THE MOBILE CAMPAIGN: GENERAL FREDERICK STEELE'S EXPEDITION, 1865

by

JOHN STUART PAINTER

B.S. Kansas State University, 1958

A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of History, Government and Philosophy

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1959

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION. 1

II. STRATEGY AND MOBILE BAY 9

III. THE CONCENTRATION OF FORCES AND CAMP LIFE AT BARRANCAS, FLORIDA 27

IV. THE UNION CAMPAIGN STRATEGY AND THE CONFEDERATE FORCES. . 41

V. GENERAL CANBY AND THE OLD SPANISH FORT. 47

VI. GENERAL STEELE'S COLUMN FROM PENSACOLA. 60

VII. THE INVESTMENT, SIEGE, AND ASSAULT OF BLAKELY, ALABAMA. . 83

VIII. OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS. 123

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS. 128

BIBLIOGRAPHY 130

APPENDICES 133

LIST OF MAPS

MAPS

I. Eastern Section of the United States Indicating the Proposed Lines of Operations of the Union Armies in 1864. 11

II. Defenses of the City of Mobile, Blakely, and the Old Spanish Fort. 16

III. The Defenses of Fort Morgan and the Entrance of Mobile Bay 19

IV. Battle of Mobile Bay. 25

V. Movement of Union Forces in the Mobile Campaign 32

VI. State of Alabama. 40

VII. Mobile Bay Area 46

VIII. Siege Operations at Spanish Fort. 53

IX. Siege of the Confederate Works at Blakely 86

X. Final Line of Investment of the Federal Army at Blakely, Alabama 100

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE

1. A View in Front of Hawkins' Division 104

2. A View from the Centre of Andrews' Second Division 111

3. A View from the Right of Garrard's Division. 117

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Mobile Campaign is one of the few campaigns of any size in the Civil War about which little is known and less has been written. The size of the Federal Army directly engaged in this Campaign was: slightly more than the total aggregate at the beginning, and more than half of the Union army at the conclusion of the Vicksburg Campaign in 1863; about three fourths the size of the Federal force which took part in the Chattanooga Campaign during the month of November, 1863; almost twice the number of troops engaged in the Red River Campaign in 1864; a little less than one half the size of General Grant's army taking part in the Wilderness Campaign, in Virginia, the same year; and slightly larger than General Sheridan's force while operating in the Shenandoah Valley in 1864. The Mobile Campaign took place during the same weeks which proved to be the last for General Lee's army in Virginia. The final assaults of the Confederate fortifications guarding the eastern side of Mobile Bay came the night previous and the same day that Lee surrendered to General Grant at Appomattox, Virginia. The glory in the east has for many years overshadowed this important campaign which took place primarily in southern Alabama. Few studies of the Civil War devote more than a paragraph to the Mobile Campaign and in many books, only a few sentences are used to describe this Campaign in which over forty-five thousand Union troops were directly engaged.

The limiting factor of space does not enable the author to give a complete and detailed account of the Union army's activities in southern Alabama and western Florida during the spring months of 1865. It is,

however, the author's purpose to present a broad view of the events which led up to the Mobile Campaign, a general account of the Federal army's activities, under the direct command of General E. R. S. Canby, against the Confederate fortifications around the Old Spanish Fort; and a more detailed description of General Frederick Steele's Column from Pensacola, Florida.

Since the days of colonization until 1813, especially from 1763 to 1813, the area designated as West Florida, which encompassed the territory around Mobile, was an "international football" between Spain, England, France, and the United States. As the area changed hands, boundary disputes arose. The United States included the Mobile area as part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803; Spain insisted that West Florida was not included in the purchase. In 1804, Congress passed the Mobile Act, which placed the disputed territory of West Florida (west of the Perdido River) in a customs district. This action of Congress was violently protested by the Spanish government which still claimed the area. During the years between 1804 and 1810, it was realized that West Florida could only be obtained by either military force or by purchase. In 1806, Congress appropriated the necessary amount for its purchase, but the political situation in Europe changed and frustrated this attempt to win the land which President Jefferson claimed already belonged by right to the United States.

West Florida was annexed to the United States by the medium of force rather than by sinuous diplomacy. In September of 1810, a small group of American settlers seized the Spanish garrison at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and proclaimed the area of West Florida free and independent of Spain. A month later, President Madison issued a proclamation

absorbing the territory of the Gulf Coast from the Mississippi to the Perdido River. Mobile, however, continued to be held by the Spaniards. It was not until after the War of 1812 had begun that the United States obtained possession of this Creole town. An expedition led by General James Wilkinson took possession of Mobile in April, 1913, the only piece of territory gained by the War.

The expansion of the South's staple crop, cotton, following the War of 1812, brought Mobile and its fine harbor into distinction. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Mobile, backed by its extensive river system, was the second only to New Orleans in its cotton exports. The trade facilities of Mobile were thus important to the Confederacy, especially after the fall of New Orleans, even though hampered by the Federal Naval blockade.

My interest in the Mobile Campaign and first real knowledge of it came when I was reading original letters written during the Civil War by my great-grandfather, Carlos W. Colby, late of the Ninety-Seventh Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment. The interesting descriptions given by Colby in his letters to various members of his family in Illinois, offered me an opportunity to use this original material in a thesis. Upon seeking further information about the Campaign, I discovered that very little could be found. Though a portion of Colby's letters gave an enlightening account of the Vicksburg Campaign which might have been used, I decided to write on a subject of which little is recorded, and thereby, endeavor to make a small contribution to history.

Of the some one hundred and twenty letters written by Carlos W. Colby during his three years in the Union army, in my possession, only

eight are concerned with the Mobile Campaign. Portions of these letters are quoted, in an edited form, throughout the parts of the thesis in which the Ninety-Seventh Illinois Regiment took part, in order to give the reader a view of this Campaign through the eyes of the common soldier. It is interesting to note and compare similarities and differences, the accuracy and inaccuracy of Colby's account with the account given in the text of this thesis. In general, this common soldier's description is mostly correct.

In the course of two years' research, part of which was concerned with the entire set of Colby letters, I searched for material in eight states, traveling over fifteen thousand miles. Part of the summer of 1957 was spent in Illinois and surrounding states. This trip proved of little value, as I was not even able to find a Regimental history of the Ninety-Seventh Illinois Infantry Regiment, and which to my knowledge has not been written. A trip to Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida in the late summer of 1958 was, however, more successful. Though I found that little material was available concerning the Mobile Campaign, the greatest benefit of the trip was spending time at the Old Spanish Fort and a day walking over the battlefield at Blakely, Alabama. As of the last week of August, 1958, the area around the Old Spanish Fort was being excavated for a new housing development. Except for a small area, the positions of the Confederate and Union armies are not visible. The area around what was the old town of Blakely, Alabama, presents a very different story. Except for a very small area which was under cultivation at what was the rear of the battlefield, the intrenchments of the opposing armies are, for the most part, clearly visible.

Upon hiring one of the local colored farmers as a guide, I spent a pleasant day walking over the battlefield. Not only were the Confederate fortifications distinguishable, but also the three lines of intrenchments and approaches constructed by the Union army in their investment and siege of Blakely. In some places, the Confederate parapets are still eight to ten feet high when approached from the front. Also in some places it was easy to see where the Confederate artillery had been placed. Distinguishable too, were some of the advanced sharpshooter or rifle pits used by both armies, these varied from about a foot to two and a half feet deep. There were places along the Federal trenches which were still waist-deep. For the most part, the approaches were fairly shallow, from six inches to a foot and a half deep.

The terrain of the battlefield was such that a number of times I was thankful to have someone with me who knew his way. There were places, characteristic of that part of the country, where the undergrowth was almost impassable, small streams with marshy banks in the bottoms of the ravines, and in other places there were open pine forests. The only evidences of there having been a town of Blakely were a cemetery and a road which had served as the main street. This road, even though the sides were overgrown with underbrush, was picturesque, as it was lined with ancient giant oak trees, each having a little Spanish moss hanging from its branches.

As nearly as I could ascertain, the terrain along the eastern side of Mobile Bay has changed but little in the last ninety-five years. The first-hand view was of immense value in being able to comprehend the difficulties incurred in this area by the soldiers of the Civil War.

The source material used for the land Campaign of Mobile can be classified into four categories: first, the official correspondence and reports found in the War of the Rebellion, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies; second, the descriptive material found in the unpublished Letters of Carlos W. Colby; third, the narration of the Mobile Campaign in General C. C. Andrews' book, the Campaign of Mobile; and fourth, the small particles of information one could gather from the various Regimental histories, histories of the different states' participation in the Civil War, and the little mention of the Campaign in the various histories of the Civil War. In compiling the different facts from the various sources, it was found that these facts did not always correspond. The author found differences in the various commanders' reports in the Official Records, between the Official Records and Andrews' narration, and the description as given by Colby. As to be expected, the various Regimental histories were usually slanted towards building up the importance and gallantry of the particular regiment. This factor has been taken into consideration when using such biased sources.

It will be noted that in the narration of General Steele's operations, emphasis has been placed on the movements of General Andrews' second division. This is due to the availability of more material concerning this division than any of the others. There are more Official Records dealing with Andrews' division than all the other divisions under Steele's command put together. Also, Andrews' narration gives more information about his division than the other divisions. The third reason for the emphasis toward the second division is that the Ninety-Seventh Illinois Regiment, of whom Colby was a member, was part of this division.

The maps and figures included were taken from the following sources. Maps one, two, three, five, six, seven, eight, and ten were taken from the Official Atlas of the War of the Rebellion, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. Map four was taken from A. T. Mahan's The Gulf and Inland Waters. Map nine and figures one through three were taken from C. C. Andrews' the Campaign of Mobile.

As few are familiar with the circumstances surrounding the Mobile Campaign and General Frederick Steele's expedition in particular, a great deal of space had been devoted to the background which led up to the latter subject. More familiar to the reader, at least in part, is the following chapter which is concerned with the general strategy of the Bay of Mobile and the area encompassed in the "south central part of the Confederacy" and the naval "Battle of Mobile Bay." Chapter three tells of the gathering of troops with an emphasis on social history and with a description of the camp life of the Union soldiers. The next chapter, the fourth, describes the strategy of the Federal forces in the Mobile Campaign and the Confederate Army they had to face. A narration of General E. R. S. Canby's movements against the Confederate fortifications around the Old Spanish Fort is reiterated in chapter five. The following chapter is concerned with General Steele's march of over one hundred miles. His force accomplished this feat in less than two weeks which included traveling through the swamps of the Florida flats. Chapter seven narrates Steele's forces in the action of the investment, siege, and assault of the Confederate fortifications around the port town of Blakely, Alabama. The last chapter gives some conclusions and observations concerning the troops at Blakely specifically, and the Mobile Campaign in general.

For the benefit of the readers, two appendices have been included. Appendix I is so that the reader may examine the letters written by Carlos W. Colby in their original form. The spelling and punctuation have been left as they were written. A few additions and corrections have been made, by the author, for the sake of clarity, which have been bracketed. Appendix II gives the organization of the Union forces This has been included so that the reader may have quick reference to see where a particular unit spoken of belongs.

I would like to call particular attention to the many persons mentioned in the Acknowledgments, without whose fine help, this study could not have been possible.

CHAPTER II

STRATEGY AND MOBILE BAY

The general situation in the "West" which prompted General U. S. Grant in the early part of July, 1863 to encourage a movement against Mobile was as follows: General William S. Rosecrans had been at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, with a large and well equipped army from the early months of 1863, with General Braxton Bragg's (C. S. A.) army confronting him with a force quite equal, at first, considering that it was on the defensive. But after the investment of Vicksburg, Bragg's army was largely depleted to strengthen General Joseph E. Johnston (C. S. A.), in Mississippi, who was being reinforced to raise the siege. Rosecrans delayed and failed to take advantage of the depletion of the Confederate forces until June 24, 1863. The hesitant General had waited too long, for ten days later Vicksburg surrendered to Grant, thereby setting free those troops of Bragg's army to return. Four days later, July 8th, Port Hudson, Louisiana, the last hold on the Mississippi River of the Confederacy fell to Union forces, thereby removing all opposition to the free use of this vital transportation route.[1]

It was at this time, General Grant suggested to the General-in-Chief that a campaign against Mobile, Alabama, would be of immense value.

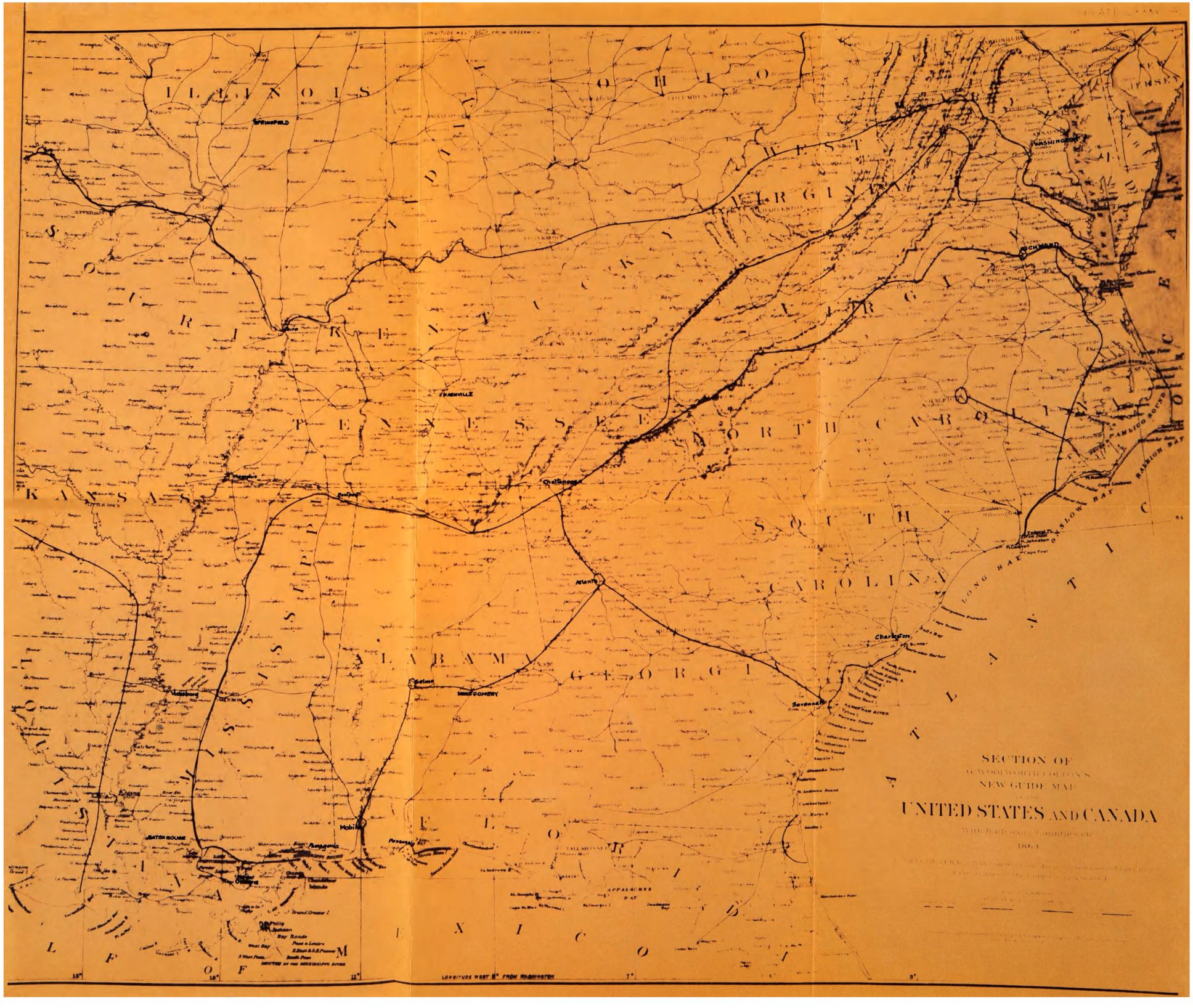
---

[1] Robert U. Johnson and Clarence C. Buel (editors), 1956 edition, New Introduction by Roy F. Nichols, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, III, p. 679.
Hereafter cited as Battles and Leaders.

Map I.

Eastern section of a Map of the United States used by General U. S. Grant in making the proposed lines of operations of the Union Armies in 1864. The heavy lines indicate these proposed lines of operations.

Note that some of the proposed operations were not completed until 1865.


ILLINOIS
SPRINGFIELD
OHIO
INDIANA
KENTUCKY
VIRGINIA
WEST VIRGINIA
WASHINGTON
RICHMOND
NASHVILLE
TENNESSEE
NORTH CAROLINA
SOUTH CAROLINA
Memphis
Chattanooga
Atlanta
Charleston
Vicksburg
Selma
MONTGOMERY
Savannah
Mobile
BATON ROUGE
Pensacola
ATLANTIC OCEAN
LONG BAY
PAMLICO SOUND
ALBEMARLE SOUND
APPALACHEE BAY
LONGITUDE WEST 85° FROM WASHINGTON
SECTION OF
G. WOOLWORTH COLTON'S
NEW GUIDE MAP
OF THE
UNITED STATES AND CANADA
1864

> Having cleaned up about Vicksburg and captured or routed all regular Confederate forces for more than a hundred miles in all directions, I felt that the troops that had done so much should be allowed to do more before the enemy could recover from the blow he had received, and while important points might be captured without bloodshed. I suggested to the General-in-Chief the idea of a campaign against Mobile. . .[2] I knew the peril the Army of the Cumberland was in, being depleted continually not only by ordinary casualties, but also by having to detach troops to hold its constantly extending line over which to draw supplies, while the enemy in front was as constantly being strengthened. Mobile was important to the enemy, and, in the absence of a threatening force, was guarded by little else than artillery. If threatened by land and from the water at the same time, the prize would fall easily, or troops would have to be sent to its defense. Those troops would necessarily come from Bragg.[3]

Thus, such a campaign against Mobile would produce two almost equally beneficial results; either the capture of Mobile, thereby giving the Union forces a supply base for operations against the Confederate Army from the south and thus depriving the Confederacy of this supply line, or relieve the pressure on the troops of the Army of the Cumberland.

In agreement with Grant on such a campaign against Mobile were General N. P. Banks, commander of the Department of the Gulf, and Admiral David G. Farragut, commander of the United States Navy in the "west." The latter had considered the feasibility of this expedition shortly following the capture of New Orleans in 1862, and had since that time urged such operations. Even though these three were in agreement that Mobile would be the next ideal target, in order to lend an effective support to the main operations about Chattanooga, Tennessee at a critical period, they were coerced into attempting to

---

[2] U. S. Grant, Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, I, p. 578.

[3] Ibid., II, pp. 20-21.

carry out the orders of the United States Government to restore the flag in Texas. General Banks was informed by General Henry W. Halleck, the General-in-Chief, that the Government fully appreciated the importance of the proposed operations against Mobile, but there were important reasons, other than military, why the Texas movement should be made first and with the least possible delay, by sea or land. A combined naval and military operation by the Red River was indicated as the best mode of carrying out the object; the selection of the route was, however, left to General Banks, but as to the movement itself he was distinctly told there was no choice and that the view of the Government must be carried out. Thus General Banks began the Red River Campaign which resulted in probably the biggest Union fiasco of the war, not because of the generalship demonstrated during the campaign but because of the impracticability of the task assigned.[4]

The Red River Campaign committed the services of forty thousand troops and prevented their effective use elsewhere for almost a year, from September, 1863 to May, 1864.

General Grant sheds some light on why the Government decided on this course of action.

> I suggested to the General-in-Chief the idea of a campaign against Mobile, starting from Lake Pontchartrain. Halleck preferred another course. The possession of the trans-Mississippi by the Union forces seemed to possess more importance in his mind than almost any campaign east of the Mississippi. I am well aware that the President was very anxious to have a foothold in Texas, to stop the clamor of some of the foreign governments which seemed to be seeking a pretext to interfere in the war, at least so far as to recognize belligerents' rights to the Confederate states. This, however, could have been easily done without wasting troops in western Louisiana and eastern Texas, by sending a garrison at once to Brownsville on the Rio Grande.[5]

---

[4] Op. cit., Battles and Leaders, IV, p. 345.

[5] U. S. Grant, op. cit.. I, p. 578.

In the interum, Admiral Farragut, in January, 1864, made a reconnaissance of Forts Gaines and Morgan defending the entrance to Mobile Bay.[6] Early in April, 1864, General Grant, who had by this time been confirmed as General-in-Chief, in anticipation of a victory by Banks in the Red River expedition, ordered preparations to be made for the concentration of troops at New Orleans for a forthcoming Mobile Campaign. This movement was delayed as there was no immediate victory by Banks. It was not until the Red River Campaign proved a disappointment, in the middle of May, that attention could be focused on Mobile.

Before considering the operations of the Army and Navy at Mobile Bay, it deems necessary to first consider the defenses of Mobile. The city of Mobile, at the commencement of the war, contained a population of thirty thousand. The fortifications of the city,[7] which General Joseph E. Johnston pronounced to be the best-fortified place in the Confederacy, began with the first continuous line of earthworks around the city being made in 1862 under the guidance of Captain C. T. Lieuner. This line of defense was about three miles out from the main business street, on terrain about one hundred feet higher than the city, and comprised of fifteen redoubts. After the fall of Vicksburg, the apprehension of an attack stimulated the defensive operations, and the year 1863 witness the completion of a second line of works, by General O. Leadbetter. This second line was built nearer the city and rendered the defenses so formidable that it was estimated that a garrison of ten thousand effective troops could hold the city ninety days against a

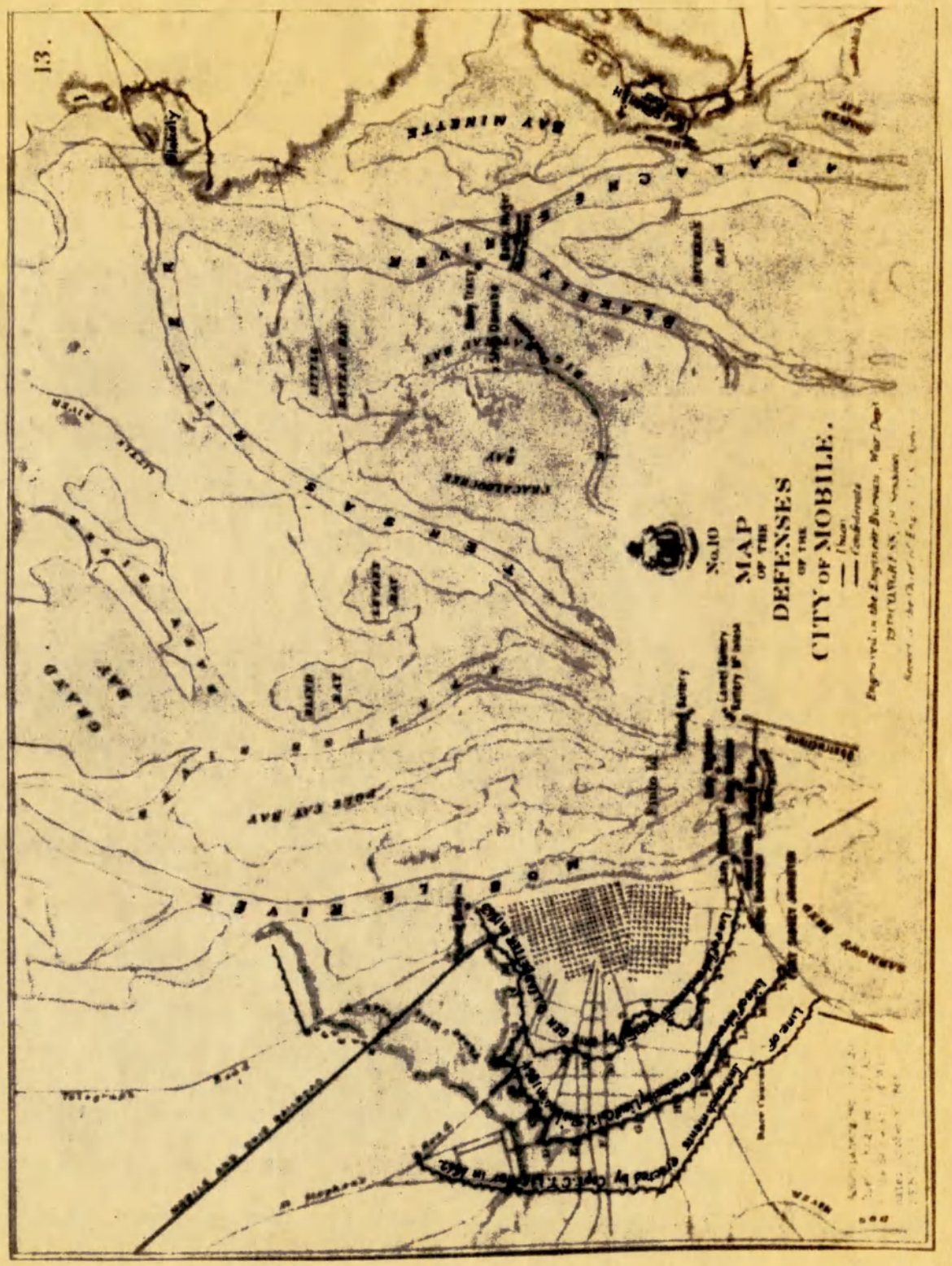
---

[6]For the defenses of Mobile, see the following paragraph.

[7]See Map No. II, p. 16.

Map II.

Map of the Defenses of the City of Mobile, Alabama, showing also the relative location of the Confederate Defenses of the Entrance of Mobile Bay.


13.
No.10
MAP
OF THE
DEFENSES
OF THE
CITY OF MOBILE.
BAY MINETTE
MOBILE BAY
GRAND BAY
MOBILE RIVER

besieging army of forty thousand. Another and still stronger line of earthworks was constructed in 1864, about halfway between the two built the two preceding years. This line, built by Lieutenant Colonel V. Sheliha, included nineteen heavy bastioned forts and eight redoubts. The parapets of these forts were from twenty to thirty feet thick, the ditches about twenty feet deep, and about thirty feet in width.[8]

The principal entrance into Mobile Bay direct from the Gulf, was between Mobile Point, a long low projection from the mainland, on the east, and Dauphin Island on the west, the latter being one of the chain which bounded the Mississippi Sound.[9] Though the distance between these points was three miles, because of a hard sand bank shoal which extended under water both east and south from Dauphin Island, the ship channel is defined so that it skirts closely to Mobile Point, narrowing it to a little less than two thousand yards. Near the southeast point of this sand bank were two small islands, called Sand Islands, a distance of three miles from Mobile Point (see Map IV). The east side of the channel was similarly defined by a bank extending seaward from Mobile Point. Though vessels of very light draught could also enter the Bay from the Mississippi Sound by passing over the shallows to the north of Dauphin Island, the amount of traffic via this route was insignificant.

Guarding this main entrance from the Gulf were two works, Fort Morgan on Mobile Point and Fort Gaines on Dauphin Island. The Mississippi Sound approach was covered by Fort Powell, a small earthwork

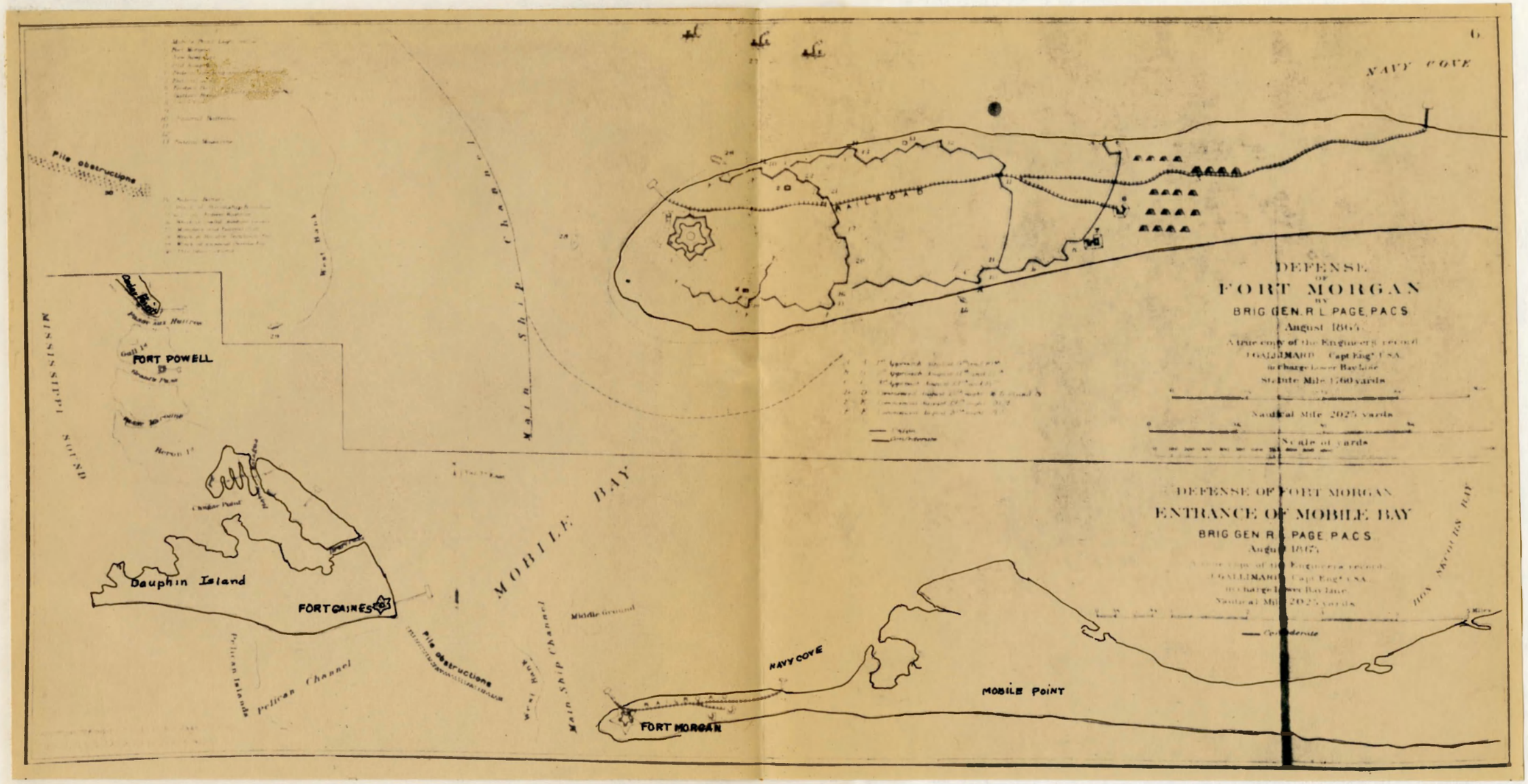
---

[8] C. C. Andrews, Campaign of Mobile, pp. 10-11.

[9] See Maps No. III and VI, pp. 19 and 42.

Map III.

Map Showing the Defense of Fort Morgan and the Confederate Defenses of the Entrance of Mobile Bay.


NAVY COVE
DEFENSE OF FORT MORGAN
BY
BRIG GEN. R L PAGE, P.A.C.S.
August 1865
A true copy of the Engineers record
J GALLIMARD Capt Eng'r U.S.A.
in Charge Lower Bay Line
Statute Mile 1760 yards
Nautical Mile 2025 yards
Scale of yards
DEFENSE OF FORT MORGAN
ENTRANCE OF MOBILE BAY
BRIG GEN R L PAGE P.A.C.S.
Pile Obstructions
FORT POWELL
Dauphin Island
FORT GAINES
Pelican Islands
Pelican Channel
Pile obstructions
MOBILE BAY
Main Ship Channel
Middle Ground
West Bank
NAVY COVE
MOBILE POINT
FORT MORGAN

on Tower Island, commanding the channel which gave the most water, known as Grant's Pass. Fort Gaines was too far distant from the main ship channel to greatly enter into the picture of defenses.

> It was a pentagonal work mounting in barbette three X-inch columbiads, five 32-, two 24-, and two 18-pounder smooth-bore guns, and four rifled 32-pounders; besides these it had eleven 24-pounder howitzers, siege and for flank defense. In Fort Powell there were one X-inch, two VIII-inch and one 32-pounder smooth-bore and two VII-inch Brooke rifles; these bore on the sound and channels, but the rear of the fort towards the bay was yet unfinished and nearly unarmed. The third and principal work, Fort Morgan, was much more formidable. It was five sided, and built to carry guns both in barbette and casemates; but when seized by the Confederates the embrasures of the curtains facing the channel were masked and a heavy exterior water battery was thrown up before the northwest curtain. The armament at this time cannot be given with certainty. . . .the following estimate has been made: Main fort seven X-inch, three VIII-inch and twenty-two 32-pounder smooth-bore guns, and two VIII-inch, two 6.5-inch and four 5.82-inch rifles. In the water battery there were four X-inch and one VIII-inch columbiads and two 6.5-inch rifles. Of the above, ten X-inch, three VIII-inch, sixteen 32-poinders and all the rifles, except one of 5.82 calibre, bore upon the channel. There were also twenty flanking 24-pound howitzers and two or three light rifles. . .[10]

These last, however, were useless against an assaulting navy because of their particular position.

As an anticipated attack did not materialize shortly following the Union Army's victory at Vicksburg, Mississippi, the Confederates strengthened their defenses. From the point of Dauphin Island a line of pile obstructions extended across the sand bank, in the direction of Fort Morgan, thus blocking the passage of any light vessels that might try to pass that way and thereby partially closed the main entrance to the Bay. During the spring of 1864, additional defense mechanisms were subjoined. From where the piles ended, near the edge of the sand

---

[10] A. T. Mahan, The Gulf and Inland Waters, pp. 219-220.

bank, a triple line of torpedoes in echelon began, extending across the main ship channel to a red buoy, a distance of two hundred and twenty-six years from the water battery under Fort Morgan. Thus, the passage into Mobile Bay was narrowed to less than one hundred yards, from the end of the torpedoes to the beach on Mobile Point.

The third element of the Confederate defense of the Bay was a small squadron under the command of Admiral Franklin Buchanan. It consisted of three small side-wheeler gunboats and the pride of the Confederate Navy, their "greatest" ironclad ram, the C. S. S. Tennessee. The construction of the Tennessee was begun in the spring of 1863, completed, and was ready for service in March 1865. Though this force afloat was comparatively small, their greatest strength lay in their position and the many dangers which had to be incurred by a hostile fleet.[11]

The Confederates were thus able to increase their defenses of the Mobile area from the existing line of fortifications around the city of Mobile and the small garrisons in Forts Morgan and Gaines in the summer of 1863, to the construction of two additional lines of earthworks for the defense of the city, the construction of pile obstructions and torpedoes placed at the main opening of the Bay, and the construction of the ironclad, the Tennessee, by late summer of 1864. It was thus evident that the delay in attacking Mobile had enabled the Confederates

---

[11] For the defenses of Mobile, the following sources were consulted: op. cit., Battles and Leaders, IV, pp. 381-383; Mahan, op. cit., pp. 218-225; Allan F. Wescott (editor), American Sea Power Since 1775, pp. 180-181; Charles L. Lewis, David Glasgow Farragut, pp. 219-251; John W. Draper, History of the American Civil War, III, pp. 220-221; John Spears, David G. Farragut, pp. 302-309.

to increase their defenses and thereby increasing the risk and danger to the lives of both the assaulting Army and Navy, to say nothing of the possible material loss of ships.

The decision in Washington for a campaign against Mobile finally came: first, because General Grant took over from General Halleck the general direction of the Federal armies; secondly, because the failure of the Red River Campaign released these units of the Army for duty elsewhere; thirdly, it was realized that additional delay would only accomplish the building of further defenses by the Confederates; and finally, General William T. Sherman wanted a demonstration against Mobile in conjunction with his own descent upon Atlanta, Georgia.

In May, 1864, though General Banks was, for a time, left in command of the Department of the Gulf, General Edward R. S. Canby was placed over him and took control of his troops as the commander of the newly made Trans-Mississippi division. After the Red River disaster, General Grant decided that the majority of the fighting men could be used to better advantage in Virginia, at that particular time, and the force in the Department of the Gulf was greatly reduced. This reduction in General Canby's force canceled any formal, full-scale military campaign against the city of Mobile, thus he was forced to limit the military objective to the forts in the lower Bay. It was not until the latter part of July, 1864, that General Canby could make his arrangements to cooperate with Admiral Farragut at Mobile Bay.

On the 3rd of August, 1864, a division (5,500 strong), under the command of Major General Gordon Granger, landed on the west end of Dauphin Island and began preparations for the siege of Fort Gaines. In the evening of the 4th, the last of Admiral Farragut's monitors,

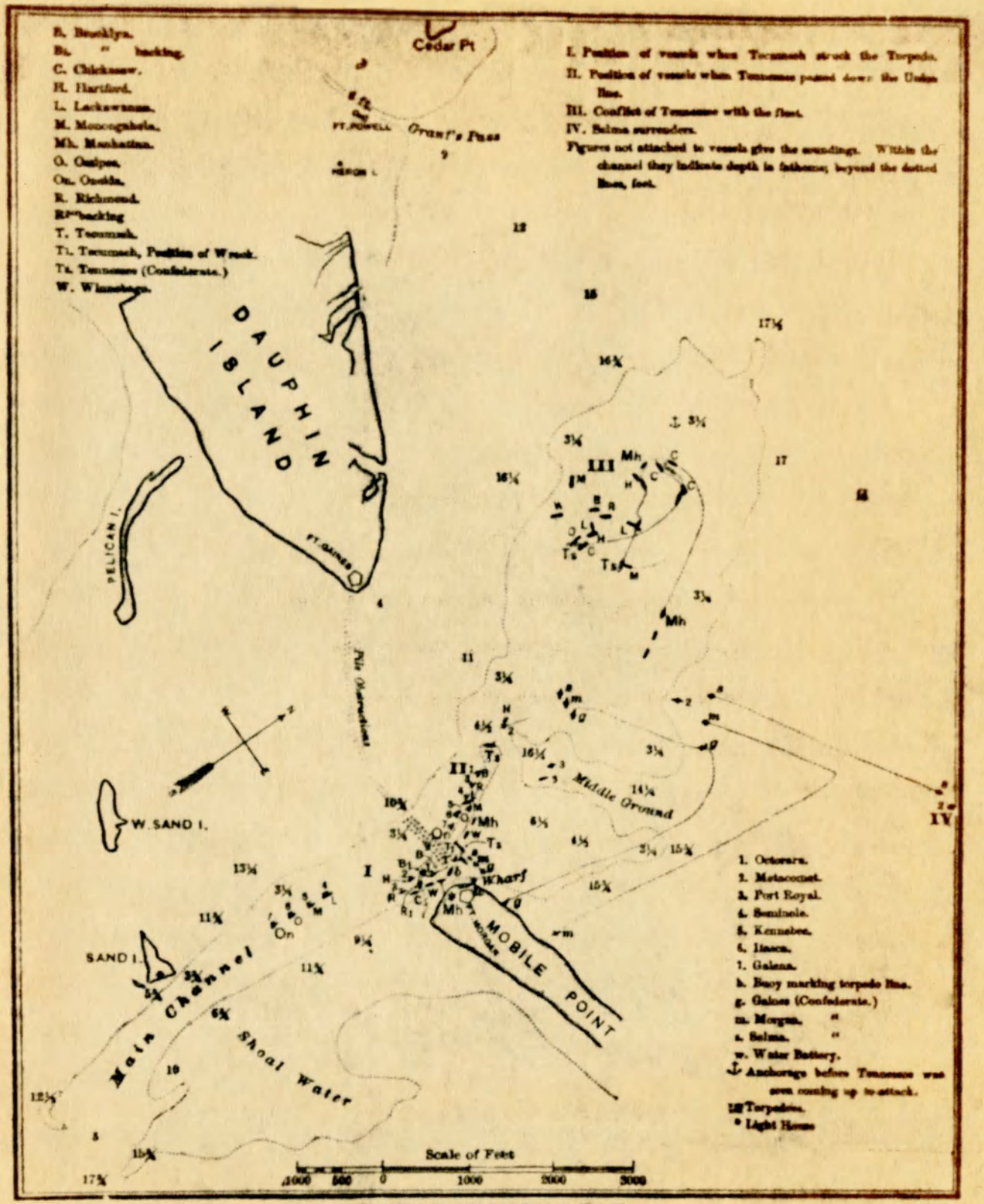
the Tecumseh, arrived. Just before dawn, on the 5th of August, Farragut's fleet sailed for the channel. The four monitors, Tecumseh, Manhattan, Winnebago, and Chickasaw, led the way, sailing a little to starboard (to the east) to draw the fire of Fort Morgan away from the wooden ships. The wooden ships, lashed together in pairs, followed. Admiral Farragut had intended to lead this line in the Hartford, but his captains insisted that the flag must not risk itself in so exposed a position, Farragut yielded the honor of heading the line (of wooden crafts) to Captain Alden of the Brooklyn.[12] At 6:45 A.M. Fort Morgan opened fire on the monitors and Captain T.A.M. Craven of the Tecumseh ordered his gunners to commence firing on the Fort. Two lines of ships moved on until they were abreast of Fort Morgan. Inside the Bay, the Confederate squadron, led by the formidable Tennessee with three other black, tallow-greased gunboats, moved out from behind Mobile Point to attack the leading vessels. Farragut climbed the port main rigging of the Hartford to see over the Brooklyn. He saw the Tecumseh veer to the right, dangerously close to the red buoy that marked the line of torpedoes. He heard a muffled explosion and saw his leading monitor settle like a stone to the bottom. He saw the Brooklyn, immediately ahead of him, back her engines and slow down. Farragut could not stop now with ships in the rear piling into confusion under the guns of Fort Morgan. He shouted to the Captain of the Hartford on the quarter-deck beneath him the famous order, "Damn the torpedoes! Four bells! Captain Drayton, go ahead." And to the Captain of the Metacomet lashed alongside the Hartford, "Jouett, full speed!" He sailed around the Brooklyn

---

[12] See Map No. IV, p. 25.

Map IV.

Map of the Naval Battle of Mobile Bay. Ledger indicates the relative location of the naval vessels.



BATTLE OF MOBILE BAY.

and ran directly over the line of torpedoes. Inside the Bay the ships cast off the smaller crafts lashed to their aides, the latter captured two of the enemy's wooden ships and destroyed a third. The Tennessee under the intrepid Admiral Buchanan, might have hugged the security of the shallow water under the guns of Fort Morgan and pounded Farragut's wooden ships from a safe distance; instead she steered straight for Farragut's flagship, intent on ramming. Farragut's ships in turn made for the giant Confederate ram. Too long to dodge, too slow to run away, the ironclad Tennessee took a terrific pounding as ship after ship rammed into her. Finally the Tennessee, battered and listing badly, ran into shallow water whither she was followed by the two river monitors. The Chickasaw and Winnebago stove in her casemate before the great Confederate ironclad, the Tennessee, showed a white flag. Fort Powell surrendered at nightfall, and Fort Gaines raised the white flag the next day, August 6, 1864. General Granger's force was transferred across the Bay and landed in the rear of Fort Morgan, cutting its communications with the mainland. Granger commenced at once a siege which lasted two weeks before Fort Morgan formally surrendered at 2:30 p.m. the 23rd of August. Thus, the entrance to, and Mobile Bay were in the hands of the Union, save for a few small Confederate craft operating at the northern end of the Bay. The blockade of the Gulf was now effectively sealed.[13]

---

[13]For the "Battle of Mobile Bay," the following sources were consulted: op. cit., Battles and Leaders, IV, pp. 379-411; Mahan, op. cit., pp. 220-245; Wescott, op. cit., pp. 183-186; Lewis, op. cit., pp. 263-295; Spears, op. cit., pp. 316-340; Richard S. West, Jr., Mr. Lincoln's Navy, pp. 262-270; Richard S. West, Jr., Lincoln's Navy Department, pp. 285-286.

CHAPTER III

THE CONCENTRATION OF FORCES AND CAMP LIFE AT BARRANCAS, FLORIDA

For almost seven months after the Union victory in the Battle of Mobile Bay, the area around Mobile was circumambiented in an atmosphere of stillness and non-belligerent activity. The only military action in the area was a demonstration made against Mobile in December, by a small column of infantry under the command of General Granger, moving from his headquarters at Pascagoula, Mississippi. The column reached Grand Bay, twenty-two miles from the city, and then returned.

General Canby's inability to follow up the victory, late in 1864, with an army campaign, was due to the lack of available units to make up a sufficient force for such a campaign. Confederate activity in Missouri and Arkansas kept many of the Federal units along the Mississippi River occupied and were thereby not available for duty elsewhere. General J. B. Hood's (C.S.A.) invasion of Tennessee made it impossible for General George H. Thomas to send Canby any forces from the Army of the Cumberland. However, by January, 1865, the military outlook in the "west" was indeed bright. The Rebel activity in Missouri and Arkansas had been put down and Thomas has quelled Hood's forces in Tennessee.

General Canby spent the months of December, January, and part of February organizing part of his forces in the Military Division of West Mississippi for the pending operation against Mobile. This proved no small task for two reasons: first, his troops were spread out from Memphis, Tennessee, along the Mississippi River to New Orleans, Louisiana, and along the Gulf Coast to Pensacola, Florida; and second,

there was difficulty in securing sufficient transportation for the troops. These two reasons plus unusually uncooperative weather slowed the process of concentrating his forces. These troops along the Mississippi River, which were to be used in the Mobile Campaign, were concentrated at Kenner, Louisiana, ten miles above New Orleans. Major General Frederick Steele was assigned to their command with instructions to have them fitted for a campaign. These were troops which had been well tried on a number of occasions, and were, in all respects such as any commander would be proud. They remained at Kenner for about three weeks. The weather was like September north of the Ohio River, but there was considerable rain and the ground was wet and muddy much of the time so that men could hardly be comfortable. Nevertheless, in pursuance of Steele's orders, some time was spent each day, when the weather permitted, in drill.

In the latter part of January, 1865, General Canby received information (through a reconnaissance report) leading to a suspicion that an attempt would be made by the Confederates to regain possession of Barrancas, Florida, or some other point thereabouts on the Gulf. On the afternoon of the 23rd of January, the commander of the Third Brigade of the Reserve Corps, was summoned to Canby's headquarters. Upon arrival, Brigadier General Christopher C. Andrews received instructions to proceed with the detachment of his brigade, then at Kenner, to Pascagoula, Mississippi.[14] Though transportation was not altogether

---

[14]This detachment of the Third Brigade of the Reserve Corps was composed of the units which later made up the Second and Third Brigades, Second Division, Thirteenth Army Corps. See the Organization of Canby's Forces, Appendix, II, pp. 169.

ready, all the regiments of this detachment had embarked the following day. By daylight of the 26th of January, they reported to General Granger, at East Pascagoula, and were by him ordered to Barrancas, in accordance with previous instructions from General Canby. The detachment arrived at Barrancas, Florida, at dawn, the 27th, debarked and went into camp.

On the 26th of January, Grant ordered General Halleck, Chief of Staff, to have Thomas send General Andrew J. Smith's command of three divisions plus cavalry to strengthen Canby's force.[15] Though General Thomas' headquarters were located in the northeast corner of Mississippi, at Eastport, just the length of the state of Mississippi from Pascagoula, the easiest route of travel, because of heavy rains in central and southern Mississippi made roads impassable for heavy wagons, was up the Tennessee River to the Ohio River and then down the Mississippi. While enroute to join Canby's forces, the following correspondence between General A. J. Smith and Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton was communicated concerning Smith's forces.

---

[15]U. S. War Department, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Vol. XLIX, pt. 1, p. 584. Hereafter cited as Official Records.

CAIRO, ILL., February 8, 1865---2 p.m.
(Received 5 p.m.)

Hon. EDWIN M. STANTON
Secretary of War:

I arrived at 1 p.m. with two divisions of my command. Will coal and take on board supplies and leave for my destination. My other command follows me. I am now without a heading or identity for my command. Unless I receive a number or a name for my command, I must style myself the Wandering Tribe of Israel. Please telegraph me immediately and give me a number.

A. J. SMITH
Major General

WASHINGTON D.C., February 8, 1865---
6:50 p.m.

Maj. Gen. A. J. SMITH
Cairo:

Continue on in your exodus as the Wandering Tribe of Israel. On reaching the land of Canby you will have a number and a name.

H. W. HALLECK
Major General and Chief of Staff[16]

General Smith and his troops were delayed at Vicksburg, Mississippi by a missent telegram, but finally arrived at New Orleans on the 22nd day of February.

The Reserve Corps of the Military Division of West Mississippi used by Canby in the Mobile Campaign were reorganized into the Thirteenth Army Corps, Major General Gordon Granger commanding. Major General A. J. Smith's forces, detached from the Department of the Cumberland were reorganized into the sixteenth Army Corps. The Cavalry,

---

[16] Ibid., p. 669.

Map V.

Map illustrating the Campaign of the Army of West Mississippi in Southern Alabama and Western Florida under the command of Major General Edward R. S. Canby, March and April, 1865.

Indicates the route of Cavalry

Indicates the route of the 16th Army Corps

Indicates the route of the 13th Army Corps

Indicates the route of Steele's Forces

CAMPAIGN
OF THE
ARMY OF WEST MISSISSIPPI,
MAJ. GEN. E. R. S. CANBY, COM'DG.
IN SOUTHERN ALABAMA,
March and April, 1865.
DRAWN UNDER DIRECTION OF
Lieut. S.E.M. GREGORY, Comdg. Topographical Party,
BY ORDER OF
Bvt. Maj. M. ALESTER, Chief Engineer, ADWM.

REFERENCES.
Indicates route of Cavalry
16th Army Corps
13th Army Corps
Steele's Forces

Scale.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Miles

prior to March 29, 1865, was known as the "Separate Cavalry Brigade," commanded by Brigadier General Thomas J. Lucas, the "Special Cavalry Expedition," commanded by Lieutenant Andrew B. Spurling, and the First Cavalry Division, Brigadier General Joseph F. Knipe, commanding. Following the 29th of March, the first two cavalry units became Lucas' Division.[17] Finally the last unit of Canby's force was the First Division, United States Colored Troops, commanded by Brigadier General John P. Hawkins, better know as Hawkins' Division.

The troops under General Canby's command encamped in three locations near Mobile; at Dauphin Island, Alabama, at Mobile Point, Alabama, and at Barrancas, Florida, near Pensacola. General Granger, early in January, had assigned the First Division of the Thirteenth Army Corps, with Brigadier General James C. Veatch in command, to Dauphin Island, and part of the Third Division under the command of Brigadier General William P. Benton, to Mobile Point (for the remaining portions of the Third Division, see below). The troops arrived in the Mobile area in the following order: January 27, at Barrancas, Florida, the Second and Third Brigades, Second Division, Thirteenth Army Corps, Brigadier General C. C. Andrews commanding (the Detachment from the Third Brigade, Reserve Corps, hereafter referred to as Andrews' Division); February 1, at Mobile Point, the First Brigade, Second Division, Thirteenth Army Corps, Colonel Henry Bertram in command (the remainder of the Third Brigade, Reserve Corps, hereafter referred to as Bertram's Brigade); February 18, at Mobile Point, part of the First, Second, and all of the Third Brigade, Third Division, Thirteenth Army Corps,

---

[17]See the Organization of Forces, Appendix, p. 169.

Brigadier General William P. Benton, commanding (these units came from the Reserve Corps in the Department of Arkansas); March 1, at Barrancas, the First Division, United States Colored Troops, Brigadier General John P. Hawkins, commander; March 7, Dauphin Island, First Division, Sixteenth Army Corps, Brigadier General John McArthur in command; March 10 and 11, Dauphin Island, Second Division, Sixteenth Army Corps, under the command of Brigadier General Kenner Garrard; March 12 to 16, Mobile Point, Third Division, Sixteenth Army Corps, commanded by Brigadier General Eugene A. Carr; and finally, March 17, Barrancas, Lucas' Cavalry Division, Brigadier General Thomas J. Lucas in command. Thus, before beginning the Mobile Campaign, the various units were concentrated in the three locations as follows: at Mobile Point, General Canby, his headquarters and staff, Benton's Division, Bertram's Brigade, and Carr's Division; at Dauphin Island, McArthur's Division, Garrard's Division, and Veatch's Division; and at Barrancas, Florida, General Steele, his headquarters and staff, Andrews' Division, Hawkins' Division, and Lucas' Cavalry Division.[18]

As Andrews' Division was the first to arrive, they spent more than six weeks encamped at Barrancas, Florida. It is interesting to note how these troops spent this time immediately preceding the Campaign. First, a look at their surroundings and then at their camp and camp life. This first description is as it was perceived through the eyes of their commander, and then an account as viewed by the common soldier.

---

[18] Official Records, op. cit., Ser. I, XLIX, pt. 1, pp. 91-322; Andrews, op. cit., pp. 23-26.

> The natural appearance of that part of the country is unattractive. Barrancas is a narrow and sandy peninsula, a third part covered with pine openings, with here and there clusters of live oaks. Along the shore the sand is white, and on a raw day creates the illusion of snow.
>
> The fort which gives the place its name was originally built by the Spaniards, about two centuries ago [from 1867], and with Fort Pickens, which is opposite, helps guard the entrace into the splendid harbor of Pensacola. On the southeastern side of the peninsula are the ruins of the Pensacola navy-yard; and surrounding that are the villages of Woolsey and Warrington. From the landing at Barrancas the ground rises slightly for a mile, and then declines to a bayou on the north side. On the higher ground was located the camp of the brigade. Its front was along the edge of the pine wood, and near was a small clear stream.[19]

The Regiments of Andrews' Division (Brigade as Andrews called it, referring to the Brigade of the Reserve Corps) camped in the area, taking position as they happened to arrive, rather than according to rank.

> It is a saying among the volunteers, that the more pleasant their camp is made, the sooner will they be called upon to leave it. However, much or little this thought influenced these regiments, they certainly, in a very few days, made a beautiful and attractive camp. It was laid out with five streets to a regiment, with tents for two companies on a street, the companies facing. Small evergreen trees were cut and hauled to the camp, and set in rows on each side of every street, and in front of every tent. Handsome arbors were made, and artificial groves before the officers' tents; and especially around the hospital tents, which, however, were but few in number and had but few inmates. Walks were neatly arranged, having their margins adorned with shrubbery, handsome shells, and devices molded from the white sand. Guns, mortars, shields, cannonballs, and other warlike implements were ingeniously carved in this sand, with, here and there, a felicitous motto or inscription. Its cleanliness corresponded with the taste and industry displayed in ornamenting it.
>
> These soldiers were some of the best young men of the West, and had the characteristics of proud and gallant men, as one could plainly see who noticed them off duty in their familiar and joyous groups around the camp. The plates on their accountrements were kept brightly polished, and their muskets and accountrements always neat. Two hours in the forenoon they spent in company drill, devoting considerable attention to the manual of arms and to target practice; and two hours of the afternoon were devoted to brigade

---

[19] Andrews, op. cit., p. 23.

drill. The ground on which these drills took place was a mile north of Fort Barrancas. The field officers met evenings in the school of the brigade; and the exercises of the brigade in the field were eminently successful. As these battalions moved with so much precision and beauty, closed in mass, or rapidly deployed, or advanced in line of battle in double-quick on the charge, their bayonets glittering and their alignment grandly preserved, no observer could doubt---remembering they had been through many battles---that these were rehearsals for no common event.[20]

The following portions of letters written by a common soldier encamped at Barrancas, gives a more detailed account of camp life.[21]

> Most of my time during the week is so occupied in doing the duties that are required of me in camp, so much so, that I can not have time to write a letter without being disturbed. For the past week we have had to drill six hours a day beside the many other little things that had to be done, so you see I do not have much time to myself. As for writing after night, that is out of the question, for our house is so small that we can have neither chairs nor table in it. All the protection we have from the earth is a rubber blanket spread on the ground. It has to serve for chairs to sit on, a table to eat from, and a bed to sleep on. In my tent there are two besides myself. . . . Each of us have a piece of tent cloth six feet square. Two of these pieces are buttoned together at the ends and stretched over a pole so as to look like the roof of a house. With the third piece, we fill up one end of the tent and then for the other end, we use a rubber blanket. In this way, we have a house big enough to crawl into, but not big enough to stand up in. When we go on a march, each man takes his piece of tent, his rubber and woolen blanket and rolls them up in his knapsack with all his clothes so that when we stop at night, we can have our house built and ready to go to bed in a half hour after stopping. Besides this, a soldier has to carry a canteen full of water, a haversack with rations to eat for two or three days, a gun and cartridge box, making, as some of the boys say, a full mule load.

---

[20] Ibid.. pp. 24-25.

[21] These letters were written by Sergeant Carlos W. Colby, Company G., Ninty Seventh Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Second Brigade, Second Division (Andrews' Division), Thirteenth Army Corps. The first and third excerpts are taken from letters written to his niece who was about ten years old. The second excerpt is taken from a letter written to his adult sister. The portions of the letters quoted are in an edited form. For the letters in their original form, see Union Letters of Carlos W. Colby, Appendix I, pp. 138-168.

We are having delightfull warm and pleasant weather. The grass is looking as green and the birds sing as gaily as they do in April with you.[22]

--- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- ---

The National Salute in honor of Washington's birthday has just ceased firing. . . . I believe that our Regiment is the only one here that is celebrating the day by not drilling. This is a wonder, too, for Colonel Vifquain /Commander of the 97th Illinois Volunteer Regiment/ is the hardest drill master here by all odds. As a general thing, there has to be a good excuse, or he will have us drilling.

Vifquain is a man that I respect, though I still fear him. Since he has come in command, the Regiment has been under the strictest military discipline. Some of his rules are rather grinding to a volunteer, and I sometimes think useless. Although I had rather it would be so, than to be ruled by as lenient a hand as formerly, for then, a good soldier had all the duty to perform and a shirk was always playing off. By being so strict, he has made a good many enemies, some of whom have been writing him anonymous letters, making some dreadful threats against him, shaving his horse's mane and tail, etc. He suspects it to be the doings of some of the members of Company B. I should not be at all surprised if his supposition were correct, for since I have been back to the regiment, our company has had eight or ten men tried by Court Martial for various misdemeanors. At the present time, we have six under arrest, three absent and three present. As many more might be subtracted from the company and then we would still have a full complement of roughs. One thing is certain, the Colonel keeps a sharp eye on us so that we are well looked after. He has the keenest eye for any man I ever saw. He can see every movement that is made on dress parade, and the penalty for moving a hand or foot or of the least unnecessary noise is six days extra duty for a private or the reduction of a non-commissioned officer. As for myself, I believe I am rather a favorite for I have crossed him two or three times, and as yet, have never been reproved.

Troops are concentrating at this place. All preparations are being made for a military movement in some direction, perhaps through the interior of the state to Montgomery. This I should much prefer to staying here all summer (although this is a healthy place) for I have always had the best health when on the march, and can stand the marching as well as the best of them.[23]

--- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- --- ---

---

[22]Carlos W. Colby to his niece, Carrie, Barrancas, Florida, February 19, 1865, manuscript, possession of author. See Appendix I, Letter No. 1, pp. 138-140.

[23]Carlos W. Colby to his sister Sallie, Barrancas, Florida, February 22, 1865, manuscript, possession of author. See Appendix, Letter No. 2, pp. 141-143.

I hardly know what to write about, to interest you, but for the want of anything better to write, will give a little description of how some of the officers have fixed up around their tents. A Lieutenant Colonel's shoulder straps consists of two silver leaves on a strap. Some of the men made an imitation of the same in front of Lieutenant Colonel Vifquain's tent one night just before dark. The outlines of the leaf was made by placing little snails (that are picked up along the coast) all around and filling the center with white sand. When it was finished it looked quite perfect, but the next morning, low and behold, it was spoiled. At first, everybody supposed that someone had done it on purpose, but on a close examination it proved that the snails were alive and that they had done all the mischief by moving from their proper position. Dr. Smith has in front of his tent a miniature Fort built in the shape of a star. It mounts eight guns, which are nothing more than Ale bottles. The parapet is covered with green moss. It is built so stylish as to attract the attention of every passerby, for everything about it is perfect, even to a small flag flying over it. Some of the boys in the regiment got some red berries and placed them on the sand in the shape of letters, and wrote out the words, "Fort Smith." In the 76th Illinois, they have a representation of the eagle made in the sand. The name of the Colonel with the number of the regiment was written with red berries. In the 24th Indians, nearly every officer had some fancy ornamental work in front of his quarters, such as hearts, diamonds, cannon, mortars, etc. It is really worth one's while to spend an hour in roaming around the different Corps to see the ornamental gardens. But enough, am near the bottom of the page, so goodby.[24]

---

[24] Carlos W. Colby to his niece, Carrie, Barrancas, Florida, March 4, 1865, manuscript, possession of author. See Appendix, Letter No. 3, pp. 144-146.

Map VI.

Map of the State of Alabama indicating the important points of the Mobile Campaign.

MISSISSIPPI

ALABAMA

Scale 10 Miles to 1 Inch.

88° 87° 86°

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

C D E F G H

38 32

Macon Columbus Rockford Marion Selma Montgomery Barryton Winchester Fort White Monroeville Camden Butler Mobile Pensacola Andalusia Evergreen Brooklyn Sparta Belleville Geneva

Tuscaloosa Tombigbee R. Alabama R. Tennessee R. Mississippi R. Tombigbee River Alabama River Escambia River Perdido Bay Escambia Bay Pensacola Bay Mobile Bay Mobile & Ohio R.R. Mobile & Gr. Northern R.R. Mobile & Pensacola R.R. Alabama & Florida R.R. Pollard Florida R.R. Mobile & Montgomery R.R. Montgomery & West Point R.R. Alabama & Tennessee R.R. Tallapoosa R. Coosa R. Chattahoochee R. Conecuh River Escambia R. Perdido R. Blackwater R. Yellow R. Choctawhatchee R. Santa Rosa Sound Santa Rosa Island Pensacola Bay Military Road Mobile Bay Sound Dauphin I. Petit Bois I. Horn I. Round I. Pinto I. Ship I. Cat I. Deer Point Fort Stoddard Fort Morgan Fort Barrancas Fort Pickens Fort McRee Fort Mims Fort St. Philip Fort Confederate Point Battle Ground Church Battle Ground Academy Battle Ground Camp Ground Battle Ground Methodist Church Battle Ground Baptist Church Battle Ground Cemetery Battle Ground Methodist Church Battle Ground Baptist Church Battle Ground Cemetery

SOUTH CAROLINA GEORGIA FLORIDA

CHAPTER IV

THE UNION CAMPAIGN STRATEGY AND THE CONFEDERATE FORCES

By the middle of 1863, the "western" portion of the Confederacy was split from the rest of the seceded states by the Union control of the Mississippi River. Late in December, 1864, General William T. Sherman's successful "March to the Sea" through Georgia from Atlanta to Savannah again split the Confederacy. These military operations split the Confederacy into three sections. These three sections consisted of the following areas: the northeastern section encompassed Virginia, North and South Carolina, and the northeastern part of Georgia; the western section consisted of the western half of Louisiana and the state of Texas; the middle section, or the south central section, consisted of the eastern central part of Mississippi, most of Alabama, the southwestern two thirds of Georgia, and Florida. The general strategy in the last section was an aggregate of three important components. The first was to break entirely the enemy forces so sufficiently that, at a minimum, it would not be able to function effectively as a unit. The second part planned the partial ruining of the economic structure of this section. This embraced: the prevention, as far as possible, of the 1865 crop from being planted for the purpose of supplying the Confederate armies; the destruction of the enemy's communication and railroads; and finally, the stopping, and if necessary, the destruction of the areas where war materials were being produced. The third component of the strategy, as stated by General Grant, was ". . . to get all the Negro men we can before the enemy puts them into their ranks."[25]

---

[25] Official Records, op. cit., Ser. 1, XLIX, pt. I, pp. 780-781.

General Canby's force operating in southern Alabama was only one part of this broad strategic picture. In cooperation with Canby's Mobile Campaign, General Thomas, if the opportunity presented itself, was to descend from Tennessee into central Alabama. Cavalry units were to execute movements in the area from Memphis, Tennessee, Vicksburg, Mississippi, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and the west side of Mobile Bay. Their mission was not only to carry out the over-all strategic assignment, but also to create diversionary action for the Mobile Campaign.

More specifically, the strategy for the Mobile Campaign called for the opening of a base of supplies at either Mobile, Alabama, or Pensacola, Florida, for further operations in central Alabama and Georgia. Whichever it would be, depending upon the one that could be established with the least delay, it was necessary to eliminate all opposition east of Mobile Bay in order to open the Tensas and Alabama Rivers. Thus, with a base of supply, the enemy's manufacturing and transportation elements in central Alabama and western Georgia could easily be taken with Federal armies converging from both the north and south.

The general plan of operation for Canby's Army incorporated the reduction of the enemy's works on the east side of Mobile Bay, the clearing of the Alabama and Tensas Rivers for transit, the turning of the strong works erected for the defense of Mobile, Alabama, and forcing the surrender or evacuation of the city. If the latter involved too great a delay, a direct movement upon Montgomery or Selma, Alabama, would be made with a shifting, for the subsequent operations, of the army's base of supplies from Mobile to Pensacola Bay, and using the

railroad from Pensacola to Montgomery for the transit of supplies. In carrying out the first part of this plan, the main army, under the command of General Canby, moving by land and water, was to establish itself on firm ground on the east side of Mobile Bay near the Old Spanish Fort. General Steele, with a smaller, but sufficient force to meet any opposition which might be sent against him, was to move from Pensacola, Florida, threatening Montgomery and Selma, Alabama, and covering the operations of the cavalry by disabling the railroads from Mobile to Montgomery. This accomplished, Steele's force was to turn southeastward and join the main force on Mobile Bay for operations against the Confederate fortifications at Blakely and the Old Spanish Fort.[26]

For the Confederate forces, Lieutenant General Richard Taylor commanded the Department of Alabama, Mississippi, and East Louisiana, with his headquarters at Meridian, Mississippi. Within this department, Major General Dabney H. Maury was in command of the District of the Gulf. General Maury's senior officer, who commanded the Confederate forces on the eastern side of Mobile Bay, designated as the Eastern Division, District of the Gulf, was Brigadier General St. John R. Liddell. General Liddell's headquarters was at Blakely, Alabama, where he was in direct command of the garrison on duty there at the fortifications. The garrison in the fortifications at the Old Spanish Fort was under the command of Brigadier General R. L. Gibson.

Though the troops in total aggregate present in the District of the Gulf, numbered slightly more than twelve thousand as of the 10th

---

[26] Ibid., pp. 91-93, 708-709, 727, 757, 780-781, 769; Vol. XLV, pt. II, pp. 609-610; Vol. XLVIII, pt. I, p. 786.

of March, 1865, it is difficult to determine the exact size of the force which opposed General Canby's army.[27] Probably defending the immediate area east of the Bay, were about ten thousand Confederate troops.[28] The garrison at Old Spanish Fort, March 28th, consisted of about four thousand effective infantry plus artillery batteries.[29] General Liddell's garrison inside the fortifications at Blakely totaled about three thousand, five hundred effective infantry, with the addition of a few artillery batteries.[30] Though the larger number of troops were defending the fortifications at the Old Spanish Fort, a portion of these were transferred to Blakely when the Confederates evacuated the Old Spanish Fort.

---

[27] Official Records, op. cit., XLIX, pt. I, p. 1045.

[28] Battles and Leaders, IV, p. 411.

[29] C. C. Andrews, op. cit., p. 60.

[30] Ibid., p. 123.

Map VII.

Enlargement of the Mobile area

taken from Map No. V.

Indicates the route of the

16th Army Corps

Indicates the route of the

13th Army Corps

Indicates the route of Steele's

Forces


Stockton
DWC Dennis Saw Mills
Kennedys Mills
Seaburys Mill
MOBILE AND
21 Mile Bluff
FORT PHILIP
Malones Bridge
Hatters Mills
Hatters Ldg
Mt Minette Sta
Halls Mill
Halls Ldg
Tensas Sta
Tensas River
Alabama River
Cleveland's Ferry
Cleveland's Bridge
Kushlia
Whistler
Mobile River
Grand Bay
Wm. Wilkins
Belle Fontaine
Saul Stapleton
O'Bibley's
Blakely
Holyoke
C. Sibley's
FORT TRACY
SPANISH FORT
MOBILE
Spring Hill
Open Hilly Piney Woods
College Hill
Halls Mill
Dog River
Pine P.
Belle Rose
Ragged Pt
Monroe's Wharf
Olive's Cr.
Parents
Greenwood
Reynolds
Camps
Milesteads Bridge
Fish River Bridge
Alabama City
CATENVILLE
Williamsburg
Great Clear Pt
Baker's Bridge
Fowl River Point
Darlings Ldg
Mullet Point
Danby's Mill
Magnolia
East Branch of Fish R.
Fish River Bay
Fish River Point
Point Judith
Alabama Port
Cedar Point
Heltons
Muddy Cr.
Little Pass Margaret
Big Pass Margaret
Dauphin I.
FORT GAINES
Pelican Channel
Pelican I
Middle Channel
Little Pelican Channel
Pelican Channel
West Sand I
Sand Island Light
Little Point Clear
Pilot Town
Navy Cove
South Bank
Sweash Channel
East Banks
Reverse Pt
MOBILE BAY
LITTLE LAGOON

CHAPTER V

GENERAL CANBY AND THE OLD SPANISH FORT

The general plan for the Mobile Campaign called for a large portion of the assembled army, directly under the command of General Canby, to move northward along the eastern shore of Mobile Bay and reduce the enemy's fortifications near the mouth of the Apalachee and Tensas Rivers.[31] By the middle of March, 1865, the necessary troops and supplies had arrived in the Mobile area so that the campaign could commence.[32]

The initial movement was undertaken by the Thirteenth Army Corps, March 17th. Bertram's brigade, detached from the Second Division, left Fort Morgan early in the morning, followed by Benton's division. They marched nine miles along the peninsula before stopping for the night. The following day, good roads enabled them to travel thirteen miles, making camp near Muddy Creek, or as it was sometimes called, Bayou Portage, near Oyster Bayou. On the 19th, the dubious swampy character of the terrain was revealed. The ground fallaciously appeared to have a heavy crust, but it soon became evident that it was a mere thin crust with a wet quicksand-like substance beneath. The wheels of the first few wagons soon cut through the thin crust and the following vehicles sunk into mire up to their hubs. It became necessary to corduroy most of the road. The column moved only a few miles because of the slow work of constructing the road. Though the rear guard got

---

[31] The Apalachee River was also called Blakely River. Both names have been used on the various maps included.

[32] For the movement of the various units, see Maps V and VII, pp. 33 and 48.

only about a mile and a half, the head of the column just passed around the head of Bon Secour's Bay. On the 20th of March, this column of Bertram's brigade and Benton's division made only four miles due to a very heavy rain and the necessity of corduroying the road, which in places seemed to almost float away. Veatch's division, which was transported from Fort Gaines to Navy Cove on the 17th, had, by the 20th caught up with Benton's division north of Muddy Creek in spite of the fact that Dennis' and Slack's brigades got lost and took the wrong road once.

The morning of March 21, found the Thirteenth Army Corps still drenched in torrents of rain. Though Benton's division moved on, the wagons were unable to get out of park.

> Every team seeking an untried path soon got mired, and wagons were seen in all directions sunk down to the hubs. The poor animals, in their struggles to haul the teams, half buried themselves. In this dilemma, long ropes were made fast to the teams, and the soldiers, with cheerfulness and alacrity, hauled both animals and wagons out of the mire with a rush; and it was only their speed that saved each team from again sinking at every rod. The same laborious efforts were applied to the field artillery. The corps and division commanders were present, wading about in the mud up to their knees, and the latter himself lending a hand at the ropes. In hauling the Twenty-sixth New York battery through a bad place, where the newly-made corduroy had been washed away, the men moved some distance in mud and water waist deep.[33]

Bertram's brigade, after contributing greatly to the bridge building and corduroying, reached the banks of the north fork of Fish River on the afternoon of the same day (21st). This same afternoon, Captain J. J. Smith's company of Pontoniers, in three hours, laid a bridge some three hundred and twenty feet long across the river.

---

[33] Andrews, op. cit., p. 34.

The 22nd and 23rd of March opened with the Thirteenth Army Corps crossing the north fork of Fish River and march-into toward Danley's Mill on the east branch of Fish River. In the morning of the 24th, a bold party of Confederate Cavalry attacked the widely spread column. Though this small party captured a few Federal soldiers, they caused a much larger commotion in the Union ranks than damage. The column continued after the short delay caused by the mischievous action of the enemy's cavalry. The terrain was somewhat better, and they were able to cross the eastern branch of Fish River by nightfall.

While the Thirteenth Army Corps was moving up the eastern side of Mobile Bay, a demonstration was also being made on the western shore to create the impression that a principal movement was also being made there. Colonel J. B. Moore, with his brigade, the First of the Third Division, Sixteenth Army Corps, about seventeen hundred effective infantry plus a small artillery battery, debarked from Dauphin Island for Cedar Point. Upon arrival, they found the pier destroyed and the point defended by a small Confederate force which was promptly driven back two miles without any trouble. The following morning, the 19th of March, Moore's force moved up the shore to Alabama Point, or Port, where they met Confederate outposts consisting of two mounted companies, which fell back with slight resistance. The following morning, Colonel Moore ordered the morning calls repeated three or four times to impress the enemy with the magnitude of his forces. Moore's force advanced to Fowl River where they met some resistance, the Confederates having set the bridge on fire and taken position on the opposite side. Moore brought up what artillery he had and dispersed the enemy with little difficulty. Not having orders to continue any farther, he halted and

returned to Fort Gaines, mission accomplished; his force had been reported to the Confederates in Mobile as having consisted of four to six thousand effective troops. On March 22nd, Moore's brigade was ordered to rejoin the Sixteenth Army Corps at Fish River.[34]

The Sixteenth Army Corps was moved by naval transports from Fort Gaines to Danley's ferry landing on the north bank of the east branch of Fish River. The operation took three days, from the 20th through the 22nd of March. The Corps remained in camp at Fish River for the Thirteenth Army Corps to come up by land, and for supplies, transportation, and some of the heavy guns to come up by water. Carr's division, the first to arrive, continued with its brigade drills begun at Fort Gaines, thereby constantly improving on its discipline and efficiency. On the 23rd, the Confederates, trying to determine the strength of the Union force, felt the pickets in front of McArthur's division with the net result of four soldiers wounded, two on each side, and one Confederate soldier killed. The gun fire which occurred was more general and protracted along the line than the event justified.

It had taken a full week for General Canby to collect and concentrate his whole force. The commander moved his entire force forward on the eighth day, March 25th, with McArthur's division of the Sixteenth Army Corps at the head of the column and the Thirteenth following the first Corps. The leading division had gone but a short distance when it met a small force of Confederates. Though skirmishing continued off and on throughout the day, the column was not retarded. The Sixteenth

---

[34] Ibid.. pp. 36-37.

Army Corps camped at Deer Park, having marched twelve miles, the Thirteenth encamped nearby. Because of the harassing by the enemy all day, the commanders ordered the camp entrenched.

The next morning, March 26, Bertram's brigade marched down the left fork of the road to Montrose, and the next day moved over a hilly road to D'Olieve's creek. As they were near the vicinity of the Old Spanish Fort, they had Confederate cavalry hanging along their front all the way. General Granger, with the remainder of his Corps, took a more direct route to the area. After getting two miles from Deer Park, Veatch's division, ahead of Benton's division, turned to the left on a road running northwesterly, and struck D'Olieve's creek about a mile to the right of Bertram. Having accomplished the crossing of the creek, which had unusually steep banks, a line of battle was formed. As the Corps moved forward, skirmishing was incurred all along the front.

During the same day (26th), leaving the Old Spanish Fort three miles to its left, General A. J. Smith's Corps marched on a direct route to C. Sibley's mill. Garrard's division in the advance, met some sharp fire from enemy forces, however, no serious resistance was met until the bridge at Sibley's mill was reached. This obstacle was soon overcome, the Sixteenth Army Corps crossed and went into camp on high ground a mile north of Bayou Minette, on which the mill was situated. Smith's Corps had marched a respectable ten miles during the day.

The Confederates, at first, planned to make a stand outside their fortifications and on the 25th had occupied their proposed line of defense. The Confederate commanders learned, however, that the Garrard's Corps was not the only one in the immediate field. Fear of being outflanked by Smith's Corps, the proposed offer of battle outside

Map VIII.

Map of the Siege Operations at Spanish Fort on the Eastern side of Mobile Bay, showing the various lines of investment of the Union Army under the command of General Canby.


MINETTE BAYOU
MINETTE BAY
BLAKELY RIVER
DUCKER'S BAY
D'OLIVE'S BAY
D'OLIVE'S CREEK
LINE OF CONFEDERATE WORKS
FORT McDERMOTT
OLD SPANISH FORT
OLD FORT
FORT TRACY
FORT HUGER
BRIG. HEADQUARTERS
GEN. BENTON'S HEADQUARTERS
Boat Landing
SERIES III
PLAN No 8
SIEGE OPERATIONS
AT
SPANISH FORT,
MOBILE BAY,
by the U.S. FORCES under
MAJ. GEN. E. R. CANBY.
CAPTURED BY THE
ARMY OF WEST MISSISSIPPI,
on the night of April 8 and 9, 1865.
Major M.D. McALESTER Senior Engr. Major J.C. PALFREY Asst. Engr.
Capt. C.J. ALLEN Asst. Engr. Capt. PATTEN Inspector Genls Dept Vol Asst. Engr.
Scale of Yards
39th CONGRESS 1st Session
Report of Chief of Engineers U.S. Army
Engraved in the Engineer Dept.
Union
Confederate

the works was abandoned. A general order to fall back into their fortifications was given, leaving, however, a small portion of the force to develop the attacking army before doing so.

The line of Confederate fortifications was located on the bay seven miles due east of Mobile.[35] Set on a high, red bluff, less than two hundred yards from the bay, was an old fort built by the Spanish in the eighteenth century. This bastioned work was inside the actual Confederate line of works, but, however, it housed some of the enemy's important artillery. About four hundred yards to the southwest, guarding the Confederate right flank, was their prominent fortification, Fort McDermett.[36] Fort McDermett, armed with ten heavy guns, was situated atop the highest and most prominent bluff some hundred yards above the water. From this Fort, extending in a semicircle, was a continuous line of breastworks and redoubts. This outer line of works was upward of two miles in length, and batteries were all on high and commanding ground. The terrain had been covered with open pine timber, but in front of the outer line of works, the trees were felled for a few hundred yards. Every ravine had borne a heavy growth of hard wood, which, having been slashed, made, with the underbrush and vines, an almost impassable obstacle. The ditch in front of the breastworks was five feet deep and eight feet wide, but in front of Fort McDermett, it was deeper and wider. In front of the batteries were detached rifle-pits for sharpshooters, and all along the entire front was a line of abatis fifteen feet wide. The extreme left of the works was unfinished.

---

[35] See Maps II and VIII, pp. 16 and 55.

[36] Sometimes spelled Fort McDermott.

In the center of the line of works, was a heavily fortified area, called Red Fort. Toward the interior of this semicircle of fortifications, the surface was undulating and wooded, but no spot was so commanding as the bare crest of Fort McDermett.

At daylight, on the morning of the 27th of March, a small detachment of Confederate infantry, numbering about four hundred, attacked the front of Veatch's division. This small detachment effectively performed its delaying mission and made it possible for the entire defending army to display within their prepared positions.

Dawn on the 27th found Smith's Corps heading almost due east from C. Sibley's mill toward the Confederate fortifications, with Carr's division at the head of the column. When about a mile from these defenses, a line of battle was formed with Carr's division on the right, nearest Minette Bay, and McArthur's division forming the left flank of the Corps. Garrard's division was held in reserve. In this manner the Corps advanced, driging the Confederate skirmishers into their main works. The establishment of a battle line, about six hundred yards from the enemy's defenses, was the Corps' fine accomplishment for their hard days' work.

While the Sixteenth Army Corps was establishing its line, Granger's Corps was also engaged in the investment of the Confederate fortifications. The Thirteenth Army Corps advanced toward the enemy's defenses with Benton's division on the right, Veatch's division in the center, and Bertram's brigade on the extreme left directly facing Fort McDermett. By the evening of March 27, the investment of the fortifications was complete with Granger's Corps' line varying from eight hundred to one thousand yards distance to the enemy's works. There

was no time that evening for celebrating the admirable day's work, for as soon as darkness arrived, large details were set to work intrenching. All along the whole line, the spade, the pick, and the axe were busily employed. The Union's general investment line, extending for about three miles, was linked together by the joining of McArthur's division of the Sixteenth Army Corps with Benton's division of Granger's Corps.

The opposing armies settled down to what was to be thirteen days of siege. The garrison inside their defensive works saw that they were to be regularly besieged by a large force, but were determined to hold out as long as they could without unreasonable sacrifice, and were inspired with the pride and satisfaction of holding at bay, a powerful and finely equipped army. For the besiegers, the next thirteen days meant fighting for each foot which would bring them within assaulting distance of the strong fortifications.

As the Union line moved closer to the Confederate works, new placements for the artillery were made. The artillery fire from the assaulting army was kept up fairly constantly while that of the defending army fired only when an ideal target presented itself. The siege was also marked with constant sharpshooter fire from both sides. In the afternoon of March 30, a small force from the defending garrison successfully executed a sortie resulting in the capture of Captain R. B. Stearns, of Company K, Seventh Vermont, and twenty of his men.

Though hindered by shallow water, elaborate obstructions, and torpedoes, the Union navy played an important part in the shelling of the fortifications around the Old Spanish Fort. With their help, the assaulting army was able to construct parallels and saps to within

about one hundred yards of the enemy's defenses by April 8, though at the cost of three ships being sunk by torpedoes.

At five thirty, the afternoon of April 8, a general bombardment of the defenses of the Old Spanish Fort was commenced. General Canby's plan was to order an assault of the works the following morning. But the corps commanders had received instructions, when the investment commenced, to push forward the works as fast as consistent with due care of the men, and to take advantage of every opportunity that promised successful and decisive results, but not to attempt an assault without that assurance. General Carr, having pushed his works on the right as of the cannonading, and carry, by assault on their flank, some two hundred yards of the Confederate left, and gain a crest covered with a grove of pines. This crest, if obtained, would give a commanding position for a battery and would enable it to fire almost directly down the Confederate line of works.

About a half hour after the bombardment had commenced, Colonel James L. Geddes, commanding the third brigade of Carr's division, ordered Lieutenant Colonel William B. Bell, commander of the Eighth Iowa infantry volunteers, to advance two companies to the crest of the hill as a picket guard, and for them to intrench themselves during the night. Companies A and G were given the assignment. Even though the terrain was difficult, they advanced bravely and skillfully, but were met with sharp musketry-fire from the Texas defenders inside the works. It became evident to Colonel Bell that the two companies needed help, so he sent forward Company H to their support. A few moments after Company H left, fearing that the assaulting party, if unsupported,

would finally be driven back, in which case they would be almost annihilated, he ordered the remainder of the regiment forward, with himself leading the attack. Arriving on the ground held by the advance companies, it was found to be too hot a place to stop with safety, so he ordered and led his gallant command in a direct assault of the Confederate main works.

Upon entering the works, the Eighth Iowa met a furious resistance put up by the Texas and North Carolina troops of the defending Ector's brigade, but finally the defenders yielded, many being killed or captured. Lieutenant Colonel Bell, with his command, captured about three hundred yards of the Confederate works, three stand of colors, and three hundred and fifty prisoners. The losses of this gallant regiment were eight killed and seventeen wounded, some mortally.

It was some time after dark before any regiment came to the Eighth Iowa's support, however, the penetration was skillfully maintained with rifle-pits quickly dug perpendicular to the enemy's works. Though the Confederate defenders tried to restore their left flank, they were unable to drive the attacking force back. The Confederate officers quickly realized that it would be better to evacuate their position than have the garrison trapped and captured. By the most gallant effort of a small detachment left to hold the assaulting army at bay, most of the garrison was able to be evacuated safely to Mobile and Blakely.

At nine o'clock, the attacking forces were still held in check, but by twelve midnight, the Confederate fortifications were in the hands of the Union Army.[37]

While Canby's force was marching to, besieging, and assaulting the fortifications around the Old Spanish Fort, General Steele's force was engaged in an expedition into southeastern Alabama, the investment, and siege of the fortifications around Blakely, Alabama. It is to this expedition that the next chapters are devoted.

---

[37]The preceding account of the Union operations against the fortifications around the Old Spanish Fort was compiled from the following sources: Official Records, op. cit., Ser. I, XLIX, pt. I, Reports: No. 1, pp. 91-105, No. 4, pp. 116-138, Nos. 11-30, pp. 155-211, Nos. 36-79, pp. 220-277, No. 97, pp. 313-319; Ibid., Ser. I, XLIX, pt. II; Correspondence; pp. 5-9, 14-16, 23, 26, 33-34, 41-42, 48, 51, 55, 58-60, 66-70, 74-80, 85-90, 95-96, 103-105, 113-117, 127-128, 130, 132-133, 140, 143-148, 150-152, 158-161, 164-165, 167, 175-176, 180-184, 190-195, 207-210, 212, 222-233, 227-229, 232, 240-241, 246, 255, 265-266, 279-280, 288, 293, and 294; Andrews, op. cit., pp. 33-94 and 130-162; Battles and Leaders, op. cit., IV, p. 411.

CHAPTER VI

GENERAL STEELE'S COLUMN FROM PENSACOLA

Major General Frederick Steele arrived at Barrancas, Florida, on the 28th of February, and assumed command of the troops operating from Pensacola Bay. Steele at once, in person, began a thorough inspection of his troops, taking one regiment at a time, and going through it, examining the arms, accoutrements, and clothing of each soldier. He found his troops in excellent condition and of fine quality. Directly responsible for these well disciplined and trained troops were their commanders, which were of the highest calibre. The following General Order, more properly described as a "pep talk" for soldiership, by Brigadier General C. C. Andrews, commanding the Second and Third Brigades, Second Division, Thirteenth Army Corps, exemplifies this superior quality of leadership.

GENERAL ORDERS,
No. 3

SECOND DIV., 13th ARMY CORPS,
Barrancas, Fla., March 9, 1865

The general commanding cannot omit to express to the troops that their exemplary soldiership has already won his admiration. Such troops cannot be contented with common success. They will seek rather to illustrate all that it is possible for gallant men to achieve. In this stage of the war the blows we strike should be decisive blows. We should not be too confident---certainly not boastful; but we ought to nourish in our inmost hearts a determination to make every exertion and sacrifice rather than fail. Heroes from Shiloh and Vicksburg, noble-hearted representatives of the youth and manhood of States pre-eminent for spirit and culture, why should you not surpass any of the exploits of history? Great success can be obtained only by great exertions. Success is in proportion to preparations and exertions. If the path to victory were easy, all would be willing to travel it, and success would be cheap. But it is a difficult and perilous path. The heroic and constant only can keep it. To them belongs the glory. To be ever ready for the worst; never to be surprised, but rather to surprise and astound the surpriser; to be quick when rapidity is required; to be confirmed in those golden military principles---punctuality, and unhesitating obedience; in a word, to have been

> faithful in attending to those simple requirements which constitute preparation---it is this which makes valor availing; this that insures substantial triumph. Be it the supreme object of this division, wheresoever it moves, whatsoever it confronts, to accomplish whatever is required of it. Let it be its next object to leave behind in its path the fewest possible of its numbers. Whether we are good soldiers, whether we have good discipline, will be seen in the number of men present for duty at the end of a campaign. For in war the greatest losses are not in battle.
>
> By order of Brig. Gen. C. C. Andrews:
>
> GEORGE MONROE
> Assistant Adjutant-General[38]

On the 10th of March, Andrews' Second Division received orders to move to Pensacola, and repair the wharf. This was not only in order that the place could be available as a depot and base, if subsequent operations should require it, but also the wharf was needed immediately for the cavalry being transported from New Orleans to land.

In compliance with a circular issued the previous day, 5:30 A.M., March 11, found Andrews' division on the march with the Second Brigade, Colonel William T. Spicely, commanding, in the advance, with the artillery directly following. Colonel Frederick W. Moore's Brigade brought up the rear. The distance around the head of the bayou to Pensacola from Barrancas is thirteen miles, the road sandy and very heavy. It was the same road over which General Andrew Jackson marched in his invasion of Florida, early in 1818 with his army of three thousand men and two pieces of artillery. The condition of part of the road had changed, for some of the road was under water making it necessary to construct a few small bridges. Andrews' division reached its destination in mid-afternoon and camp was made shortly thereafter.

---

[38] Official Records, op. cit., Ser. I, XLIX, pt. I, p. 879.

The next day being Sunday, the repairs of the wharf were not fully commenced. The repairs that were to be made consisted chiefly of driving piles and making a new wharf to fill up two gaps, each about three hundred feet in length in the central or main wharf. It took six days, including one day in which work was halted by a storm, to complete the work assigned. The work completed included making the wharf serviceable and strong, constructing eight hundred yards of railroad, making a platform car, and putting the latter in running order.

> Pensacola at that time was indeed remarkable for its ruined and lonely condition. It appeared once to have contained five thousand inhabitants; but it did not even have a hundred. It had been raided upon by troops on both sides. Apparently the best part of the town had been swept away by fire. Amid the ruins, the shrubbery, and here and there delicate flowers, recalled a period of taste, if not affluence. But now there was not a dozen sound buildings in the town, and not a single shop doing business.[39]

Not knowing how long they would remain, the troops handsomely policed their camp and parade grounds, and built quarters, using what they could find in the ruined buildings for materials.

Information concerning the movement of Andrews' division reached General Maury's headquarters March 12. The number of troops under Andrews was, however, estimated about four times its actual strength.

On the 19th of March, General Steele, with an infantry division under the command of Brigadier General John P. Hawkins and a cavalry brigade commanded by Brigadier General Thomas J. Lucas, moved to Pensacola. The same day, Lieutenant Colonel Andrew B. Spurling, with

---

[39]Andrews, op. cit., p. 97.

eight hundred cavalry, embarked on transports to the east shore of the Blackwater River, and thence moved to strike the railroad above Pollard, Alabama.

Before the campaign commenced, Steele issued the following order concerning the conduct of the troops under his command.

GENERAL ORDERS
No. 1

HEADQUARTERS U.S. FORCES
OPERATING FROM PENSACOLA BAY
Barrancas, Fla., March 19, 1865

The following will be observed during the campaign upon which this command is about to enter:

1. The order of march and the time for starting will be habitually announced from these headquarters the evening previous.

2. Orderly call will be sounded on the bugle one hour before sunset (or immediately after the troops get into camp), at which time a staff officer from each infantry division and cavalry brigade will repair to headquarters to receive the orders.

3. Division trains will follow their respective divisions. The train of general headquarters, followed by the cavalry train, will move at the head of the train of the leading division.

4. No straggling will be allowed on the march. Marauders, plunderers, and incendiaries will be severely punished.

5. Foraging parties will be organized under orders of division commanders for infantry, and brigade commanders for cavalry. No independent foraging will be permitted either on the march or while the troops are in camp. All captured animals will be turned into the quartermaster's department for issue or appraisal.

6. The discharge of fire-arms, except by order or in the line of duty, is strictly prohibited.

> 7. It shall be the duty of all commissioned officers to check any violation of paragraphs 4, 5, and 6, of this order that may come under his observation, to arrest the offender and turn him over to the provost-marshal with a full statement of the case. Provost-marshals will report all such cases to their respective headquarters in the form of charges against the offender.
>
> By order of Maj. Gen. F. Steele:
>
> JOHN F. LACEY
> Captain and Assistant Adjutant General[40]

On March 20, 1865, Steele's command moved out from Pensacola, Florida, on the road to Pollard, Alabama. The troops were issued ten days' rations, five carried by the men and five in the wagons. There were approximately two hundred and seventy wagons in the whole column. Each division was in charge of its own train.[41]

> The cavalry always takes the lead, and if there is any enemy in the rear, also the rear is protected by them. With two or more divisions of infantry, the advance division today takes the rear tomorrow. The same routine is followed with the brigades and regiments, the advance brigade takes the rear of its division, and the regiment of its brigade. The last brigade is usually guarding the division train with one regiment just in the advance, one behind, and the others as flankers, or if not practicable to travel beside the wagons, each regiment is assigned to so many wagons and marches between them.[42]

Andrew's division had the advance, and started at daylight. It was followed by Hawkins' division of colored troops. The Cavalry Brigade (except the Second Illinois, which was detached to Spurling's command) left Pensacola at three in the afternoon and bivouacked at ten P.M., four miles out, the road having been badly cut up by the

---

[40] Official Records. op. cit.. Ser. I, XLIX, pt. 2, pp. 32-33.

[41] The following excerpt from one of Carlos W. Colby's letters tells the manner in which Steele's column marched.

[42] Carlos W. Colby to his sister, [In the field near Blakely], Sunday noon [April 9, 1865], manuscript, possession of author. See Appendix I, No. 6, pp. 154-162.

infantry. The forward division, halting ten minutes every hour, moved along pleasantly. They went into camp by noon, at Twelve-mile house, in a pine forest where the ground sloped a few hundred yards down to a clear stream. A few wagons of the train had sunk in the sand to their hubs, in a few places, and these were not up with the rest of the troops until after dark.[43]

> Our regiment was on train guard, which consists of one hundred and fifty wagons. The country is low, flat and sandy, and the wagons would mire down so that we had to put our shoulders to the wheels frequently to help them out. After making eleven miles, we were tired enough to go into camp.[44] On our first day's march, our division train broke thirteen wagon tongues and two wheels.[45]

The division of colored troops went into camp not far from the Second Division just before dark. After midnight, a heavy rain commenced to fall, and continued to come down in a steady stream until ten the next morning. This was the same storm which impeded Canby's column marching up the eastern shore of the Bay to Fish River. The ground was so flooded, in some places, that many of the troops were driven from their slumber in search of higher ground before morning.

Dawn on the morning of the 21st found Spicely's Brigade, of the Second Division, moved out of camp, and pursued the march. Moore's Brigade remained to take charge of the division train. As soon as it was light enough, the artillery and the wagons attempted to get out of

---

[43]The portions of Carlos W. Colby's letters cited concerning activities from March 20 to April 9 are taken from two letters partially written in a diary form.

[44]Carlos W. Colby, op. cit., April 9. See Appendix, Letter No. 6, pp. 154-162.

[45]Carlos W. Colby to his sister, Sixteen miles from Sea, Sixteen from Land on the Pensacola and Montgomery R. R., March 22, 1865, manuscript, possession of author. See Appendix, Letter No. 5, pp. 151-153.

park and move on. A most discouraging and dismal prospect appeared, the ground seemed to be a mere crust which the falling torrents had softened and dissolved, many of the wagons and artillery carriages had actually sunk down to the hubs in the very tracks where they had stood. In the midst of large trees, where the ground was covered with grass giving every indication of its being firm and solid, the wheels would sink down, and the mules, in their struggles to draw, would themselves plunge into the quicksand beneath, and required assistance to get out. The wagons would be unloaded and, after moving a little way and getting upon what seemed firm ground, would be reloaded, only to get bogged down again. Many times the soldiers bent their shoulders to ropes in order to pull the loaded wagons along over the worst places. Many of these worst places were corduroyed by the pioneers with the help of details from the various brigades. Andrews' division marched only three miles, and camped near the Fifteen-mile house. Spicely's Brigade went into camp in a downpour of rain at eight in the morning. Moore's Brigade and most of the train were up by dark. The cavalry brigade, which started at noon, bivouacked near the Second Division just before the day's light failed.

> 21st, was again on the road by daylight, our regiment was the second in line. Marched five or six miles through a drenching rain and went into camp at 8 A.M. As there had been a heavy fall of rain all night, it was utterly impossible for the wagons to get through. The country is a little more rolling, but a treacherous quicksand lies under the sod.[46]

The next day, Andrews' division remained in camp, however, part of Spicely's brigade was assigned to the task of improving the road

---

[46] Carlos W. Colby, op. cit., March 22 and April 9. See Appendix, pp. 151 and 157.

four miles to the front. Shortly before noon, Hawkins' division reached Fifteen-mile hours, and camped in front of the Second Division. The cavalry arrived late in the afternoon and part of the brigade took its place at the head of the column.

> The heading of this letter, Sixteen Miles from Sea, and Sixteen from Land, On the Pensacola and Montgomery R. R., March 22nd, 1865, gives you as good a description of this country as I can give. Although I suppose it must be called land, for it belongs to the U. S., unentered, for no one ever thought enough of it to enter it, and who blames anybody? I don't. A few squatters' houses have been built along the road, but are now deserted. I have not seen a living pig, cow, or dog since leaving Pensacola, and they say that we are only half way through the Florida flats. Today we are waiting for the Colored Division to pass. This is a most delightful day, cool and pleasant.[47]

The Confederates were trying every means in order to ascertain the number and purpose of Steele's forces. From scouting reports, Colonel C. G. Armistead, Confederate Commander of the outpost at Canoe Station, about fifteen miles west of Pollard on the Mobile and Great Northern Railroad, estimated Steele's column as consisting of about forty thousand troops.[48] A dispatch the following day confirmed the existence of Steele's force, but estimated it to be ten thousand less in strength.[49]

The Union column, having been delayed by the heavy rains, resumed their march on Thursday, March 23. The cavalry took the advance followed by the division of colored troops. The Second Division, upon leaving camp about ten in the morning, found the road so badly cut up by the trains in the advance, that it was necessary for Spicely's

---

[47] Carlos W. Colby, op. cit., March 22, 1865. See Appendix I, pp. 151-153.

[48] Official Records, op. cit.. Ser. I, XLIX, pt. 1, p. 1138.

[49] Ibid., pp. 1141-1142.

brigade, which was in charge of the division train, to corduroy much of the ten miles to Pine Barren creek. Throughout the day, a small detachment of Confederate cavalry endeavored to delay the column, but had little success.

About a mile from Pine Barren creek, there is a gradual descent to that stream of about three hundred feet with a few small intervening hills, however, the last descent to the creek is quite steep. The road is lined on both sides with an open pine forest. Upon reaching the bank of the stream, it was found that the Confederates had destroyed the bridge. The creek was unfordable for it was about ten feet deep, its banks widely overflowing, and the current was flowing violently. Two companies of the Thirty-first Massachusetts Cavalry crossed the stream, dismounted, and after exchanging a few shots with the Confederate picket, drove it away and remained themselves on picket duty. Captain E. H. Newton, assistant engineer on General Steele's staff, with the help of large details from the infantry, commenced the construction of a bridge across Pine Barren creek.

The following two orders issued by General Canby concerning his whole command are enlightening, in the first instant, as to how, where, and when a grand guard is established, and in the second instant, the rules to be observed when foraging for resources in enemy territory.

SPECIAL
FIELD ORDERS,
No. 16

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AND DIVISION
OF WEST MISSISSIPPI
Dannelly' Mills, on Fish River,
Ala., March 23, 1865.

10. The following rules for establishing the grand guards will be strictly adhered to: The general outline of the line of guards will be indicated by an officer of the corps staff, and to each division will be assigned a portion of it in its front, or front and flanks. These lines must be far enough in advance of

the camps to give not only timely warning of any approach of the enemy, but also to insure ample time to the troops in camp to fall in and form before the enemy can be upon them. The guards must be of sufficient strength to cover the whole front of the camps, and the width of a division deployed in line, or both wings beyond the front (if natural obstacles do not render such precautionary extension unnecessary), and to repel small parties of the enemy which may intend to feel along the picket-line to harass our troops. For these purposes the grand guards will be formed in three lines, viz.: First, the line of outposts (sentries); second, the line of guards (pickets); third, the line of reserves. The first line must cover the whole front in one continuous chain, if possible, so that every portion of the entire front would be under complete control. The position of the second line must be carefully selected with a view to defense. Parties sent out by the enemy to reconnoiter or alarm the camps ought to be checked here. The third line (reserves) will be placed between the second line and the camps at such points as will enable them to easily communicate with and re-enforce the more advanced lines. The commander of the grand guard should be habitually with the reserves and act as emergencies may demand. The line of guards (No. 2) must be thrown out at least a mile from the camps, if natural objects do not render it unnecessary or impossible, and the line of outposts (No. 1) half a mile beyond the guards. While the line of outposts must be continuous, the position of the inner lines (Nos. 2 and 3) ought to be in easy supporting distance with each other, and every officer and man should be acquainted with the relative position of the guards to their right and left and in front. A system of patrols toward and along the front of the first line and along the inner lines must be established; also patrols in the direction of the enemy should be sent out whenever the situation of things admits of them. At or shortly before sunrise is the most suitable time for the last-mentioned patrols. The position of the first and second lines should be regularly changed before night-fall. The most complete connection of the three lines through all the divisions of the army is imperative, and the several division picket officers will for that purpose confer with each other when establishing or correcting their lines. When the troops camp in more than one line those in the first line will cover the front, and those in rear the flanks and rear, where such precautions are demanded. Anything of importance which may occur at the front must be communicated to these headquarters with as little delay as possible. Refugees and deserters coming into the lines who may be able to give any information of importance will be sent in person to these headquarters under proper guard.

By order of Maj. Gen. E. R. S. Canby:

C. T. CHRISTENSEN,
Lieutenant-Colonel and Assistant Adjutant-General[50]

---

[50] Official Records. op. cit.. Ser. I, XLIX, pt. 2, pp. 68-69.

GENERAL
FIELD ORDERS,
No. 8

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AND DIVISION OF
WEST MISSISSIPPI,
March 23, 1865

Whenever it shall be deemed necessary for the troops of this command to subsist wholly or in part upon the resources through which the army marches, the following rules will be strictly observed: The collection of such supplies will be made by regularly detailed parties from each regiment or battery. The respective commanders will select from 6 to 10 per cent of their effective strength as foragers, and will give them in charge of one or more commissioned officers, at the rate of one officer to every thirty or thirty-five men. These officers must be held strictly responsible for the behavior of their parties. Great care should therefore be taken in the selection of officers and men. The officers should not only be energetic and zealous, but also discreet and strict disciplinarians, as it is left to their judgment when, where, and what supplies should be seized. Only the real wants of the troops are to be considered, and all wanton and reckless acts must be suppressed with vigor. The collections ought to be made from the greatest possible number of plantations, in order to divide and thus alleviate the heavy burden on the country. The premises of poor and destitute people must not be interfered with. No foraging parties will be allowed, except on the special written authority of a division or a superior commander, to enter dwelling houses, kitchens &c., nor to disturb the people in the possession of their furniture or supplies necessary for their immediate wants. Horses, mules, and wagons will only be taken by special authority from the proper officers. All articules collected will be brought to the roadside and loaded on the wagons selected for that purpose from the division trains. On arrival in camp the proper officers of the supply departments will distribute the stores. No receipt will be given for any article seized. The land to the right and left of the marching column will be the legitimate field of operations of these forage parties, and the officers in charge must, whenever they are compelled to go beyond the regular flank detachments, secure their men again surprise and capture. The foragers of the leading divisions will under no circumstances go in advance of the advance guard. Parties sent to collect grain and fodder for the animals will be accompanied by a sufficient guard in case it is impracticable for them to operate in connection with the ordinary subsistence foraging parties. Small foraging parties must be avoided. The details should be made by division, preferably, and at least by brigade. Every forage train will be accompanied by an officer of the quartermaster's department, who will also superintend the equitable distribution of the articles collected.

By order of Maj. Gen. E. R. S. Canby:

C. T. CHRISTENSEN
Lieutenant Colonel and Assistant Adjutant-General[51]

---

[51] Ibid., Ser. I, XLIX, pt. 2, pp. 67-68.

Note the concern of the commander for the private property of those living in the area, not only by the strictness of what should be taken but also by the attention given to the personnel of the foraging party. The significance of these two important elements of war is easily seen as Steele's column progresses.

As to the work on the bridge over Pine Barren creek continued throughout the afternoon of the 23rd of March, all the troops arrived in the area before supper time, camping on both sides of the road. In compliance with orders, the buglers sounded the evening calls twice to give the Confederates an exaggerated impression of the number in the column.

> 23rd. We took up our line of march at 10½ A.M. Our regiment was just in the advance of the train. We marched ten miles and had to make several stops to corduroy the road. The country is more hilly with occasional signs of civilization. The change in the scenery from barren pines to the more enlivening foliages of the oak, ash, and the blossoms of the peach, plum, cherry, red bud, and dogwood is an agreeable one. One great blessing we have is good water and plenty of it. We arrived in camp by dark.[52]

March 24 opened with pleasant weather again. The morning and early afternoon were spent working on the bridge, which was completed about three P.M., its length about three hundred feet. The cavalry was the first to traverse the creek on the new bridge. They were followed by their wagon train which moved tardily for there was a steep hill that ended at the creek bank. The road had been badly washed, making it difficult to hold the wagons back. To add to the difficulty, there was the danger of striking against the trees which lined the road on both sides. With this entanglement of difficulties, the

---

[52]Carlos W. Colby, op. cit., April 9. See Appendix, p. 158.

cavalry's train did not reach the far shore until almost dark. The Second Division, however, crossed and made camp a few hundred yards from the stream. Though the bridge spanned from bank to bank of the creek, the overflow flooded the south bank for one hundred feet or more.

> 24th. Laid in camp until about 5 P.M. when we moved our camp across Pine Barren creek. Although the deepest of it has been pontooned yet we had to wade through water nearly waist deep. Occupied myself this morning in washing myself and clothes. Bill Perrin has just come in with a splendid bouquet of flowers, wish I had an opportunity of sending you one. All the kinds I know, are the dogwood blossom, red bud, and violets.[53]

Steele's column moved out cautiously on the morning of the 25th, at daylight, with expectations of a fight. The scouting reports the previous evening revealed two brigades of Confederates with artillery were intrenched on a creek a few miles ahead. The report was made even more probable by the continual picket firing the night before.

Lucas' cavalry troops encountered slight resistance when about three miles out. At nine o'clock, they reached Michell's creek and found the opposite bank entrenched by about four hundred Confederate cavalry troops. The bridge crossing the stream had been partially destroyed. The banks of the creek, however, were not steep and both sides were densely skirted with shrubbery giving protective cover to both the assaulting and the defensive forces. After a short, fierce contest, the Confederates were dislodged from their position and made an orderly retreat to the northern bank of Canoe creek. After repairing the bridge, Lucas' cavalry crossed over the stream and moved forward to encounter the enemy again where they had taken up a defensive position at Canoe creek. Again the Federal cavalrymen pressed the

---

[53]Carlos W. Colby, op. cit., March 22 and April 9. See Appendix, pp. 152 and 158.

enemy with so much vigor and gallantry that the Confederates were unable to hold the attacking force at bay for long. From here, the Confederates fell back to Pringle's creek, a distance of about four miles.

Pringle's creek was a shallow stream, and like Michell's creek was skirted with shrubbery. Covered with a characteristic growth of pines, the north bank rose gradually for about fifty feet to a crest. On the brow of this crest was a high fence of split rails and a few hard-wood trees with heavy foliage. The road, after crossing the ford, bore around to the right and was much obscured by the trees as it gradually ascended the hill.

Upon arriving at Pringle's creek, part of the Confederate force, most of the cavalry, turned toward Williams' station on the Mobile and Great Northern Railroad. Remaining at the creek was Brigadier General James H. Clanton's brigade consisting of two Alabama cavalry brigades, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Washington T. Lary and Lieutenant Colonel Thomas L. Faulkner. Their force did not exceed five hundred men. Assigned also to Clanton's brigade were two pieces of artillery and one hundred infantry reserves, the latter, however, stayed on the north side of the Escambia River. As General Clanton had not arrived, his brigade was under the command of Colonel Lary. The latter made a breastwork of the fence rails on the rise north of Pringle's creek, and behind it again formed his men to meet the advancing Federal troops.

> A sharp engagement ensued as soon as Lucas' advance came up. The Confederates were driven back two hundred yards in ten minutes, and were still falling back as Gen. Clanton galloped up and ordered a halt. At this Col. Leary /Lary/ seemed surprised, and told Clanton they were being flanked. Clanton replied: "But we

> must fall back in order." The latter then commanded his forces to dress up on the colors. His brave color-bearer, young Maynor, held the colors high, and repeated the command, "Dress up on the colors." Fifteen minutes afterward, Clanton fell severely, and it was then thought mortally, wounded. Immediately the buglers of the First Louisiana sounded the call for the charge, and that regiment mounted and led by its commander, Lieut-Col. A. S. Badger, dashed forward in line of battle, in a gallant, impetuous manner, and with a wild and thrilling cheer. They were met by a volley; and though some of their number fell the fury of the charge was not checked; and in a few moments they had swept over and captured the main part of the Confederate force. The prisoners consisted of Gen. Clanton, ten other officers, and one hundred and twenty enlisted men.[54] The killed and wounded numbered about a dozen. The loss of the First Louisiana was two killed. . . .and eight wounded. In this action the Second New York attacked the Confederates on their flank. . . . . The two pieces of artillery and reserves from the north bank of that river /Escambia/ produced an effect greater than their force justified; such is the moral power of artillery. They were replied to by four pieces of the Second Massachusetts, ...and in an hour compelled to retire.[55]

The Confederate troops not captured in the assault or the pursuit which followed, escaped across the Escambia river or in the swamps.

Shortly before the cavalry's engagement of the enemy, Spicely's brigade of Andrews' division had gone into camp, about one o'clock in the afternoon, just north of Canoe creek. The brigade had been stopped only a short while, when orders were received from General Steele for the brigade, with some artillery, to advance to support Lucas' cavalry. Making a forced march, the brigade arrived at the Escambia River about four P.M., marching seventeen miles in about three hours. The Confederates, having destroyed the road bridge across the river and because it was greatly overflowing its banks, other means of crossing

---

[54]General Lucas' official correspondence lists the captured as, ". . . .General Canton, who was severely wounded, 18 other officers, and 101 enlisted men. . . ." (Official Records, Ser. I, XLIX, pt. 2, p. 119).

[55]Andrews, op. cit., pp. 109-110.

had to be found. Details from Spicely's brigade immediately set to work constructing a foot bridge on the railroad trestle which crossed the river a few rods below the destroyed bridge.

As the road had required a considerable amount of labor in order to bring the train along, the remainder of the column that day, got only a short distance past Michell's creek.

> 25th. Was on the road by a little after daylight. Marched twenty miles and went into camp near Escambia river a little before dark. We went into camp by 1 P.M., but had hardly got our knapsacks off, when the order came to fall in as we were wanted to the front. By a flank movement our Colonel got the 97th in the advance and for six miles we had a forced march, making one halt of about five minutes. The cavalry was fighting ahead, but we could not get up to them in time to be of any assistance. They had done some good fighting, capturing 1 General, 1 Colonel, 1 Major and 150 men. The area showed signs of hard fighting and a hasty retreat on the part of the Rebs, it being strewn with knapsacks, guns, and any and everything that would impede their flight.[56]

Complying with General Steele's order, Spicely's brigade of the Second Division, marched for Pollard, Alabama, at daylight, the 26th of March. Crossing over on the foot bridge, the brigade set out for their destination. The road showed tracks of the artillery used by the enemy the previous day. These signs, and not having certain knowledge of what force might be in Pollard, caused the commanders to take the necessary precautions and preparations to meet the possible resistance. But no armed resistance was found, and the village was peaceably taken. Pollard was a small village containing, perhaps, twenty crude and scattered dwellings. Two or three empty wooden storehouses, used by the Confederate army for storage, were the only property burned by

---

[56] Carlos W. Colby, op. cit., April 9. See Appendix, pp. 158-159.

the Federal troops. The tearing up of about one thousand yards of railroad track, the bridges being left intact, was the only other property destroyed. Lucas' cavalry arrived at Pollard as the infantry was returning to their camp south of the Escambia river.

> 26th. The infantry of the 2nd Brigade crossed the river as soon as they could see, and made a forced march to Pollard, a little town at the junction of the Montgomery and Mobile with the Alabama and Florida R. R. /Mobile and Great Northern Railroad with the Alabama and Florida Railroad/ where we had heard there was a small rebel force. By some means, our Colonel always succeeds in getting the 97th in the advance when there is a prospect of a fight. The town was surrounded and the whole force advanced on it at once, but there was nary a Reb there, hearing of our advance, they had skedaddled. After destroying the R. R. track for some distance and burning several public buildings, we returned to our division.
>
> In the Rebels' retreat, they had destroyed the main road bridge over the river /Escambia/, so that we had to cross on the stringers of the railroad bridge and only footmen could pass.
>
> One peculiarity of this country is that the ground is more solid in the bottoms than on the tops of the hills. After rising to an elevation of a hundred feet, water can be found within two or three feet of the surface, and in many places flows over the top of the ground.[57]

While General Steele's column was moving almost due north toward Pollard, Lieutenant Colonel A. B. Spurling, commanding a cavalry force of about eight hundred, was also traveling northward some twenty miles east of the main column. Spurling's force was landed on the morning of March 19, opposite Milton, Florida, on the East Bay near the east branch of the Blackwater river. From here, the mounted troops headed for the railroad at Evergreen, Alabama, via Andalusia, Alabama, passing near Lewis Station. The march to Andalusia was marked by frequent encountering of enemy scouts, of which, most were captured. The cavalry force camped the evening of the 23rd of March west of Andalusia, a few miles

---

[57] Ibid., p. 158.

east of Evergreen. This proved to be an eventful night, for Colonel Spurling, himself, while scouting ahead, captured two scouts and one of General Clanton's staff officers. The next two days also were eventful ones. After cutting the railroad several miles north of Evergreen, Spurling's force captured and destroyed two trains, one loaded with Confederate troops and the other with valuable stock. Heading southward, the Federal troops severed the enemy's communication lines at Sparta and destroyed the Confederate army's supplies stored there. Spurling's troops rejoined the column on the 26th of March, their mission well executed, completed, and accomplished without the loss of a single man.

The same evening of Spurling's return, Steele called together his division commanders and notified them that the column would turn the next morning to join General Canby. As rations were running low, the country too destitute for requisitioning food, and the extra mouths of the prisoners to feed, all men of the column were put on half rations.

Early on the morning of the 27th, the column turned and marched westerly, toward Canoe Station, on the Mobile and Great Northern Railroad. The cavalry moved out first, followed by Hawkins' division of colored troops. The going was slow as the first few miles had to be corduroyed, thereby delaying the Second Division's start until noon.

The distance to Canoe Station along the route the column took was around thirteen miles. After passing the bad road near the Escambia River, the country became more hilly and transit of the wagons would have been less difficult, but rain commenced to fall soon after noon, seeming to dissolve the earth's surface. Notwithstanding the

Herculean task of corduroying the road and getting the wagons through, all of the column reached Canoe Station except Spicely's brigade, which had charge of the Second Division's train. They bivouacked about four miles from the main body of the column late in the evening.

> 27th. We have now changed our direction and are marching towards Blakely. Our regiment is train guard. It rained all day and did not get into camp until near midnight, and then only made twelve miles. We are now reduced to half rations, considerable being thrown away from the wagons that broke down, the slowness of our movements, and prisoners being fed make it necessary to economize.[58]

The rain had stopped by the next morning. Andrews' division worked from dawn until eleven in the morning corduroying the road to Canoe Station in order to get their train and artillery up. The rest of Steele's force had moved on.

> The Second division train was all up to Canoe station by one o'clock. A rest was then taken of two hours. . . . At three P.M., the march was resumed in a northwesterly direction. The troops moved out in good spirits and handsome style, the music playing.[59]

Andrews' division marched five miles before dusk and went into camp five miles behind the cavalry and Hawkins' division.

> 28th. The 97th was in the advance of the division. Marched twelve miles and went into camp early.[60]

The march was resumed at daylight, the 29th of March, by the Second Division, but the roads were bad, and again had to be corduroyed much of the way throughout the day. Rain commenced again about three in the afternoon to add misery once more to the troops. The

---

[58] Ibid., pp. 159-160.

[59] Andrews, op. cit., p. 116.

[60] Carlos W. Colby, op. cit., April 9. See Appendix I, p. 160.

infantry, Hawkins' and Andrews' bivouacked near the Perdido River.[61] The cavalry went ahead to Weatherford's plantation a few miles to the north.

> 29th. Marched ten miles, was rear guard to the train, passed through one swamp that had to be corduroyed for three miles. During the day over five miles of corduroy had to be made. It commenced raining at noon and at night it fell in torrents completely flooding the camp. Nelson Goodwin of Company G died from the effects of an accidental wound received yesterday from the falling of a tree.[62]

> The morning of the 30th was raw and windy, and the soldiers were seen in thick circles around the camp-fires. The colored division moved out first, and was followed by the Second at nine o'clock. The Perdido, where forded, was two feet deep, and some trees were felled on which the soldiers crossed. To get the artillery along, the Second Division made two miles of corduroy, and made it promptly. Considerable work had to be done also on the road near McGills.[63]

Andrews' division marched two miles southwest of McGill's before stopping for the night, the rest of the column was a few miles farther down the road. Towards evening, a foraging party from Lucas' division returned from their expedition, near Montgomery Hill west of Weatherford, with some beef and sheep which was distributed among the troops. Though the supply was limited, it was badly needed, as the troops had been

---

[61] General Andrews, in both his Official Report and his book speaks of camping near "Perdido." The author has therefore assumed this to be the headwaters of the Perdido River. This would mean that the Infantry did not go to Weatherford, (according to and as indicated on Map 5) but instead turned west when about half way between Canoe Station and Weatherford, about due east of McGill's. The statement by Andrews that, "The Perdido, when forded, was two feet deep, . . ." seems to indicate that such a movement was made. General Hawkins' reports in the Official Records do not cover the column's march to Blakely. Nowhere, to this author's knowledge, is this movement of the infantry explicitly stated.

[62] Carlos W. Colby, op. cit., April 9. See Appendix I, p. 160.

[63] Andrews, op. cit., p. 117.

laboring and facing hardships of the march on one-third rations. Supplying the troops with food had become a serious problem. "We had succeeded in communicating with the major-general commanding, and here received orders to proceed to Holyoke, but want of forage and rations compelled us to turn toward Stockton, . . ."[64]

> March 30th. Marched about nine miles, nearly all the way through swamps, consequently most of the road had to be corduroyed. Have worked harder and feel more tired than any night of the march. Are now reduced to one-third rations and with what we can forage from the country, which is precious little for it is nearly all a barren wilderness.[65]

At dawn the following day, the Second Division resumed the march, found the roads good for a change, and made Stockton, nineteen miles, by two in the afternoon. The country near Stockton, Alabama, was more settled and fertile. The ration question was much brighter as foraging parties were sent out in the afternoon and the next morning. A considerable amount of corn and fresh meat were found at neighboring plantations.

> 31st. Marched eighteen and a half miles over a rough broken country. It is a little more inhabited, so that our mess succeeded in getting some corn and a turkey for supper. At night we encamped on the grounds of a beautiful plantation near Stockton. The woman of the house was very bitter in her denunciation against the Yanks which caused a guard to be placed over the house to keep the boys from burning it. But it was of no use, for we had not got out of sight in the morning before it was in flames.[66]

The march was resumed before noon on the first day of April. The cavalry lead the way followed by Hawkins' division of colored troops Andrews' division taking the rear. The road south from Stockton was

---

[64] Official Records. op. cit., Ser. I, XLIX, pt. I, p. 281, General Steele's Official Report.

[65] Carlos W. Colby, op. cit., April 9. See Appendix, p. 160.

[66] Loc. cit.

good and the troops had little difficulty keeping the wagon trains up with the rest of the column. The cavalry and Hawkins' division began setting up camp near Tensas Station. Colonel Spurling's brigade of cavalry had been sent on ahead to ascertain the best route to Holyoke and to communicate with Canby's headquarters in regard to the movements of the Column from Pensacola. About four and a half miles from Blakely and one mile from where the road forks toward Holyoke, near Wilkins' plantation, Spurling found the road barracaded, and a strong picket or outpost composed of cavalry and infantry guarding it. The Second brigade of Lucas' cavalry division gallantly charged the outpost, capturing seventy-four of the enemy and forcing the rest back toward their works at Blakely.

Hearing of Spurling's fight, the remainder of Lucas' cavalry and the division of colored troops hurried to his support. By nightfall, these two divisions had pushed the Confederates to within two miles of their works at Blakely, Hawkins' infantry having marched almost twenty miles that day. Andrews' division, being in the rear, was unable to get beyond Tensas Station.

> April 1st. Made ten miles, some skirmishing along toward night by the cavalry and Negro troops. Do not feel very well as I have caught a severe cold and it has settled in my bones.[67]

Back on the last day of March, General Canby had ordered Veatch's division, escorted by the Fourth Tennessee cavalry regiment, from the assault of the Old Spanish Fort to Holyoke with supplies for Steele's

---

[67] Ibid., p. 161.

force. The troops of the Column from Pensacola received these supplies they needed for the next eight-day siege and assault of the Confederate works around Blakely, the second day of April.[68]

---

[68]For the preceding chapter, the following sources were consulted. Particularly helpful were the Official Reports and Chapters XIII and XVI in Andrews' book. Official Records, op. cit., Ser. I, XLIX, pt. 1, Reports: No. 1, pp. 91-100; No. 4, pp. 119-123 and 135-138; No. 27, pp. 200-206; Nos. 30-34, pp. 209-216; Nos. 79-90, pp. 279-299; Nos. 92-95, pp. 302-313. Correspondence: Union; p. 879, pp. 879-880, p. 881, p. 886, pp. 887-888, p. 888, pp. 896-897, p. 915, pp. 915-916, pp. 924-927; Confederate; pp. 1045-1048, p. 1050, p. 1052, p. 1053, p. 1054, p. 1056. Official Records, op. cit., Ser. I, XLIX, pt. 2. Correspondence: Union pp. 7-8, pp. 23-24, p. 25, p. 27, p. 33, p. 41, p. 42, pp. 67-68, pp. 68-69, p. 70, p. 89, pp. 90-91, pp. 96-97, p. 117, pp. 117-118, p. 118, p. 119, pp. 119-120, p. 133, p. 147, p. 151, pp. 151-152, p. 164, p. 167, p. 181, pp. 181-182; Confederate; p. 1137, p. 1138, p. 1149, p. 1152, p. 1154, p. 1154, p. 1156, p. 1158, p. 1159, p. 1160, p. 1161, p. 1167, p. 1168, p. 1169, p. 1172, p. 1173, p. 1174, p. 1176, p. 1178, p. 1179, p. 1181, p. 1183, p. 1188, p. 1190. Andrews, op. cit., pp. 95-120.

CHAPTER VII

THE INVESTMENT, SIEGE, AND ASSAULT OF BLAKELY, ALABAMA

The town of Blakely, around which the Confederates had erected fortifications, was situated ten miles northeast of Mobile, on the east bank of the Apalachee river, and opposite its confluence with the Tensas river. The extent and depth of the town's adjacent waters made it a fine natural port. The town of Blakeley, as it was spelled then, was founded in 1817. By about 1825, it was a thriving city of between three to five thousand in population. Thus, at this time, Blakely was a larger and more important city than Mobile. It was the county seat of Baldwin County from 1820 to 1870. However, epidemics of yellow fever and high land prices caused the young town to lose its appeal within fifteen years after its birth. After unsuccessful attempts to make a comeback after each attack of yellow fever, Blakely finally gave in to an ever-growing Mobile by the middle of the 1830's. From this time on it gradually declined to a population of less than one hundred in 1865.[69]

From the vicinity of the main landing near the river, two principal roads diverged, one bearing northeast to Stockton, the other southeast to Pensacola. For about a mile they ran about parallel. Following the Stockton road, it was around a mile from the landing to the line of Confederate fortifications. The Pensacola road wound around on high ground. The ground rose slightly for about a mile from the river.

---

[69] The Mobile Press Register. Mobile, Alabama, Sunday, October 30, 1955, Section B.

For the Investment, Siege, and Assault of Blakely, see Maps 9 and 10, pp. 90 and 105.

The Confederate fortifications around Blakely were constructed in an elongated semicircle. These rested on a bluff close to the river at the extreme left, and terminated with the high ground, a few rods from the river on the right. The line was almost three miles in length and included nine well built redoubts or lunettes. Arming these thoroughly built fortifications were about forty pieces of artillery. From six to eight hundred yards in front of the works, the trees had been felled. About fifty yards out from the fortifications was a line of abatis, and opposite some of the redoubts was an interior line. Then three hundred yards farther out, parallel with the works, was another line of abatis, and behind the latter were detached rifle-pits.

The garrison inside the fortifications of Blakely consisted of Brigadier General Francis M. Cockrell's division of veteran troops, mostly from Mississippi and Missouri, and Brigadier General Charles W. Thomas' brigade of Alabama reserves. Cockrell's troops were assigned to the left wing which extended from south of number four redoubt to the northern edge of number one redoubt, Thomas' Alabama reserves were on duty from north of the fifth redoubt to south of the ninth redoubt, thus encompassing the area of the right wing of the Confederate force. These two units of infantry plus several artillery companies, in command of the batteries, made a force totaling about three thousand five hundred, under the command of Brigadier General St. John R. Liddell.

Hawkins' division of colored troops had made camp, the evening of the first of April, two miles from the Confederate fortifications at Blakely. Heavy firing on the picket line brought these troops quickly into line of battle early Sunday, April 2. Colonel Charles W. Drew's Third brigade had camped in advance of the division and it was their

Map IX.

Map of the Siege of the Confederate Fortifications at Blakely, Alabama, showing the various positions and lines of investment of the Union Army under the Command of General Frederick Steele.


SKETCH OF
THE SEIGE OF BLAKELY
Invested April 2nd. by the forces under
Maj. Gen. F. STEELE
Assault April 9th.
1865
APALACHEE RIVER
Blakely
Spicely
Moore
Second Division 13th Corps.
Engd by H.C. Evans Washn D.C.

picket lines which were being fired upon by the enemy. Hawkins' other two brigades marched up in line with the Third, Brigadier General William A. Pile's First brigade covering the left flank of the division and Colonel Hiram Scofield's Second brigade in the centre. With two companies from each brigade as skirmishers, the division advanced toward the enemy. The first earnest resistance encountered was about a mile and a quarter in front of the Confederate left, the enemy entrenched on the brow of a rise above a small stream. The skirmishing became so fierce that finally the advance skirmish line mounted to twenty seven companies. After three hours of hotly contested ground, the division entrenched about one thousand yards from the Confederate main works facing redoubts numbers one and two. During the contest, Colonel J. Blackburn Jones of the Sixty-eighth United States Colored Troops, in charge of the advance skirmish line was conspicuous along the line for bravery and had two horses shot out from under him.

Hawkins' division and the other units engaged in the investment, were given a warm reception by vigorous artillery and musket fire. To add to the assaulting army's difficulties, the natural terrain was, in most places, anything but desirable. The pine forest began to swindle about two miles from the Apalachee river. From here, on west to the river, for the most part, the crests and brows of rises were comparatively void of any protective cover, the ravines had a small growth of hard wood trees in them but with almost insurmountable entanglements of undergrowth. Needless to say, these natural obstructions not only caused a hindrance, but also exposed the Federal troops to a greater danger.

The Second Division, who had camped just north of Tensas station the first night of April, had marched some distance before sunrise on the 2nd of April. They arrived before Blakely about ten A.M. After a short rest, a line of battle was formed. Spicely's brigade was assigned to the left flank of the division and Moore's brigade formed the right flank. With the two regiments from the latter's brigade, the One Hundred and Fourteenth Ohio and Twentieth Iowa, as advanced skirmishers, the division moved toward the enemy's works. Andrews' troops were warmly received by Confederate artillery fire and that of the enemy's advance skirmishers. After contesting about a mile of territory, the Second Division established its first line of entrenchments nearly a half mile long to the left of Hawkin's line about nine hundred yards from the Confederate fortifications. Two hundred yards of these entrenchments were on the right side of the Stockton road, the remaining fifteen hundred or more yards ran southward from the road. Late in the afternoon the Second Division was ordered to complete the investment by extending its line in a southerly direction, to south of the Pensacola road, making their line enlarged to about two miles in length.

The troops were busy throughout the night dodging the blind fire of the Confederates and digging their entrenchments. The entrenching, however, was a slow process for spades were few in comparison to such a long line.

> /April/ 2. Was on the road before day light, heard heavy cannonading in the advance soon after starting. Made a march of seven miles in a very short space of time, and came upon the enemy in force within three miles of Blakely. Made several countermarches and flank movements to get in our proper position. Soon

after dark we advanced towards the works driving in their outer pickets.[70] A heavy fire was kept up all night doing us no damage, however.[71]

The gallantry and vigor in which Hawkins' division pressed forward toward Blakely caused General Liddell to send the following dispatch to his commander.

HDQRS. EASTERN DIVISION, DISTRICT OF THE GULF
Blakely, April 2, 1865

General MAURY
Mobile:

The enemy camped apparently in large force one mile above us last night on the Stockton road, and is now engaged skirmishing on the left flank preparing, I think, for an assault or demonstration in force. I need additional artillery temporarily if it can be spared. My cipher reader, Massey, has not yet returned from Mobile.

ST. JOHN R. LIDDELL
Brigadier-General, Commanding[72]

Again, as the Second Division was approaching the fortifications, Liddell sent another appeal for artillery.

HDQRS. EASTERN DIVISION, DISTRICT OF THE GULF,
Blakely, April 2, 1865

General MAURY,
Mobile:

I believe the enemy are preparing to assault my line to-day. Please spare me some light artillery temporarily, and if possible send it over immediately.

ST. JOHN R. LIDDELL
Brigadier-General, Commanding[73]

---

[70]None of the six reports of Andrews' division, in the Official Records, gives the explicit time of the division's investment. However, the context of the reports seems to indicate middle to late afternoon.

[71]Carlos W. Colby, op. cit., April 9. See Appendix I, p. 161.

[72]Official Records, op. cit., Ser. I, XLIX, pt. 2, p. 1192.

[73]Loc. cit.

General Liddell listed his casualities for the day as five killed and twenty wounded.[74]

As viewed from a distance, the ground lying between the combatants appeared level, but it was actually cut with rugged ravines, some running parallel and others perpendicular to the Confederate works. Along the bottoms of the principal ravines were small streams hidden by the dense undergrowth. Many of the banks of these streams were marshy. The general elevations of the ground was perhaps eighty feet above the water, and the greatest depth of the ravines was about sixty feet.

Where the Second Division established its first line of entrenchments, the ground was a little higher than that occupied by the Confederates, however, from this position for about three hundred yards the ground in front of the division's line gradually sloped downward toward the enemy. The terrain occupied by Hawkins' division was nearly level with the Confederate works.

The second day of the siege, April 3, found both divisions of Steele's force preoccupied with enlarging and securing their entrenchment lines. Particularly in Hawkins' division, the work was hindered by the fire of the Confederate artillery. His division was arranged with Pile's brigade on the left, next to the Second Division, and Drew's brigade, on the right with Scofield's held in reserve. In Andrews' division, Spicely's Second brigade was on the right, Moore's covered the left flank.

---

[74] Loc. cit.

General Steele's headquarters was located about two miles to the rear of the Union lines at O. Sibley's. The two division headquarters were situated about a half mile behind the lines.

Brigadier General Kenner Garrard's Second Division of the Sixteenth Army Corps, and Brigadier General James C. Veatch's First Division of the Thirteenth Army Corps, both having been relieved of duty at Spanish Fort, were assigned to Steele's force. Before noon on the third of April, Garrard's division moved up to the front occupying the investment line south of the Pensacola road, thus shortening the length of the investment line held by Andrews' division to a little over a mile. The line of Garrard's division was formed with Colonel John Rinaker's First brigade on the right, Brigadier General James I. Gilbert's Second brigade in the centre, and the Third brigade under the command of Colonel Charles L. Harris occupied the left flank of the division and thereby, the extreme left of the Union forces investing Blakely. Veatch's division was held in reserve at Steele's headquarters.

> 3rd. Early in the morning we retired to an adjacent hollow to cover us from the enemy's fire, our position being too much exposed. A heavy cannonading was kept up all day by the Rebs, wounding one man in the 97th.[75]

The third day of the siege was occupied with Steele's troops continuing to make progress in their development of lines opposite the Confederate fortifications. The soldiers of both the Second Division and the division of colored troops were engaged in putting the finishing touches to the first line of investment and were making sustained

---

[75]Carlos W. Colby, op. cit., April 9. See Appendix I, p. 161.

headway on the second line of entrenchments. The following order by Spicely reveals how these entrenchments were made, and why they were made in this manner.

GENERAL ORDERS,
No. 4

HDQRS. SECOND BRIG., SECOND DIV.
THIRTEENTH ARMY CORPS,
Before Blakely, Ala., April 4, 1865

The rifle-pits in front have been designated to each regimental and battalion commander, will by him be immediately divided into as many parts as he has companies, and each company commander will be held responsible for the following, viz: To have by sundown to-night his rifle-pits 4 feet wide at the top, 3½ feet wide at the bottom, and the earth that is thrown outside to be a regular parapet not less than 4 feet at the top, and with a slope of 1 to 1½ the parapet to be 3 feet high and the ditch 3 feet deep. At all times there will be at least one man to every four yards of rifle-pits, with sufficient number of commissioned and non-commissioned officers. Regimental and battalion commanders must remember that a man behind earth-works must occupy a space of not less than three feet when attacked. The intrenchments will be advanced every day and night under the supervision of Lieut. Col. Victor Vifquain, Ninety-Seventh Illinois Volunteers, with a detail to be called for from each regiment and battalion, the details to have at all times with them guns and accoutrements and sixty rounds of ammunition, their knapsacked left behind in camp. Commanding officers are referred for further instructions to the chapter on sieges in Revised Army Regulations. The brigade officer of the day will not allow any fires made inside of brigade headquarters. Regimental and battalion commanders will be held strictly responsible for the policing of their rifle-pits and for the good order that at all times must exist in them.

By order of Col. W. T. Spicely, commanding brigade:

F. T. LEWIS,
Captain and Acting Assistant Adjutant-General[76]

The art of psychological warfare was not unknown to the military commanders of the Civil War as the following correspondence illustrates.

---

[76] Official Records, op. cit., Ser. I, XLIX, pt. 2, p. 231.

HDQRS. SECOND DIVISION, THIRTEENTH ARMY CORPS,
Before Blakely, Ala., April 4, 1865

COL. W. T. SPICELY,
Commanding Second Brigade:

COLONEL: Spanish Fort will be bombarded at 5 o'clock this p.m. Let your men know it, so that they can cheer for the benefit of the enemy in Blakely.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant.
GEORGE MONROE,
Assistant Adjutant-General[77]
[General Andrews' Staff]

The execution of this no doubt had a moral effect on the garrison inside their works. However, it produced more than just a moral effect.

> The shouts from many thousand voices made the Confederates think that they were going to be assaulted, and at sight of the skirmish-line of Moore's brigade they fell back rapidly to an interior line of pits, so that Moore's skirmishers, consisting of details from each regiment of the brigade, advanced nearly three hundred yards without resistance. This carried his line out of the woods, and upon a sort of plateau on a level with the garrison's main works, and only five hundred yards distance therefrom. Intrenchments were then commenced on the line thus gained and continued, but the work was difficult, for there were numerous stumps, and the surface was strewn with fallen pines.[78]

The ground in front of Spicely's brigade was more earnestly contested so that his skirmishers gained only a hundred and fifty yards. The lines in front of the colored division were advanced about two hundred yards, though at the expense of several killed and wounded.

Previous to this date no artillery had been used by the besiegers, however, their first battery was put into action on this third day of the siege. Also making its first appearance on the siege line was part of Veatch's division. Around nine in the evening, Brigadier General Elias S. Dennis' Second brigade moved to the front and occupied the

---

[77] Loc. cit.

[78] Andrews, op. cit., p. 171.

ground just north of the Pensacola road. This again enabled Andrews to close up his ranks so that his division was now entrusted with about three quarters of a mile in the siege line.

> 4. Rather quiet during the day until 5 P.M. when our batteries opened a terrific bombardment, on Fort Spanish, the extreme right of the Rebel works on the Mobile Bay. Heretofore they have had it all their own way and done all the fireing, so I think they were a little surprised to find us open all at once with fifty guns, and this is only a foretaste of what is to come.[79]

The soldiers' slumber was interrupted at daybreak, on the fourth day of the siege, April 5, with firing from the Second Connecticut battery located near the Stockton road. Throughout the day most of the Federal troops were occupied either on the forward lines of investment or behind the front line building artillery emplacements. In the afternoon, the position of Rinaker's brigade, Garrard's division, was changed from the right to the division's left. Late in the same afternoon, his advanced skirmishers gained a position some four hundred yards from the Confederate's main works, but was fired upon with such intensity that his troops had to retreat. Some of the lost ground was regained, however, after dusk.

In the evening, the skirmish line of Spicely's brigade gained one hundred and fifty yards, and intrenched within eighty yards of the Confederate's forward rifle-pits which were relatively unexposed as they were covered in front by an abatis. Moore's forward troops advanced forty yards through a network of pine logs. Both brigades by this time had two well built lines of entrenchments with safe approaches.

---

[79]Carlos W. Colby, op. cit., April 9. See Appendix I, p. 161.

The apprehension of a night sortie by the Confederates on the Union's right, caused General Steele to send Veatch's Third brigade, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel William Kinsey, to the rear of Hawkins' division as a reinforcement. Nothing more, however, than the usual night skirmishing occurred in front of the division. On Veatch's front, the investment line was advanced twenty-five yards on the right and nearly a hundred yards on the left.

> 5th. Nothing of interest is transpiring along our lines. Our large fatigue parties are gradually nearing their works by entrenching under the cover of darkness. The pits are dug deep and wide enough to hide a man, and then finished by day light.[80]

At three o'clock on the morning of the 6th, the fifth day of the siege, the garrison made a sortie from opposite their fourth redoubt, down to their right, advancing their line with much noise and shouting. Their purpose, it appeared, was to dislodge the besiegers' skirmishers. Along the left half of the Union line, the Federal troops held their ground firmly. The cunningness and quick thinking of the officers in charge at the Union front were partly responsible by the Confederates' lack of success.

> Lieut. [A. R.] McDonald [of the Eleventh Wisconsin] had with him Sergeant Moore and about a dozen men. Being hard pressed, he undertook to awe his assailants by a strategem, and called out, "First and Second brigade supports, forward!" which had a good effect.[81]

Just before daylight, April 7, the sixth day of the siege, the garrison made another sortie against the advance line of the Thirteenth and Sixteenth Army Corps, assaulting the Union lines from the Stockton

---

[80] Loc. cit.

[81] Andrews, op. cit., p. 178.

road south. The Confederates, in a comparatively large force, delivering repeated volleys, charged with cheers up to the pits of the Federals. They were supported admirably by their artillery. The tumult of the roar of cannonading and musketry was near startling even to the veteran soldier. Only the steadfast soldiership of the few troops at the front enabled Steele's force to repulse the enemy.

During the afternoon and continuing throughout the evening, rain fell making the air chilly and duty in the muddy trenches considerably uncomfortable. This unpleasantness, however, did not retard to any extent the process of developing lines opposite the Confederate works. New batteries were completed and work was continued on the investment lines.

In Andrews' Second Division, Moore's brigade widened their third parallel from six to eight feet and extended it some to the left. The third entrenchment, in Spicely's brigade, opened one hundred and fifty yards from the left, along a crest and connected with an approach which had been finished the preceding day. This put their third parallel only five hundred yards from the Confederate fortifications.

Inside the fortifications, three siege guns had been put in position and were to take part in a heavy bombardment to take place the next morning at eight. The Confederates also had some seven inch guns, but these could not be put into position for the want of platforms.

Andrews relates an incident which was not an uncommon occurrence during the Civil War.

> Between the skirmishers of Garrard's division, of the Sixteenth corps, and of Thomas' Alabama reserves, a system of intercourse had grown up, which the garrison commander justly condemned. The men on the skirmish line made truces of some hours' length, during which they would meet and converse in a

> friendly manner, often discussing public questions relating to the war. They would also exchange newspapers, and trade coffee and sugar for tobacco. They agreed also that there should be no firing while the skirmish-line was being relieved. Then when they resumed their places, it would sometimes happen that one or the other would call out to warn his adversary that he was about to fire. The garrison commander learned that the Sixteenth corps men were "very bold," and that they exposed themselves "without being fired upon with sufficient effect to make them timid." To abate the mischief, he directed Gen. Thomas, commanding the reserves, to send a company to report to Gen. Cockrell, to exchange for a company of his command, and that the old soldiers of Cockrell's division should be scatted in the skirmish pits with Thomas' men.[82]
>
> 7th. It rained nearly all day. There was about an hours heavy firing in the morning. Then all was comparatively quiet. Two men from the regiment were wounded by their shells. Adjutant Prierson was wounded by an accidental discharge of a pistol in the hands of one of the officers.[83]

At one A.M. the morning of the eighth of April, the seventh day of the siege, the garrison, with their usual enterprise advanced a strong skirmish line, covered by the fire of artillery, against the forward positions of Steele's besieging army. The heaviest fighting occurred on Veatch's front and on the right of Andrews' division. The Confederate movement was successfully repulsed, but an alarm was caused all along the Federal line. Heavy fire continued along the line, for about an hour both sides discharging missiles from artillery and muskets.

At eight in the morning, the Confederates opened with all their artillery, and fired with uncommon vehemence for an hour. Their shells frequently struck the parapets of the besiegers' rifle-pits and exploded over them. Though there were many narrow escapes, the besieging army

---

[82] Andrews, op. cit., p. 184.

[83] Carlos W. Colby, op. cit., April 9. See Appendix I, p. 162.

incurred few casualties. Shortly after the bombardment commenced, it was answered by the voluminous firing of the Union batteries.

As the skirmish subsided toward the middle of the morning, work in advancing the trenches was steadily progressing on all parts of the besieger's front throughout the day and following night. Work was also continued on some new batteries.

During the day, orders were received by General Andrews to have his division in readiness to march with five days' rations in the haversack and fifteen in their wagons. The prospect of losing the results of their week's toil in the development of lines opposite the Confederate works was most unwelcome news for the men in the division. This order, did not, however, dampen their ardor as progress continued to be made on the division's trenches. The movement of the division from the lines at Blakely did not transpire as it was later learned that the order had been occasioned by a false alarm of Confederate troops gathering in considerable force above Stockton, Alabama.

Towards nightfall, the troops on both sides remarked with awe, the terrific cannonading at Spanish Fort. About ten in the evening the besiegers heard of the assault there and that a lodgment had been effected.

> 8th. Weather cloudy with a little fall of rain. We are rapidly approaching their works by entrenching. For the last hour there has been one of the heaviest bombardments on our extreme left, near or at Fort Spanish that I ever heard. That is their main works, with a continuous line of works to the river above Blakely.
>
> There is more or less cannonading every day, our losses however, have been comparatively light, but three men in the regiment have been wounded by the enemy's fire, seriously but not mortally. Yesterday Adjutant John R. Frierson was severely wounded by an accidental discharge of a pistol in the hands of one of the officers, the ball entering his mouth and passing through so as to be cut out at the back of the neck. It is thought, however, that he will recover.

Map X.

Map of the Final Line of Investment by the Federal Army at Blakely, Alabama.

REBEL LINE OF WORKS
BLAKELY, ALA.
ARMY OF WEST MISSISSIPPI
TENNESSEE

> Our division is again under marching orders with five days' rations in haversack and fifteen in wagons. The report is that it is to take supplies to General George H. Thomas and we suppose him to be near Montgomery, Alabama.[84]

The morning of Sunday, April 9, the eighth and last day of the siege, was calm, for the skirmish line was unusually quiet. Around nine o'clock there was a shower of rain, but the sun came out for a little while, and the rest of the day was partly cloudy.

The fall of the Old Spanish Fort enabled Canby to send more artillery to Blakely. In the course of the day, these were emplaced and opened fire, but were faintly answered by the defenders.

The besiegers now had three lines of entrenchments with safe approaches to them. This third line was, on the average, six hundred yards from the Confederate main works. Some of the skirmishers of Garrard's division were three hundred yards from them. On the two flanks of Moore's brigade of the Second Division, approaches had been opened a hundred yards out from the advance parallel and a fourth parallel was started. This located the brigade's front lines about four hundred yards from the enemy's fortifications. In Spicely's brigade, the third parallel, on the left, was within about five hundred yards of the garrison's main works, but this front line slanted toward the rear so that where it crossed the Stockton road it was close to eight hundred yards from the enemy. During the previous night, part of Hawkins' troops advanced their line about one hundred and forty yards.

---

[84] Carlos W. Colby to his sister, Headquarters, Company G, 97th Illinois Volunteers, in the field near Blakely, April 8, 1865; Carlos W. Colby, op. cit., April 9. See Appendix I, Letter No. 6, pp. 154 and 162.

Up to this time, the colored division had taken the heaviest toll in casualties with sixteen killed and one hundred and seventy-six wounded. The other division's losses were about four or five killed and twenty to thirty wounded.

Before noon reconnaissance reported some boats leaving Blakely loaded with Confederate troops. It was not long before the rumor ran through the Union lines that the enemy was evacuating. This report seemed to be confirmed by the unusual silence of both the Confederate artillery and sharpshooter fire. Soon there developed a general desire all along the besieger's line to take the first opportunity to move to "feel the enemy."

General Garrard received instructions for his division to make an assault on the enemy's fortifications during the afternoon. The other divisions were at first supposed to support Garrard's division in its assault at five thirty in the late afternoon, however, by five o'clock all the division commanders had obtained permission to engage in a general assault and to move on the garrison works as far as they could go, and to enter the works if possible.

All this time, the Union troops were deceived in supposing that any part of the garrison had evacuated. The troops they saw leaving Confederate fortifications were the small portion of the Spanish Fort garrison who had escaped through the swamps to Blakely. None of the Blakely garrison had left at all. General Liddell, upon receiving word of Canby's troops moving to the Blakely vicinity, ordered Thomas and Cockrell to hold their commands "in readiness for an assault at

Figure 1.

A View in Front of Hawkins' Division from Sketches Drawn of the Battle Fields in 1866.



BLAKELY—View in Front of Hawkins' Division.

any moment."[85] The garrison suffered a severe artillery fire during the forenoon, which dismounted "two guns, field pieces, including the only Blakely gun."[86] The Confederate artillery did not, however, reply to this bombardment as they were saving their ammunition to repel an assault.

Shortly after noon, the skirmishers in Pile's front of Hawkins' division reported that the Confederate sharpshooters in their front had suddenly become quiet and asked permission to "feel the enemy." General Pile ordered a few artillery shots fired to see what reply would be elicited. When no reply was made, he ordered thirty men and one commissioned officer from each regiment to be ready to advance. Shortly after three, this party sprang out of the rifle-pits and charged forward to capture, if possible, the Confederate advanced rifle-pits. They had no sooner left their cover when they were met with firing from both the enemy's sharpshooters and artillery. The assaulting party moved more cautiously, seeking what little cover there was behind stumps and felled trees. This protection, however, was only temporary, for in order to advance, they had to jump over the fallen trees and logs and were consequently much exposed. The ground was exceedingly rough and the assaulting party had three hundred yards of ground to contest. The garrison sharpshooters were located behind the protection of a strong line of abatis and took advantage of the exposure of the Union soldiers, many of whom were shot down as they advanced. But still the officers and men of the colored units kept

---

[85] Official Records, op. cit., Ser. I, XLIX, pt. 2, p. 1223.

[86] Ibid., p. 1222.

moving forward with self possession and courage, and though fighting at a disadvantage, returned the fire with spirit.

Perceiving by the steady advance of the assaulting party, that they meditated a serious attack, the garrison sent out reinforcements to their skirmish line, and the contest grew more obstinate. Still the Union skirmishers continued to move forward. Pile reinforced his first party with five companies with instructions to entrench immediately in the rear of the enemy's abatis. Within about an hour, Pile's assaulting force had gained three hundred yards necessary to take possession of the garrison's advanced rifle-pits, and inflicted some loss on their occupants as they fell back to the main breastworks.

The skirmish line along the rest of Hawkins' division advanced about four o'clock. The Confederate advanced pits were captured in the front of Scofield's and Drew's brigades, yet without loss. In Drew's brigade, of the eleven officers in the assaulting party, seven were killed or wounded.

The skirmish line of General Pile's brigade had been entrenched in their new position, under heavy fire, less than an hour, when the cheering of the white troops on their left was heard. Ascertaining that the Second Division was charging the main breastworks of the Confederates in their front, Pile ordered his brigade forward. The assault became general in the front of General Hawkins' division of colored troops.

> Greater gallantry than was shown by officers and men could hardly be desired. The latter were burning with an impulse to do honor to their race, and rushed forward with intense enthusiasm, in the face of a terrible fire. As they got close to the works some of the confederates, dreading to fall into their hands, ran off to surrender to the white troops.[87]

As the troops of Drew's brigade advanced, several of the Confederates, with muskets, remained outside of the works refusing to surrender, and maintained a cool and desperate struggle until they fell. As Scofield's line charged, the explosion of a single torpedo killed and wounded thirteen. As his troops were advancing, ". . .they heard a confederate officer behind the works exclaim, 'Lay low and mow the ground---the d----d niggers are coming!' which became a byword in camp."[88] The colored troops captured nine pieces of artillery, 304 pieces of small arms, and 200 men plus 21 officers.[89] The colored division's loss in the assault was thirty-two killed and one hundred and forty-seven wounded. Of these, quite a proportion were officers. The division's total loss in killed and wounded before Blakely was three hundred and seventy-one, of those killed, five commissioned officers and forty-three men, of those wounded, twenty-three commissioned officers and three hundred and one men.[90]

---

[87] Andrews, op. cit., p. 200.

[88] Ibid., pp. 200-201.

The feelings of the Confederate soldiers towards the Federal colored troops is interesting. The facts seem to indicate that a good many of the Confederates both feared and hated the Union's colored soldiers. This is indicated in the last two quotations, the latter by the fact that the resistance on Hawkins' front was stiffer, for the division's losses were the heaviest of all the divisions taking part in the siege and assault of Blakely.

[89] Official Records, op. cit., Ser. I, XLIX, pt. 1, pp. 887-288.

[90] Andrews, op. cit., p. 201.

> The prisoners [taken by Hawkins' division] were treated with kindness. A colored soldier of the Fiftieth regiment found his former master among the prisoners. They appeared happy to meet, and drank from the same canteen. Some of the Louisiana men, however, made an attack on the prisoners and were with difficulty restrained from injuring them. The latter almost invited attack by manifesting an unreasonable dread of the colored soldiers; huddling in heaps as if their captors were wild beats. Capt. Norwood and Lieut. Gleason of the Sixty-eighth were wounded, the latter mortally, in their efforts to save the prisoners.[91]

In the Second Division headquarters, it was arranged that a regiment, deployed as skirmishers, should advance in front of each brigade. After these regiments had gained one hundred and fifty yards, the remainder of the brigades would follow, deployed in a line of battle. The assault was to commence with the Second brigade, and the cheer of the skirmish line, as it started, was to be the signal for the skirmish line to start in front of the Third brigade. The commander of the latter brigade, Colonel Moore, assigned the position of advance skirmish line to the Eighty-Third Ohio. At the request of its commander, the Ninety-Seventh Illinois was designated for the skirmish line of Spicely's brigade. Both brigades were on the front trenches at about half past five.

---

[91] This attitude of the colored troops is also quite interesting. Though not mentioned in his letters, Carlos W. Colby, in his War Memoirs written some forty-five years after the Civil War wrote the following concerning the charge of (probably) Piles' brigade. ". . . . I had a grand and thrilling sight of seeing a charge of a colored brigade off to the right; now dropping down out of sight as a charge of canister went over them, then up and forward with thinned ranks, always keeping an eye on the gun for smoke, again to fall as the charge went over them. As the storming column climbed over the works, I could hear their yell, 'Fort Pillow, Fort Pillow,' in retaliation for the massacre of colored prisoners captured there." (The War Memoirs of Carlos W. Colby, manuscript, possession of author.)

> Lieut.-Col. Vifquain had the Ninety-seventh deployed, and had passed along the trenches once or twice to see that everything was in readiness, when an explosion of a torpedo occurred on the rear edge of the trench, tearing off the leg of Capt. Wisner, of the Ninety-Seventh Illinois, who was endeavoring to pass to his company, and injuring to all appearances, fatally, one or two men. It was no happy augury, and as the wounded were borne along the trench and approach to the rear, the spirits of the beholders seemed depressed. Such is the terror of concealed danger.[92]

This occurrence caused a short delay, and it was almost six when the movement commenced. ". . . .Lieutenant-Colonel Vifquain, commanding the Ninety-Seventh Illinois Infantry, gave the command, 'Forward, Ninety-Seventh!' at which time his regiment sprang with him over the parapet, and with a loud cheer charged in line as skirmishers upon the enemy."[93] Instantly the Ninety-Seventh was met with a volley of bullets, and before they had gone twenty yards, a few men fell. Less than a moment later, Lieutenant Colonel William H. Baldwin's regiment, the Eighty-Third Ohio dashed out of their trenches toward the Confederates raising a chorus of cheers. By this time, three or four pieces of artillery from the garrison were brought to bear on these regiments, firing rapidly. The enemy's sharpshooters being disposed to hold their position, met the assault with a bitter musketry fire. The soldiers of the Illinois regiment began returning the fire when less than a hundred yards out of their trenches. The contest grew more and more bitter, the Union soldiers gaining ground every minute while the Confederates reluctantly retreated. It was soon evident that the garrison was in full strength instead of having only part of their force still inside the works as it had been believed before the

---

[92] Andrews, op. cit., pp. 202-203.

[93] Official Records. op. cit.. Ser. I, XLIX, pt. 1, p. 201.

Figure 2.

A View from the Centre of Andrews' Second Division Showing the Confederate Redoubt No. 4, from Sketches Drawn of the Battle Fields in 1866.



BLAKELY—View from Centre of Second Division—Showing Confederate Redoubt No. 4.

assault began. Literally swarms of defenders retreated from their rifle-pits to their main fortifications, near the fourth redoubt.

The Ninety-Seventh had gone but a short distance when the remaining regiments of Spicely's brigade sprang forward. Lieutenant Colonel Oran Perry's regiment, the Sixty-Ninth Indiana, was on the left flank of the brigade; the Seventy-Sixth Illinois, under the command of Colonel Samuel Busey, occupied the centre of the line, and the Twenty-Fourth Indiana regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Francis A. Sears, commanding, moved from the right flank position north of the Stockton road against the third redoubt. These regiments charged with great enthusiasm and gallantry. Lieutenant Colonel Perry was severely wounded before he had gotten two hundred yards. Colonel Busey's regiment had one man killed at the first line of abatis and at the second line, the battle became fierce and bloody. The garrison maintained a bold front from behind their breastworks, and when the Seventy-Sixth Illinois was within fifty yards of the fourth redoubt, they suffered severely from the Confederate musketry and artillery. While part of the regiment sustained a spirited fire, the rest crossed the abatis and commenced the charge on the main works.

The Twenty-Fourth Indiana entered the Confederate works on the right of the Seventy-Sixth Illinois, shortly after the latter had position. Colonel Sears' regiment had a difficult terrain to cover, which included passing over two deep entangled swampy ravines.

> . . . .when part was to the confederate works, the regiment was halted, and ordered to lie down. But such was the ardor of the men that their commander found it difficult to restrain them, and bade them go on. Such was their ardor they did not stop to capture the confederate skirmishers, nor even disarm all they met.

> One of the latter raised his hands, to indicate his submission, and after the Twenty-Fourth men had passed him turned and fired on them grazing the ear of a man named Messer. The latter turned turned upon him, and shot him dead.[94]

The loss of the Twenty-Fourth Indiana was about twelve killed and wounded.

The soldiers of the Ninety-Seventh Illinois had gotten rather scattered having started deployed as skirmishers, but mostly being veterans, they knew well how to take care of themselves and performed their duty with unflinching valor. The colors of the regiment were planted on the enemy's fortifications almost simultaneously with the Eighty-Third Ohio. Colonel Spicely in his report tells the following about the assault.

> His /Colonel Vifquain's/ command was closely followed by the rest of my command, and the contest for a long time seemed to be who should arrive in the enemy's works first. The dash was so sudden and impetuous that it was almost impossible to determine who arrived first. But the honor of first entering the works is justly due to the Ninety-Seventh Illinois. . . ."[95]

". . . .going into battle with about 500 men and losing 61 killed and wounded," was what Vifquain recorded in his official report of the assault.[96] The loss in the Sixty-Ninth Indiana regiment, was ten wounded. Spicely's brigade took the heaviest toll in killed and wounded than any other brigade on the battlefield, totaling two hundred and two.

In Moore's brigade, part of the advanced skirmish line had three ravines to pass over. The colors of the Eighty-Third Ohio moved on

---

[94] Andrews, op. cit., p. 206.

[95] Official Records. op. cit., Ser. I, XLIX, pt. 1, p. 209.

[96] Ibid., pp. 213-214.

the line, advancing as fast as the nature of the ground and the obstacles of brush and logs would permit. When the regiment descended into the ravine nearest the Confederate works, it was deep and long enough that almost the entire regiment was lost from sight for two or three minutes. The entanglement in the bottom of this ravine was jungle-like and almost defied the passage of persons even at a time of leisure and unencumbered with weapons. This type of obstruction was common all along the territory being assaulted by the Union army.

As the Eighty-Third Ohio regiment reached the last and most impregnable abatis nearest the enemy's breastworks, the rest of Moore's brigade commenced the charge. On the right was the Thirty-Fourth Iowa, under the command of Colonel George W. Clark; right of centre was Colonel John H. Kelly's regiment, the One Hundred and Fourteenth Ohio; left of centre, the Thirty-Seventh Illinois regiment under the command of Colonel Charles Black; and covering the brigade's left flank was the Twentieth Iowa, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Joseph B. Leake. All of these were veteran regiments with gallant and able commanders. As soon as the Eighty-Third Ohio had made a passage through the last abatis, the regiment, with dauntless spirit, charged forward and were soon upon the redoubt directly in front of them.

> Lieut.-Col. Baldwin was soon on the parapet; and seeing that the most of his regiment was ready to mount the works, he jumped down inside, and cried out, "Surrender!" The commanding officer inquired, "To whom do we surrender?" Baldwin answered, "To the Eighty-Third Ohio." Then the officer said, "I believe we did that once before,"---referring to a somewhat similar occasion at Vicksburg.[97]

---

[97]Andrews, op. cit., p. 209.

Following the path opened by Baldwin's regiment, the other regiments in the brigade were soon through the abatis and upon the Confederate works. Of the brigade losses, the Eighty-Third Ohio took the heaviest toll; their total almost equaled the rest of the brigade, with seven killed and twenty-one wounded, the Thirty-Fourth Iowa had three killed and twelve wounded, the loss in the Thirty-Seventh Illinois was one killed and three wounded, the One Hundred and Fourteenth Ohio had only two wounded, and the Twentieth Iowa escaped the assault with only its flag being shot through.

The number of prisoners taken by the Second Division totaled one thousand three hundred. The fortifications of the enemy carried was three-quarters of a mile. The total number of casualties incurred by Andrews' division was two hundred and thirty three, forty one killed and one hundred and ninety two wounded.[98]

Next on the left in the Union's line of assault was Brigadier General Elias S. Dennis' brigade of Veatch's division. This brigade's assault took part of the fifth redoubt and the enemy's works south to the Pensacola road. Their charge was lead by the Eighth Illinois regiment. The brigade's losses in the assault were thirteen killed and sixty-four wounded, of these, the Eighth Illinois regiment alone lost ten killed and fifty four wounded. In Veatch's front, about three hundred prisoners were captured.

General Garrard's division, assigned to the large task of carrying the extreme left flank of the Union forces, assaulted the works in the division's full strength of three brigades comprised of fourteen

---

[98] Ibid., p. 210.

Figure 3.

A View from the Right of Garrard's Division from Sketches Drawn of the Battle Fields in 1866.



BLAKELY—VIEW FROM THE RIGHT OF GARRARD'S DIVISION.

regiments. The right side of the division's trenches being closest to the Confederate fortifications, the commander ordered the assault to commence from there.[99] This included Colonel John I. Rinsker's brigade which was primarily on the south side of the Pensacola road and the right half of Colonel Charles L. Harris' brigade which was located in the centre of the division. Rinaker ordered the Eighty-Ninth Indiana to take the honored position as advanced skirmishers for their brigade, and the Eleventh Wisconsin occupied the same position in front of Harris' brigade. Garrard ordered his skirmish line to form in two lines supported by the main line of battle. When the first skirmish line had started and appeared to be moving with success, the second line was to begin the charge, and then when the first line reached the enemy's main works, the main line of battle was to start. This plan of battle was adopted by the division commander because of the terrible obstructions in his front.

When the order to charge was given the skirmish line sprang over their parapets with the ringing cheers of veterans, rushed onward, with emulous ardor and high resolve, to victory or death. Though encountering a destructive fire of musketry, grape, and canister, the gallant troops stormed forward. Though many were struck down, and the ranks of the leading regiments were visibly thinned, the survivors moved unfalteringly to the main works where they engaged in hand to hand combat with the garrison defenders who fought with an unyielding spirit.

---

[99]See Map No. 10, p. 105.

No sooner had the right half of the division commenced their assault than the left half started. Brigadier General James I. Gilbert's brigade, on the extreme left of the division, and the remainder of Harris' brigade moved forward simultaneously with part of the Twenty-Seventh Iowa in advance as the forward skirmishers. This portion of Garrard's division made a charge of the longest distance, from nine hundred to one thousand one hundred yards had to be covered before reaching the Confederate's breastworks. In their front, the artillery uttered its last fierce thunders, pouring forth shell, grape and canister; the musketry volleys rolled along the line in quick succession, and clouds of smoke rose up from the besieged works. The Union soldiers continued to advance unfalteringly against this ferocious fire. The heaviest resistance was encountered by the Tenth Kansas directly in front of the Sixth redoubt.

> The furious fire that had beset them, made them cluster in a group, and they entered the works more as a column in mass than in line. Then, with fixed bayonets, they swept along the works to their right, mixing blue and gray together; and the latter, seeing their helpless condition, huddled into the angles of the fort, and making little resistance, surrendered by scores. Yet there was some firing after the Tenth were inside the works, for a number of the confederates refused to surrender.[100]

Garrard's division in carrying the Confederate works captured ". . .21 guns, 4 mortars, and 1,524 enlisted men, and 100 officers, including 2 brigadier-generals, one of them Brigadier General Liddell, commanding East District of the Gulf, at the division's loss of forty-one killed and one hundred and twenty-three wounded."[101]

---

[100] Andrews, op. cit., p. 217.

[101] Official Records, op. cit., Ser. I, XLIX, pt. 1, p. 247.

The total casualties of the Union army engaged in the assault were six hundred and fifty-four, one hundred and twenty seven killed and five hundred and twenty-seven wounded. Though there is no account of the number of Confederate casualties, probably they totaled about one third that incurred by the assaulting army.[102] "About 3,200 prisoners, 40 pieces of artillery, a large amount of ordnance and subsistence stores, &c., fell in our hands," recorded General Steele in his Official Report.[103]

Carlos W. Colby, late of the Ninety-Seventh Illinois regiment, gave the following account of the assault on his brigade's front in a letter to his sister, Sallie.

> I suppose if I do not give a full account of the fight, that you will give me a scolding, and as I should not like to be scolded, I think I had better report to the best of my ability.
>
> Well, at about 5 P.M. on the 9th Inst. the order came to fall in. And then everyone knew that there was a charge to be made. From all appearances of things I had made up my mind that such was to be the case soon after dinner. We made our way to our advance rifle pits, which is a good five hundred yards distant from the rebel works. While we were forming in the pits, Capt. Wisner of Co. D stepped upon the bank in the rear of the pits and was walking along close by where I stood when he stepped on a torpedo which exploded, completely severing his right leg from his body at the knee. The lines stood four deep in the pits, the 24th Ind. in the advance on the right of our Brigade, supported by the 76th Ill. and we in the advance on the left supported by the 69th Ind. The 83rd Ohio was in the advance on the right of the 3rd brigade, resting on our left.
>
> The order was given to charge, the advance immediately started with a whoop and yell. Our route lay for the first hundred yards, over the brow of a hill exposed to a raking fire from two forts; with an abatis work of brush and fallen timber, which, for a man without any opposition, was hard to get through. On this hill we suffered the most, but no man but what was wounded,

---

[102] Andrews, op. cit., p. 220.
The number of Confederate casualties is not given in the Official Records.

[103] Official Records. op. cit., Ser. I, XLIX, pt. 1, pp. 283-284.

faltered. Then we had to cross a valley of fallen and tangled timber, every man doing his best, firing while on the run and then dropping behind a stump or log to reload. At a distance of fifty yards from their works, there was another abatis, more difficult than the first. As I was climbing through it I saw the flash of a cannon on my right which I knew was belching forth grape and canister, but I was in a tangled mess of limbs and could not fall. It proved to be loaded with grape, one struck my gun and shattered it in my hand, another passed through my blouse, and the third struck the sole of my boot nearly cutting it through, but not a single one touched me. I then advanced fifteen or twenty steps when I saw a man fall a little to my left. I had started for his gun when a musket ball took me in the leg. At first I thought it was a spent ball and was going on but had proceeded but a few steps when I fell and could go no farther. Then on examination I found the ball had passed clear through the fleshy part of the leg and was bleeding profusely.

After creeping back to a little less exposed position, I laid and watched the lines as they advanced on top of the parapets. I claim that our colors was second to none in being planted on the parapets, as far as I could see, and that was through two brigades. I have sent you a New Orleans paper of the 10th with an article on the taking of the place, the writer gives us no credit whatever, but speaks in the highest praise of other regiments in the division. One thing is certain, we lost heavier than any other according to our numbers, we losing sixty-two, I think, out of less than four hundred in the charge. The loss from our whole division was only about two hundred. Where we charged was the most exposed position, and had more torpedoes than any other place. Immediately in front of where Capt. Wisner was blown up, fifteen or twenty large torpedoes have been dug up, and that is exactly where I came out of the works. I was lucky enough to escape, but poor John Wyant stepped on one and exploded it, tearing off one leg and badly shattering the other. Lowe, our color bearer, was shot after planting the colors on their works. A braver lad never lived, after he was shot, he sent his compliments to the Colonel and said he had put the colors on their works.

I was helped off the field by two boys from the 15th Mass. Batty., I would not let the stretcher bearers take me for there were many worse wounded. I got to the division hospital and had my wound dressed by about nine o'clock.[104]

Though the Union soldiers gallantly stormed from their parapets, charging the enemy's works, there was every reason for them to dread

---

[104]Carlos W. Colby to his sister, Sallie, Sedgwick U. S. General Hospital, Ward 10, New Orleans, Louisiana, April 17, 1865, manuscript, in possession of author. See Appendix I, Letter No. 8, pp. 164-168.

the assault. The nature of the ground over which the assault was made, its being cut up by almost impassable ravines, rough terrain, covered with man-placed obstructions, and mined in many places with torpedoes; there was little wonder that the Union losses were not even heavier than they were in the thirty-five regiments, some sixteen thousand troops which participated in the assault.

The assault line was about three miles in length, and the advance of the entire line was remarkably simultaneous.

> The scene was picturesque and grand. From different points view the assaulting lines could be seen for a mile or two, as far even as the form of men could be distinguished moving over the broken ground. The regimental colors, though not in perfect line, were steadily advancing, and the troops were dashing on over and through the obstructions like a stormy wave. It was at a moment when the shock of battle was the fiercest. In the clamor could be heard the voices of the assaulting troops. Nothing could exceed their enthusiasm. If then they could have known the great event that had occurred a few hours before---that Lee had surrendered---and that their contest would probably be the last important struggle of the war, they could hardly have experienced more exulting emotions, or pressed forward with more dauntless step. It seemed as if, "all the joy, all the sensation of life, was in that moment, that they cast themselves with the fierce gladness of mountain torrents, headlong on that brief revelry of glory."[105]

---

[105] Andrews, op. cit., p. 221.

For the preceding chapter, the following sources were consulted. Official Records, op. cit., Ser. I, XLIX, pt. 1. Union Reports: No's. 1-8, pp. 91-150; Nos. 10-34, pp. 153-216; Nos. 55-71, pp. 247-267; and Nos. 79-95, pp. 279-313. Official Records. op. cit., Ser. I, XLIX, pt. 2. Correspondence: Union; p. 192, p. 193, pp. 195-196, p. 195, pp. 195-196, p. 208, p. 210, p. 211, p. 212, p. 227, p. 229, p. 230, p. 231, p. 232, pp. 232-233, p. 233, p. 234, p. 242, p. 244, p. 245, p. 246, p. 247, p. 248, p. 251, p. 252, p. 256, pp. 264-265, p. 266, pp. 266-267, p. 267, p. 268, p. 269, pp. 281-282, p. 282, p. 283, p. 284, p. 286, pp. 286-287, p. 287, p. 288, p. 289, p. 295, p. 298, p. 299, p. 302, p. 303, p. 304, p. 305, pp. 305-306, p. 306, and p. 307; Confederate; p. 1190, p. 1194, p. 1204, p. 1209, p. 1210, p. 1214, p. 1217, p. 1219, p. 1222 and pp. 1222-1223.

Andrews, op. cit., pp. 121-129 and 168-222.

Carlos W. Colby, op. cit., Letters of April 8, April 9, and April 17, 1865.

CHAPTER VIII

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The fall of Blakely and the capture of its garrison left the Confederates with less than five thousand troops for the immediate defense of the city of Mobile. The Confederate naval strength, having been primarily eliminated in the Battle of Mobile Bay, though in April of 1865, outnumbered the Union's navy in small draught vessels and was insufficient to repulse an attack which might be made upon Mobile from the seaward side. General Maury, finding his force too small to hold the city, evacuated his position on the 11th and 12th of April. Learning of this, part of General Canby's force landed near the city, entered it unopposed, and put Mobile under Federal occupation. Though not an important part of the Union's strategic picture, the move was deemed an expedient one. The occupation of Mobile, however, added to the Campaign's already achieved success and attainment of its strategic objective. As previously stated, the main strategic objective of the Mobile Campaign was to establish a line of communication for subsequent military operations into the State of Alabama and neighboring Georgia.

The conduct of the Confederate garrison of Blakely was, on the whole, commendable. The defending troops manifested much energy and spirit during the siege and bravely made sallies on several nights, greatly disturbing the besiegers. Apprehending that an assault was about to take place, the soldiers of the garrison felt confident they could repulse it. Needless to say, the spirits of the defenders were slightly dampened by the moral and military advantage of the besieging troops in having reinforcements from the Old Spanish Fort in their

rear. Had Steele's forces assaulted Blakely prior to the fall of the Confederate works to Canby, the garrison would have had more hope in resisting the assault.

Aside from lacking adequate ammunition, guns and troops for proper defense of their works, the Confederates made two mistakes with respect to their defense during the assault. A large number of sharpshooters or skirmishers were in pits three hundred yards in front of their main works when the assault began. They had an opportunity to fire only once or twice, before they fell back. But there was no covered route of retreat, and not being able, on account of the obstacles, to move rapidly, they were for a short time a sort of cover to the assaulting troops, embarrassing, if not preventing the fire of those behind the main works. Had these skirmishers been able to retreat by means of a covered route, even part of the distance, it would have enabled the troops inside the main fortifications to have rendered a more effective fire upon the assaulting force. Even more practicable, if, instead of being three hundred yards to the front, had the main body of the sharpshooters been in rifle-pits fifty yards in front, with approaches into the main works, a double line of musketry fire could have been poured on the assaulting Federal troops just as they were reaching the most difficult abatis. The garrison's second mistake was their failure to carry out the rules for defending fortifications. These rules required the garrison to mount the parapet when they found the assaulting troops were attacking closely. This did not appear anywhere on the line.

The commanders in the garrison were not entirely responsible, for these mistakes should not have happened. There is little doubt that the garrison at Blakely should have been evacuated within an hour after

the fall of Spanish Fort. Every possible means should have been used to remove the defending troops before an assault could be made. This, however, was not ordered by the commanding general in Mobile. General Maury alleged that it would have been difficult to evacuate the garrison at Blakely after daylight, and before this time, not all of the Spanish Fort garrison which escaped to Blakely had been transferred to Mobile, and thus, he thought an evacuation of the Blakely garrison was not possible. Had the Blakely garrison been evacuated, Maury could have assembled a force of about nine thousand strong for the defense of the city of Mobile. This is just short of the total number of effective troops estimated to be necessary for sustaining an assault of the city by a force numbering about forty thousand and resisting the attack for ninety days. Thus, in retrospect, saving the Blakely garrison from being captured could have enabled General Maury to have sustained resistance for about three months at Mobile.

The question as to the favorability of the time for the assault on the Confederate works has posed some interesting speculation, however, the facts indicate that the question should be answered in the affirmative. The troops engaged in the assault had the moral support of the presence of the rest of the army which had come from Spanish Fort, even though the latter troops were not used in the assault. No doubt, when the garrison saw the assaulting lines advancing, they felt that the woods behind them were also full of troops, for they could not have failed to hear the victorious troops as they marched to the Blakely vicinity. Could the garrison troops have repulsed an attack a day or so earlier? It is difficult to give even a speculative answer

to this question, though one fact is certain, their hope of effecting a repulse would have been greater. As it was, nowhere along the line was the general assault repulsed.

It is probable that General Steele would have waited a few days before ordering a general assault had it not been for the fall of the Spanish Fort, the distance over which a charge had to be made, such as it was, five or six hundred yards. It is also probable that the assault coming when it did, saved many of the besiegers' lives. Following the assault, it was found that where the fourth parallel probably would have been dug by the Union soldiers, there were many torpedoes buried. There is little doubt that many lives would have been lost by farther extension of the approaches and trenches.

The amount of work performed by the besiegers in the development of the lines opposite the Confederate works was commendable. Each division constructed its entrenchments according to its own plans, and had little, if any professional assistance from engineers of the commanding general's staff. In total, about ten miles of trenches and approaches were constructed. The entire investment was completed without the capture of a single Union soldier.

When the Mobile Campaign commenced no one knew just how long the war would continue. Since most of the Confederate forces east of the Mississippi river surrendered within a month after the fall of Blakely, just what the effect of the Campaign on the general military situation of the war, is difficult to ascertain. The success of Canby's operations around Mobile, occurring at the same time as Lee's surrender at Appomattox, followed by the capture of Montgomery and Selma, Alabama,

was influential in pointing out that the continuation of hostilities, after the Confederacy had once again been split, was useless.

The battles at the Old Spanish Fort and at Blakely were the last ones of any size fought. The Campaign was one of the concluding steps in the final defeat of the Confederacy. Had the Campaign and the other Union elements operating in northern and western Alabama failed, the vast area from the middle of Mississippi to the middle of Georgia would still have been left intact, from which the hostilities of Confederacy might have been continued. With this area from which to operate, it might have offered an outlet for the Confederate armies in the east, namely those of Lee and Johnston, to escape.

In the Mobile Campaign, both the Confederate and Union armies were entitled to praise for their constant industry and energy. The gallantry displayed by the officers and soldiers of both the Blue and the Gray in this Campaign has rarely been surpassed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is a pleasure to record here the assistance received from many sources; the author's indebtedness for aids runs in many directions.

The author wishes to acknowledge his gratitude to a stimulating teacher and valued friend, Dr. James L. Nichols, Jr., of Stephen F. Austin State College, Nacogdoches, Texas, who first introduced me to the field of Civil War History. His inspiration fostered the deciphering and transcription of the Colby letters. Dr. Nicholas' advice was most helpful in the formative stage of this study.

The author's debt to libraries and archives is especially great. The cordial assistance of the directors and staff of these institutions is gratefully acknowledged. Thanks are due to the aid rendered at the University of Texas Library, the Louisiana State University Library, the University of Kansas Library, the Ohio State University Library, the University of Illinois Library, Mobile Public Library; the Library of the Alabama State Department of Archives and History, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, and Illinois State Department of Archives and History; and to the Library of the Chicago Historical Society.

Special thanks are due to Mrs. Lewis Sawyer, Assistant Reference Librarian, Chicago Historical Society; Miss Irma Meyer and Mrs. E. C. Harris of the Mobile Public Library, Miss Hazel Council of Daphne, Alabama, Captain Paul Mote, United States Navy, Retired, of Fairhope, Alabama, and Mr. Peter A. Brannon, Director of the Alabama State Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama. The author

is indebted to Mr. Edwin C. Bearss, formerly Historian at Vicksburg National Park and presently Research Historian for the National Park Service, for his helpful suggestions with regard to the Colby letters.

Three in particular deserve special thanks for their encouragement, skillful advice, and valuable criticisms. The author is grateful to the following members of the Department of History, Government and Philosophy of Kansas State University, Dr. A. Bower Sageser, Miss Hazel Riggs, and Dr. James C. Carey.

It is most gratifying to remember the late Mrs. Florence Colby Fish and the late Miss Carlie Faye Colby, daughters of Carlos W. Colby, for without their interest and insight into the historical significance of the letters written by their father during the Civil War, his letters might not have been preserved. Thanks are due to Mrs. Henry Hastings Colby, daughter-in-law, to three grandchildren of Carlos W. Colby, Mr. John H. Colby, Mrs. James A. Williams, Jr., and Mrs. Carol Colby Peterson, for the loan of letters and other manuscript material concerning the life and military service of Carlos W. Colby.

This study could hardly have been completed without the continued assistance of Elizabeth May Painter, mother of the author and granddaughter of Carlos W. Colby. Her knowledge of "Colby sayings" were of eminent value in deciphering the Colby letters. The author is grateful to her for the many long hours she spent in making the transcription of the Colby letters and typing the first draft of this thesis; for her encouragement, helpful advice, and most valuable criticism which have contributed to the scholarship of this study.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Manuscripts

Colby, Carlos W. Letters of Carlos W. Colby. Manuscript of 120 letters plus fragments, 8 letters from February 19, 1865, to April 17, 1865. Possession of author.

_____. Memoirs of Military Service, by Carlos W. Colby, late Company G, 97th Illinois Volunteer /Infantry Regiment/. Manuscript in three different copies. March, June and July, 1910. Possession of author.

Published Materials

Andrews, Alice E., editor. Christopher C. Andrews, Recollections: 1829-1922. Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1928.

Andrews, Brevet Major-General Christopher Columbus. History of the Campaign of Mobile. Second Edition. New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1889.

Boynton, Charles Brandon. The History of the Navy During the Rebellion. Volume II. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1868.

Complete History of the 46th Illinois Veteran Volunteer Infantry. Eastport, Illinois: Bailey and Ankeny, Printers, 1866.

Cornish, Dudley Taylor. The Sable Arm. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1956.

Delaney, Caldwell. The Story of Mobile. Mobile, Alabama: Gill Printing Company, 1953.

Draper, John William. History of the American Civil War. Volume III. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1870.

Dyer, Frederick H. A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion. Des Moines, Iowa: The Dyer Publishing Company, 1908.

Eddy, T. M. The Patriotism of Illinois. Chicago, Clark and Company, 1865.

Fitzgerald, W. Norman, Jr. President Lincoln's Blockade and the Defence of Mobile. Historical Bulletin No. 12. Madison, Wisconsin: Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin, 1954.

Grant, Ulysses S. Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant. Two volumes. New York: Charles L. Webster and Company, 1885.

Hamilton, Oscar B. History of Jersey County, Illinois. Chicago: Munsell Publishing Company, 1919.

Hamilton, Peter J. Mobile of the Five Flags. Mobile, Alabama: The Gill Printing Company, 1913.

Hubbard, L. F., General. Minnesota in the Red River Expedition, 1864 and the Campaign of Mobile, 1865. Papers Read Before the Minnesota Historical Society, November 11, 1907, and February 10, 1907. (Bound folder in University of Texas Library, Catalog number, 973.7388, H861.)

Illinois at Vicksburg. Chicago: Blakely Printing Company, 1907.

Ingersoll, Luther D. Iowa and the Rebellion. Chicago: J. B. Lippincott and Company, 1866.

Johnson, Robert Underwood, and Clarence Clough Buel, editors. Battles and Leaders of the Civil War. 1956 edition, New Introduction by Roy F. Nichols. Volumes III and IV. New York: Thomas Yoseloss, 1956.

Lewis, Charles Lee. David Glasgow Farragut. Annapolis, Maryland: The United States Naval Institute, 1943.

Mahan, A. T. The Gulf and Inland Waters. The Navy in the Civil War, Volume III. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883.

Marshall, T. B. History of the Eighty-Third Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Cincinnati, Ohio, The Eighty-Third Ohio Volunteer Infantry Association, 1912.

Maury, Davny H., General, C. S. A. The Defence of Mobile in 1865. Southern Historical Society Papers, Volume III, No. 1. Richmond, Virginia, 1877.

Mobile Press Register, The. Sunday, October 30, 1955, Section B. (Blakely File, Mobile Public Library)

Moore, Frank, editor. The Rebellion Record. Volume VIII. New York: D. Van Nostrans, 1865.

Quarles, Benjamin. The Negro in the Civil War. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953.

Randall, J. G. The Civil War and Reconstruction. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1953.

Reece, J. N., Brigadier General. Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Illinois. Volume V. Springfield, Illinois: Phillips Brothers, State Printers, 1901.

Reid, Whitelaw. Ohio in the War. Cincinnati: Moore Wilslach and Baldwin Company, 1868.

Spears, John Randolph. David G. Farragut. American Crisis Biographies. Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs and Company, 1905.

War of the Rebellion, The: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. 128 Volumes. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901. (Especially Vol. 39, pt. 1 and 2; Vol. 41, pt. 1 and 4; Vol. 45, pt. 1 and 2; Vol. 46, pt. 2; Vol. 47, p. 2; Vol. 48, pt. 1 and 2; Vol. 49, pt. 1 and 2.)

Wescott, Allan, editor. American Sea Power Since 1775. Chicago: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1947.

West, Richard Sedgwick, Jr. Gideon Welles. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1943.

_____. Mr. Lincoln's Navy. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1957.

Wood, William. Captains of the Civil War. The Chronicles of America Series, Volume 31. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921.

APPENDICES

Union Letters of Carlos W. Colby, February 19, 1865
to April 17, 1865

Letter No. 1

Hd. Qrs. Co G. 97 Ills.
Barrancas Florida
February 19th 1865

My Dear Neace Carrie[1]

How often do I think of you, and Sympathis with you, since the loss of your dearly beloved Mama,[2] As long as it is daylight I have plenty to do to ocupy my mind, but when night comes then it again returns to my mind how desolate and lonely it must be at home without your Dear Mama[3] And yet Dear Carrie it is all for the best, for her Soul will rest in peace, with your Dear Grandma in Heaven. So why should we wish to call her back to Earth, where all is toil and trouble. Since I left home I have often resolved to write you but have so often broken my resolve and this is the first time that I have carried it into effect with Pen, and Paper, Most of my time dureing the week is ocupied in doing the duties that are required of me in camp, so much so that I can not have time to write a letter without being disturbed. For the past week have had to drill six hours a day beside the many other little thing that had to be done, so you see I do not have much time to myself. And as for writing after night that

---

[1]Niece Carrie is the daughter of Carlos W. Colby's sister, Caroline Colby Thomas, also sometimes called Carrie.

[2]Caroline Thomas died in December, 1864, shortly after giving birth to Charles (Charlie) Thomas.

[3]Many places Carlos W. Colby fails to add punctuation, often it is difficult to distinguish between his commas, periods, and where new sentences begin.

is out of the question, for our house is so small that we can have neither Chairs nor table in it, And all the protection we have from the Earth is a Rubber Blanket spread on the Ground, that has to serve for Chairs to sit on, a table to eat from, and a bed to sleep on, In my tent there are two beside myself Wm [William D.] Perrin, and Orville Paddock [Jr.],[4] each of us have a piece of tent cloth buttoned together at the ends and stretched over a pole, so as to look like the roof of a house with the third piece we will up one of the tent, and then for the other end we use a rubber blanket. in this way we have a house big enough to crawl into but not big enough to stand up in, then when we go on a march each man takes his piece of tent, his Rubber, and Woolen Blanket and rolls them up in his Knapsack with all his cloths, so that when we stop at night we can have our house built and ready to go to bed in a half hour after stoping, beside this a Soldier has to carry a Canteen full of Water, a Haversack with Rations to eat for two or three days, a Gun and Cartridge Box. Makeing as some of the boys say [,] a full Mule load.

We are having dlightful warm and pleasant weather. The grass is looking as green, and the birds sing as gaily as they do in April with you.

I have no news to tell you, nor anything to write about that will interest you that I can think of So you will have to excuse me for not writing a more interesting letter

---

[4]Members of Company G., Ninty-seventh Illinois Volunteer Regiment, Perrin is from Hardin, Illinois and Paddock is from Alton, Illinois.

Now Carrie you must write me and tell me how you are getting along with your Studies and whether Marshall learns as fast as ever or not. I am expecting to be greatly astonished when I come home after seven months more service to find how much progress you have made in your Studies so you will not let me be disapointed? Will You? I wrote to your Papa one day last week. Give my love and Kises to All, Without forgetting to throw in several extra Kisses to Marshal /1/,[5] and Charlie[6]

I remain ever Your loving

Uncle

Carlie

---

[5]Carlos W. Colby's nephew, Carrie's seven year old brother.

[6]Carlos W. Colby's nephew, Carrie's two months old brother.

Letter No. 2

Barrancas Fla. Feb. 22nd /1865/

Dear Sallie[7]

The National Salute in honor of Washingtons birthday has just ceased fireing.

Time has flown so rapidly with me as since being in the service of my Country. I can hardly realize that two years have passed away since I was on picket at Youngs Point and heard the salute fired from all Gun Boats at the mouth of Yazoo river[8] And yet such is the case and an eventful two years it has been to my self And one of deep Affliction to our family.

I believe that our Regiment is the only one here that is celebrating the day by not drilling, And that is a wonder too for Col. Vifquain[9] is the hardest drill master here, by all odds. As a general thing, there has to be a good excuse or he will have us drilling.

Vifquain is a man that I respect, still I <u>fear</u> him Since he has come in command /,/ the Regt.[10] has been under the strictest Military discipline Some of his rules are rather grinding to a volunteer, and I sometimes think useless, Although I had rather it

---

[7]Carlos W. Colby's sister, Sarah.

[8]In February, 1863 the Ninty-seventh Illinois was taking part in the Vicksburg Campaign. Young's Point is about ten miles due west of Vicksburg, Mississippi. The mouth of the Yazoo River is just north of Young's Point on the east side of the Mississippi River.

[9]Lieutenant Colonel Victor Vifquain was the Commander of Ninty-seventh Illinois Volunteer Regiment. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for gallantry displayed in the assault of the Confederate works at Blakely, Alabama.

[10]Carlos W. Colby abbreviates regiment both "Regt." and "Rgt."

would be so, than to be ruled by as lenient hand as formerly, for then a good Soldier had all the duty to preform and a shirk was always playing off. By being so strict he has made a good many enemies, some of whom have been writing him Anonamous letters, making some dreadful threats, Shaving his Horses Main tail & &. He suspects it to be the doings of some of the members of Co. G. Should not be at all surprised if his supposition was correct, for since I have been back to the Regt. Our Company have had eight or ten men tried by Court Martial for various misdemeanors At the present time we have six under Arrest /three/ Absent, and three present. As many more /roughs/ might be subtracted from the Company and then /we would still/ have a full compliment of roughs. One thing is certain the Colonel keeps a sharp eye on us so that we are well looked after He has the keenest eye of any man I ever saw, he can see every movement that is made on Dress parade, and the penalty of moving hand or foot or of the least unnecessary noise is six days extra duty to a private or the reduction to a non commissioned Officer. As for myself believe am rather a favorate for I have crossed him two or three times, and as yet have never been reproved.

Troops are concentrating at this place, All preparations are being made for a Military movement in some direction prehaps through the interior of the State to Montgomery /Alabama/, that I should much prefer to staying here all summer (Although this is a healthy place) for I have always had the best health when on the march, And /I/ can stand the marching as well as the best of them.
Our Regt. was never in as good health as at the present time since leaving Dauphin Island which was about the middle of Dec. it has sent

but one man to the General Hosp. with sickness And there are not over ten, or fifteen excused daily As for myself I occasionaly have a draw-back for a day or two, but not enough to interfere at all with my duty My weight is now 161 lbs. that is a gain of about twelve lbs. since I left you.[11] Have writen this with a pencil because I hate to sit on the ground with my portfolio on my knee, and write with a pen This is about the dulest place for news that I was ever in. Have recd. but one letter from you since have been here. Yesterday the flags of the fort were at half mast [,] the report is that a vessel with the 21 Iowa[12] on board, have sunk in coming from N. O. [New Orleans] here, Although it may be only a report [,] May God grant that is is for it is a splendid Regt

With love and kises to All I remain as ever Your loving Brother

Carl

---

[11]Carlos W. Colby was sick with dysentery and was given a furlough to go home in the middle of September, 1864, and returned to duty December 24, 1864, not fully recovered.

[12]The Twenty-first Iowa Infantry Regiment.

Letter No. 3

Barrancas Florida
March 4th 1865

My Own Dear Carrie

I had just thought of writing to your Auntie to day, but as last evenings mail brought me a letter from you enclosed in which was the Handkerchief which you dear Mama had procured for me, I shall take this oppourtunity of Answering yours and let Aunties go until some future time. Dear Carrie you do not know how much surprised, and delighted I was at receiving your letter. To see such a nicely written letter, without a mistake in it, is enough to delight the heart of any loving Uncle, And then to see what improvement you have made in writing since I left home is quite astonishing.

The Handkerchief you sent me I shall prise highly, as being a present from My Own dear Sister Carrie, beside your letter, I also received one from your Auntie[13] dated the 12th of last month in which she gives a good account of you, and Marshal, as progressing finely with your studies, of course was not surprised at that, for you always was a good girl, And would not intentionly do anything wrong, And to learn you lessons was always a delight,

I was pained to hear that you had suffered so with the Ear Ache and also the sickness of your dear little Brothers. I hardly know what to write about, to interest you, but for the want of anything better to write will give a little description of how some of the Officers have fixxed up Around their tents. A Lt. Colonels Shoulder

[13]Probably Sarah, Carlos W. Colby's sister.

Straps consists of two Silver leavs on the strap. Some of the men made an imitation of the same, in the sand, in front of Lt. Colonel Vifquains tent one night just before dark, The outlines of the leaf was made by placing little Snails (that are picked up along the coast) all around and filling in the centre with white sand, when it was finished it looked quite perfect, but the next morning low, and behold it was all spoiled And as every body at first supposed that someone had done it on purpose but on a close examination it proved that the Snails were alive, and that they had done all the mischief , by moving from their proper positions. Dr. Smith has in front of his tent a miniature Fort built in the Shape of a Star, it mounts eight Guns which are nothing more than Ale bottles, The Parapet is covered with Green moss [,] it is built so styleish as to attract the attention of every passer by for everything about it is perfect eaven to a small Flag flying over it Some of the boys in the Regt. got some red berries and placed them on the sand in the Shape of letters, and wrote out the words Fort Smith.

In the 76 Illinois they have a representation of the Eagle made in the sand, and the name of the Colonel with the number of the Regt written with the red berries,

In the 24 Indiana nearly every Officer has some ornamental work in front of his quarters, such as hearts, diamonds, cannon, morters, It is rearly worth ones while to spend an hour in roaming around through the different Corps, to see the ornamental works which is

equal to any Garden, But enough, Am nearly at the bottom of the page so Goodbye Give lots of kises to Marshal and Charlie and lots of love to All

I Am Your loving Uncle

Carl

Letter No. 4

[No heading or date, probably Barrancas, Florida, between March 4 and 10, 1865]

Dear Sallie

As there is no drill to day, will have a little talk with you, When I commenced writing did not think should more than time enough to answer Dear Carries letter.

It is now evening and but a little while to roll call, After writing the heading of this[14] was called away to make out a Clothing estamate for the Co. [Company G] for this month, After which came dinner, then hearing that a boat had arrived at port concluded to rove [in] to town, to see what the news was from <u>America or any other civilized Country</u>, As this is one of the out posts and not counted in any enlightened Kingdoms In this way the Afternoon passed away and this epistle not finished, but considered myself recompenced for my Afternoon loaf, for I procured a N.O. [New Orleans] paper of the 1st Inst. in which was the gratifying news of our troops ocupying Charleston and through Rebes [']s source [,] Wilmington also, Truly this is encourageing news, And may God speed the right, and teach all rebels in Arms, ere it is to late, that their Cause is an unholy one, While in town to day, saw and talked with one of eight deserters who left the Rebel ranks two weeks ago at Montgomery, Ala. Theirs is the old Story of dissatisfaction and terrible suffering in the ranks of their army they are heartily disgusted with the <u>would be</u>

---

[14] As there is no heading to this letter, Colby must be referring to the salutation and first two sentences.

Counfederacy as they call it. Well we are making preperations for a tramp through that portion of the Country so shall probibly have a chance to see whether there is any sympathy for us or not. The old 13 A.C. [Thirteenth Army Corps] has been again reorganized with Gen [Gordon] Granger[15] in command [,] ours is the 2nd Div. Comd. by Brig. Gen. [Christopher C.] Andrews, this with a brigade of Colored troops All under the Command of [Major] General [Frederick] Steel [e] is to constitute the right wind of the Army, as near as I can find out.[16] Another detachment of the 13 Corps is to leave Ceder point under the charge of the Corps commander, The left wing is to start from Pascagoula under old Grey Hairs as he generally is called [Major General] A. J. Smith, Of course a Soldier is not expected to know much about Military affairs, but then we can conjecture what is going to transpire And sometimes correctly.[17] So if there is any reliability to be placed in such reports we shall start about the 20th of this month.

We have been having any amount of inspections, Grand Reviews & [etc.,] by General's Steel [,] Ashboth [Brigadier General Alexander Asboth][18]

---

[15]The new Thirteenth Army Corps was reorganized February 18, 1865, Major General Gordon Granger Commanding.

[16]Colby's information here is incorrect. Steele's Command consisted of the Second Division (13th Army Corps), one division of Colored troops (Brig. Gen. John P. Hawkins Division) plus one Cavalry Brigade (Brigadier General Thomas J. Lucas' Brigade, and after March 29, 1865, Lucas' command was a Cavalry division).

[17]Here, however, Colby's conjecture is incorrect, see Chapter IV, text. General Steele in command of U. S. Forces, The Column from Pensacola as of February 28, 1865.

[18]Commander of the District of West Florida with Headquarters at Barrancas, Fla.

and Andrews but that is not worth speaking about for it is a perfect bore, and that you knew before Have had quite a little desertion in Co. G in the last week Jeremiah Heath who was wounded as a Scout on the Atchafalaya [River][19] and was immediately promoted to Corporal for bravery has been reduced to the ranks for feigning a parilised arm from the effects of his wound. He returned to the Regt. at the same time I did and had so completely fooled the Dr.[20] as to clear himself from duty until the present time, by Carrying his arm still and claiming to be unable to bend it. In some way the Dr got wind of his playing off, and so called him up to examine him, on the pretence of making out his discharge, After a little Soft Soaping he got him to make a full confession of his ability of using his arm, The consequence is that Mr. Heath had to go on duty, and has been pretty hard run by the boys of the Company. It is now almost time to call the roll, and what an awful scroll I have written do not believe I could read it, but circumstances under which it is writen must be a partial excuse I am siting on the ground with my Portfolio on my knees and most of the time there has been four in the tent beside myself [,] All talking and laughing and every half minute asking me some questions

I answered Cousins Lucys letter before I left five mile creek. How

---

[19]The Atchafalaya River is located in southeastern Louisiana west of Baton Rouge and the Mississippi River. The Regiment was active in this area from the middle of September to the middle of October, 1864.

[20]Probably refers to Charles Davis, the Regimental Surgeon at this time.

is Henry's sick horse getting along? And the other Horses how do they look? What is the prospect for Wheat the comeing season? And the fruit crop Also? Try and get Henry to write Give my Kindest regards to Aunt Neipha [?] Henry [,] Dr. Birckrudge wife and family

The drums have commenced to beat so Good night

Lots of love

Carl

Letter No. 5

Sixteen Miles from Sea, and Sixteen
from land
On the Pensacola and Montgomery R.R.
March 22, 1865

Dear Sister,

The heading of this letter gives you as good a discription of this Country as I can give Although I suppose it must be called land, for it belongs to the U.S. unentered, for no one ever though enough of it to enter it, and who blames Anybody? I dont, A few squatters houses have been buklt along the road, but are now deserted Have not seen a living pig, cow or dog since leaving Pensacola and they say that we are only half way through the Florida flats. We left the Coast early Monday morning the 97th /Illinois/ and the 24 Ind. were train guards and assistants in Case the teams stalled, and by the way they done nothing else for there is no bottom to this country as soon as the sod is cut through /,/ so that it made mules of us all day but nevertheless we made eleven miles by a little after dark. Yesterday our Regt. was the second in line marched five miles through a drenching rain And went into camp by 8½ A.M. Could go no further for the trains could not get through. On the first days march our Division train of 150 waggons broke 13 waggon tongues, and two wheels And as for yesterdays march I guess it was not much better for at dusk there had not more than half the train got up. Today we are waiting for the Colored Division to pass

This is a most delightful day cool and pleasant.

General Steel /e/ is in command of the two Divisions in this Expedition. He came up last night, And brought with him A large

mail. I got one from Lucy's Jamie written at School. He has improved a good deal in writing since he last wrote have written a good long letter in answer to it this morning, And have written my write out, and do not feel in the humor to write any more.

This march is just going to be the cureing of my Dysentary, As I am feeling better every day, In my last I to acknowledge the receipt of several Harpers weekly's three I think.

Am doubtful whether I shall be able to mail this soon or not.

No more at present love and kisses to all Ever you loving Brother

Carl

March 24 This is a most delightful day cloudy and cool We marched 10 miles yesterday Are now encamped near Pine Barren creek, which is being pontooned, Have had no opportunity of mailing this as yet, Have been Occupying myself this morning in washing myself and Cloths /clothes/, Bill Perrin has just come in with a splendid Boquet of flowers, wish I had an opportunity of sending you one. All the kinds that I know are the dogwood blossom Red Bud, and violets, The green border is fern, and the leaves from the Spice wood.
We have none of our comisioned Officers with the Company /,/ Lt. Laramer /Second Lieutenant George W. Larimer/ of C. E in command /,/ Capt. /Frederick P./ Lewis is A.A.A.G. /Assistant Acting Adjutant General/ on Col. Spiceleys /William T. Spicely's/ (Comdg. the /Second/ Brigade /Thirteenth Army Corps/) Staff. Lt. /Charles/ Davis in charge of the Ambulance Corps of the Div, And the day before we left Pensacola /Second Lieutenent William P./ Hazard[21]

[21]Lieutenant in Company G, 97th Illinois Regiment, later cleared himself.

recd. an order from the War Dept. revoking his Commision. When we were at Barrancas the Inspector General made inquiries in regard to the number of men in the Co. at the time of his muster which was only 82 and 85 is the minimum for which a Second Lt. could be musyered Do not know whether will succeed in clearing himself or not At least he will get an honorable discharge and only the mustering officer will be blamed.

Letter No. 6

Hd. Qrs. Co. G 97th Ills Vol.
In The Field Near Blakely
Apr. 8th, 1865

Dear Dear Sister

I wrote a few lines a few evenings since informing you of our arrival at this place, And the commencing of a Siege. The most I can now say is, that we are rapidly approaching their works by entrenching. For the last hour there has been one of the heaviest bombardment's on our extreme left, Near, or at, Ft. Spanish that I ever heard [,] that is their Main works with a Continuous line of works to the river above Blakely There is more or less cannonadeing every day, our loss however has been comparatively light, but three men in the Regt. being wounded by the enemys fire Seriously but not Morraly Yesterday Adjutant [John R.] Frierson was severely wounded by an accidental discharge of a pistol in the hands of one of the Officers [,] the ball entering his mouth and passing through so as to be cut out at the back of the neck It is thought however that he will recover.

Our Div. is again under marching orders with five days rations in Haversack and fifteen in waggons. The report is that it is to take supplies to Gen [George H.] Thomas and we suppose him to be near Montgomery

Had intended to have written a long letter giving a detailed account of our march from Pensacola, but my time has been so occupied that have rearly had no time, and now have hardly five minutes to call my own.

It is getting so dark that it is with dificulty that I can

see the lines, so will have to close for the present, for have no candle Since have been here have received letters from you and one Harpers weekly. In the letter Henry[22] enclosed in yours he asks what I think we had better take for the property where the House Stands. I think that if we could get $2,500 dollars [sic] in cash, or its equivalent, that it would be best to sell, and pay up Debts, and then improve the other property. Will think the matter over more and report more fully the next opportunity but I should say sell at that price Shall have to write to Marshal some time so now Good Night It is so dark that I can not see the marks that I make so do not know whether you can read it or not

Love and Kises to all

Your loving Brother

Carl

---

[22]Surname not known.

Sunday Noon [April 9, 1865]

And we have not been relieved Although we are still expecting it to transpire at Any Minute.

The heavy fireing that I spoke of in the other sheet was an assalt on Ft. Spanish by our forces. And it is now officially reported to be in our posesion. Some Say that it was taken at midnight, that the first assalt was unsuccessful, As to the fact of the case am not prepared to say. Our loss most have been heavy for our men were three lines deep. We have always supposed that when Ft. S.-- [Spanish] fell that they could not hold Blakely And the report now is that they are evacuating And with their Gun Boats in the river to cover their retreat. we can not do much to oppose or harrass them. Our Gun Boats have not as yet got up to be of any assistance for the Channel of the river is literaly full of Torpedoes, which could not be removed as long as they were under the cover of their Batteries.[23] But now they are being speedily removed by Prisoners Captured last night. The Number reported Captured faires from two, to three thousand. As for getting any thing reliable it is utterly impossible as there are so many rumors affloat.

If I am not disturbed before finishing will coppy my notes entered in a Diary. Before going further will tell you how it is customary for an Army to march. The Cavalry always [(usually)] take[s] the lead, and if any enemy [is] in the rear, also the rear is protected by them. With two or more Div. of Inft. [infantry,] the

---

[23] These protective batteries were probably those at Fort Huger and Fort Tracy at the fork of the Apalachee and Blakely Rivers.

Advance Div. to day takes the rear to morrow And the same with Brig's /Brigades/ and Regt.'s, the advance Brig. takes the rear of its Div. And the Regt. of its Brig. The last Brig. /is/ usually guarding the Div. train, one Regt just in the advance, one behind and the others as flankers, or if not practable to travil /travel/ beside the waggons each Regt. is assigned so many waggons and marches between them. My notes commences on leaving Pensacola /, Florida/ March 20th.

/March 20th/ Left Pensacola early this morning for a wild Goose chase through the Country, and for my part have but little confidence of success. Our force consists of two Brigades of the 13 A.C. /,/ And one Div. of three Brig. of Colored Inft. /,/ and three Regts of Cav., then there are four more Cav. Rgt /s./ /that have/ gone up the Bay to embark at Milton making in All a force of about fifteen thousand men With five days Rations in Haversack and six on the waggons. Our Regt. was on train guard, which consists of one hundred fifty waggons. The country is /so/ low /,/ flat /,/ and Sandy /,/ the waggons would mire down, so that we had to put our Shoulders to the wheel frequently to help them out, After making eleven miles we were tired enough to go into Camp

/March 21st/ Was again on the road by day light Marched six miles through a drenching rain and went in to camp by 8 A.M. As there had been a heavy fall of rain all night it was utterly impossible for the waggons to get through. The Country a little more rolling, but a treacherous quick sand lies under the sod.

/March 22nd/ Our Div. laid in Camp to let the Colored troops pass. Weather clear and cool.

/March/ 23rd. took up our line of March at 10½ A.M. Our Regt /was/ just in the advance of the train /,/ march ten miles, had to make several Stops to Corduroy the worst places in the roads, Arrived in Camp by dark The Country more hilly, with occasional signs of civilization. The Change in the Scenery from barren Pines to the more enlivening foliage of the Oak, Ash, and the blossoms of Peach, Plumb, Cherry /,/ Red bud and dog wood is an agreeable one, One great blessing we have is good water and plenty of it.

/March/ 24th. Laid in Camp until about 5 P.M. when we moved our Camp across Pine barren Creek, Although the deepest of it had been pontooned yet we had to wade through the water nearly waist deep

/March/ 25th. Was on the road by a little after day light. Marched twenty miles and went into Camp near Escambia river a little before dark. We went into Camp by 1 P.M. but had hardly got our Knapsacks off, when the order came to fall in as we were wanted to the front. By a flank movement our Col. got the 97 /th Illinois/ in the advance and for six miles we made a forced march making but one halt of about five minutes. The Cav. /was/ fight /ing/ ahead but we could not get up /in time/ to /assist/ them, they done some good fighting /,/ Capturing 1 General (mortaly wounded)[24] 1 Col. 1 Maj. and 150 men[25] The /y/ Showe/d/ signs of hard fighting and a hasty retreat on the

---

[24]Brigadier General James H. Clanton, C.S.A., was thought at first to be mortally wounded, but recovered.

[25]Brigadier General T. S. Lucas, commanding the Separate Cavalry Brigade, lists the captured as "General Clanton----, 18 other officers, and 101 enlisted men." Official Records, Ser. L, XLIX, pt. 2, p. 119.

part of the Rebs, it [the area] being strewn with Knapsacks, Guns and any and every thing that would impede their flight

[March] 26th. The Inft of the 2nd Brig crossed the river as soon as they could see, and made a forced march to Pollard, a small town at the junction of the Montgomery and Mobile with the Blakely and Pollard R.R. [Mobile and Great Northern and the Alabama and Florida Railroads] where we had heard there was a small rebel force, By some means our Col. always succeeds in getting the 97th in the Advance when there is a prospect of a fight. The town was surrounded and the whole force advanced on it at once, but there was nary Reb there, hearing of our advance they had skedadeled, After destroying the R.R. track for some distance and burning several public buildings we returned to our Division. In the Rebels retreat they had destroyed the main road bridge over the river so that we had to cross on the stringers of the R.R. Bridge and only footmen could pass. One peculiarity of this country is that the ground is sollider [more solid] in the bottoms than on the tops of the hills. Adter rising an elevation of an hundred feet, water can be found within two or three feet of the surface, and in many places flows over the top of the ground.

[March] 27th. We have now changed our direction and are marching towards Blakely Our Regt is train guard It rained all day [,] did not get into Camp until near mid night, and then made only about twelve miles. We are now reduced to half rations considerable being thrown away from waggons that broke down The slowness of our movements, and Prisoners being fed made it necessary to economise

[March] 28th. The 97 in the Advance of the Div. marched twelve miles and went into Camp early

[March] 29th. Marched ten Miles [,] was rear guard to the train [,] passed through one swamp that had to be Corduroyed for three miles [,] during the day over five miles of corduroy had to be made [It] commenced raining at noon and rained all the After noon and at night it fell in torrents completely flooding the camp. Nelson Godwin [Goodwin] of Co. G. died from the effects of an accidental wound received yesterday from the falling of a tree

[March] 30th. Marched about nine miles nearly all the way through swamps consequently most of the road had to be corduroyed [,] have worked harder and feel more tired than any night of the march. Are now reduced to one third rations and with what we can forage from the Country which is precious little for it is nearly all a barren wilderness

[March] 31st. Marched eighteen and a half miles over a rough broken country. it is a little more inhabited, so that our mess, [Orville] Paddock [Jr.] and [William D.] Perrin succeeded in getting some corn and a Turkey. At night we encamped on the grounds of a beautiful plantation near Stockton. The woman of the House was very bitter in her denunciation against the Yanks which caused a guard to be placed over the house to keep the boys from burning it, but it was of no use, for we had not got out of sight in the morning before it was in flames.

April 1st. Made ten miles some skirmishing along toward night by the Cav. and Negroes Do not feel very well as have caught a severe cold and it has settled in my bones

[April] 2. Was on the road before day light heard heavy cannonading in the advance soon after starting Made a March of seven miles in a very short space of time, and came upon the enemy in force within

three miles of Blakely. Made several countermarches and flank movements to get in our proper position. Soon after dark we advanced toward the works driving in their outer Pickets. A heavy fire was kept up all night doing us no damage however.

[April] 3rd. Early in the Morning we retired to an adjacent hollow to cover us from the enemys fire [.] our position being too much exposed. A heavy cannonading was kept up all day by the Rebs. wounding one man in the 97.

[April] 4. Rather quiet during the day until 5 P.M. when our Batteries opened a terrific bombardment, On Ft. Spanish the extreme right of the Rebel works on the Mobile Bay. Heretofore they [the Confederates (probably) at Spanish Fort] have had it all their own way and done all the fireing, so I think they were a little surprised to find us open all at once with fifty Guns, and this is only a foretast[e] of what is to come

[April] 5th. Nothing of interest transpiring along our lines Our large Fatigue parties are gradualy nearing their works by entrenching under the cover of darkness the pits are dug deep and wide enough to hide a man and then finished by day light

[April] 6th. The Regt. was arroused at about 3 A.M. this morning as there was a heavy firing on our left. It proved to be a little Sortie of the enemy to drive in the Skirmishers of the 3[rd] Brigade, but they found us too much for them and had to retire considerably discomforted. At about 8 A.M. one of our batteries opened on a flag that they had on their works This caused a spirited cannonading for an hour

/April/ 7th. It rained nearly all day. There was about an hours heavy firing in the morning Then all was comparatively quiet two men from the Rgt were wounded by their shells. Adjutant Frierson was wounded by an accidental discharge of a pistol in the hands of one of the Officers

/April/ 8th. Weather cloudy with a little fall of rain just before dark there was one of the heaviest bombardments at Ft. Spanish that I ever heard

And So ends the Diary up to date, you see I was rather dispondent when we first started out /,/ one reason of it was because I did not like Gen. Andrews. I have since formed a little better opinion of him, believe he is brave, and cautious, but altogether to stylish, and not any to much capasity. He is a great favorate of Gen Steeles however. That /This/ sheet of letter paper was the cleanest I have, and to use wet paper it takes so much.

If you do not hear from me for a few weeks do not feel worried for a march is just the thing for me. Have never felt better since being in the Service that at the present time Kiss all the youngsters for their loving Uncle

Carl

Letter No. 7

In Hosp. Near Blakly
April 10/65

Dear Sister

I wrote you a long letter yesterday My expectations and plans that I laid down in that were flustrated A few minutes after the letter had been mailed, by an order to fall in, then I saw that there was a Charge to be made. We Charged their works and took them although I did not get in side their works, for I was struck by a musket ball in the Calf of the leg when within about twenty steps of their works, the ball passing through the fleshy part of the leg, making as clean a wound as could possibly be. it was considerable painful last night but to day it is quite easy Our Regt ['s]. loss was quite heavy [,] nearly one third of the Div loss We having fifty odd killed and wounded Our Co David Stanton Killed and seven wounded John Wyant probably mortaly wounded [died April 11, 1865] John or Joseph Clark [,] Henry and Thomas Doyle [,] Chas John and Frank Depuy [,] All wounded but not daingerous [dangerously] Capt [Samuel R. Howard] and S. L. Howard both wounded but not serious that is all I believe from the neighborhood. The 97 had four Capts and one Lt. wounded. Do not feel worried for my wound is not at all serious one I understand that we are to be sent to N.O. will write again in a day or two Love to All

Carl

With the exception of Stanton none of my most intimate friends were Struck

The 97 has covered herself with <u>Glory</u>

Letter No. 8

Sedgwick U.S. Gen Hosp. Ward 10 N.O.
[New Orleans, Louisiana]

Dear Sallie

This is a very warm day so much so that a sheet is almost a burden on me. Have just finished my dinner, had Bean Soup, Boiled Beef, a potatoe, and a slice of Bread. For breakfast I had potatoe Stew, Bread and Coffee. for supper it will be Bread, Rice and Tea, with Molasses or Apple Sauce. The quality is very good, and well cooked but the quantity is a little small for a Slightly wounded man, who has an egredious [egregious] apetite. My wound is getting along finely, it is discharging profusely, and pains me but very little. As yet can not bear any weight on my foot. but can move myself in bed without pain My greatest suffering all the time has not been the pain from my wound, but to see the agonies of those who have been terribly mangled and cut to pieces, their groans and moans is most heart rending.

I suppose if I do not give a full account of the fight, that you will give me a scolding, and as I should not like to be scolded think I had better report to the best of my ability.

Well at about 5 P.M. on the 9 Inst the order came to fall in. And then everyone knew that there was a charge to be made, from the appearances of things I had made up my mind that such was to be the case soon after dinner We made our way to our advance rifle pits, which is a good five hundred yards distant from the rebel works, while we were forming in the pits Capt. [James W.] Wisner of Co D stept upon the bank in the rear of the pits and was walking along close by where

I stood when he steped on a torpedo which exploded completely severing his right leg from his body at the knee. The lines stood four deep in the pits, the 24 Ind. in the advance on the right of our Brig supported by the 76th Ill. and we in the advance on the left supported by the 69 Ind. The 83 Ohio was in the advance on the right of the 3 Brig resting on our left. The Order was given to charge the advance immediately started with a whoop and yell Our rout/e/ lay for the first hundred yards over the brow of a hill exposed to a raking fire from two forts, with an abatis work of bush and fallen timber which for a man without any oposition was hard to get through, on this hill we suffered the most but no man but what was wounded faltered, then we had to cross a valley of fallen and tangled timber every man doing his best, firing while on the run and then droping behind a stump or log to reload At a distance of fifty yeards there was another abatis more difficult than the first, as I was climbing through it I saw the flash of a canon on my right which I knew was belching forth grape, and canister, but I was in a tangled mass of limbs and could not fall, it proved to be loaded with grape one struck my gun and shattered it in my hand Another passed through my blouse and the third struck the sole of my boot nearly cutting it through but not a single one touched me. I then advanced fifteen or twenty steps when I saw a man fall a little to my left and I had started for his gun when a musket ball took me in the leg. At first I thought it was a spent ball and was going on but had proceeded but a few steps when I fell and could go no farther [,] then on examination I found the ball had passed clear through the fleshy part of the leg and was bleeding profusely. After creeping back to a little less exposed position I laid and watched the lines as

they advanced on top of the parapets. I claim that our Colors was second to none in being planted on the parapets. As far as I could see and that was through two Brigades. I have sent you a N.O. paper of the 10 with an article on the taking of the place, the writer gives /us/ no credit whatever, but speaks in the highest praise of other Rgts in the Div. One thing is certain we lost heavier than any other according to our numbers, We loosing sixty two[26] I think, out of less than four hundred in the charge. The loss from our whole Div. was only about two hundred.[27] Where we charged was the most exposed position and had more torpedoes than any other place. /I/ immediately in front of where Capt W--- was blown up fifteen or twenty large torpedoes have been dug up, and that is exactly where I came out of our works. I was lucky enough to escape but poor John Wyant steped on one and exploded it tearing of/f/ one leg and badly shatering the other. David Stanton was shot dead on the field with the ball striking him in the eye. Wyant lived but two days. Charlie Johnson and my self are the only ones that are at this Hosp, he is wounded in the neck but is doing well. Patrick Finn and John /G./ Clark /,/ Thos. and Henry Doyle and Frank Depuy were all slightly wounded but left in the field Hosp.[28] Edward /Edwin D./ Lowe Our color bearer was shot through the bowels, after planting the colors on their works A braver lad never lived he belonged to Co K was from Jerseyville After he was shot he sent

---

[26]The Ninty-seventh Illinois Volunteer Regiment's losses in the assault as given in Colonel Vifquain' Official Report, was sixty one.

[27]Andrews' division's losses was 235 men killed or wounded in the assault.

[28]All of these were members of Company G from Colby's home town of Alton, Illinois.

his compliments to the Colonel, And said he had put the colors on their works. I was helped off the field by two boys from the 15 Mass [Massachusetts] Batty, I would not let the stretcher bearers take me for there were so many worse wounded, got to the Div. Hosp. and had my wound dressed by about nine Oclock Jimmie Rowe[29] was there on duty he was very kind to me, laid at the Div. Hosp untill two or three oclock of the 11th when we took the Ambulances for the Steamer landing twelve miles distant. Arrived at the landing about 10 P.M. where we were loaded on a light draft boat to convey us to deep water, there to be changed to a Gulf Steamer to come to the City. It was after dark on the night of the 13[th of April] when we arrived here, and it took all night to unload the boat. The suffering of the poor fellows was terrible for the Gulf was rough, and the accomodations poor, most of them having to lay below where it would suffocate a man, or else on deck in the hot Sun. Have given as minute details as my memory would permit.

Although I am now slightly wounded yet I consider myself a better man, than a little over three months ago when I joined the Regt, for I am once more intirely free from that Disease that troubled me so long I can get a furlough of sixty days but do not think I shall take it[30] Wish I could consult you a little about the matter

---

[29]One of the Regimental Hospital Stewards, later to become Carlos W. Colby's brother-in-law.

[30]By not taking the furlough he would be discharged that much sooner.

A few days previous to the fight Billy Spears and Billy Brooks that used to live at M Spauldings came to see me from the 122 Ills. the next day I went over to their Regt. and saw them and Charlie Brown and two of the Deleplain boys. Billy Howell was wounded at Nashville Billy Spears is the same little bow leged boy as of old but they say that he has good pluck. They wished to be remembered to you.

/Not signed/

ORGANIZATION OF THE UNION FORCES, COMMANDED BY MAJOR GENERAL EDWARD R.S. CANBY, OPERATING AGAINST MOBILE, ALABAMA, MARCH 17 TO APRIL 12, 1865[1]

/HEADQUARTERS/

Engineer Brigade

96th U.S. Colored Troops, Col. John C. Cobb
97th U.S. Colored Troops:
  Lieut. Col. George A. Harmount
  Col. George D. Robinson
  1st Company of Pontoniers, Capt. John J. Smith

Siege Train

Brig. Gen. James Totten

1st Indiana Heavy Artillery, Companies B,C,H,I,K,L, and M, Col. Benjamin F. Hays
New York Light Artillery, 18th Battery, Capt. Albert G. Mack

THIRTEENTH ARMY CORPS

Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger

Mortar Batteries

6th Michigan Heavy Artillery, Company A, Capt. Seldon F. Craig
6th Michigan Heavy Artillery, Company K, Lieut. Charles W. Wood

FIRST DIVISION
/Transferred to General Steele' command, April 1, 1865/

Brig. Gen. James C. Veatch

First Brigade

Brig. Gen. James R. Slack

99th Illinois (five companies), Lieut. Col. Asa C. Matthews
47th Indiana, Lieut. Col. John A. McLaughlin
21st Iowa, Lieut. Col. Salue G. Van Anda
29th Wisconsin, Lieut. Col. Bradford Hancock

---

[1] Official Record. op. cit., Ser. I, Vol. XLIX, pt. 1, pp. 105-109.

Second Brigade

Brig. Gen. Elias S. Dennis

8th Illinois, Col. Joshiah A. Sheetz
11th Illinois, Col. James Coates
46th Illinois, Col. Benjamin Dornblaser

Third Brigade

Lieut. Col. William B. Kinsey

29th Illinois, Lieut. Col. John A. Callicott
30th Missouri (four companies), Lieut. Col. William T. Wilkinson
161st New York, Maj. Willis Craig
23rd Wisconsin, Maj. Joseph E. Greene

Artillery

Capt. George E. Fox

Massachusetts Light, 4th Battery (D), Lieut. George W. Taylor
Massachusetts Light, 7th Battery (G), Capt. Newman W. Storer

Cavalry

4th Tennessee, Lieut. Col. Jacob M. Thornburgh [Used as escort for First Division when transferred to Steele's command, April 2, 1865]

BERTRAM'S BRIGADE

[First Brigade, Second Division, Thirteenth Army Corps]

Col. Henry Bertram

94 Illinois, Col. John McNults
19th Iowa, Lieut. Col. John Bruce
23rd Iowa, Col. Samuel L. Glasgow
20th Wisconsin, Lieut. Col. Henry A. Starr
1st Missouri Light Artillery, Battery F., Capt. Joseph Foust

THIRD DIVISION

Brig. Gen. William P. Benton

First Brigade

Col. David P. Grier

28th Illinois, Lieut. Col. Richard Ritter, Maj. Hinman Rhodes
77th Illinois, Lieut Col. John B. Reid
96th Ohio (five companies) Lieut. Col. Albert H. Brown
35th Wisconsin, Col. Henry Orff

Second Brigade

Col. Henry M. Day

91st Illinois, Lieut. Col. George A. Day
50th Indiana (five companies) Lieut. Col. Samuel T. Wells
29th Iowa, Col. Thomas H. Benton, Jr.
7th Vermont, Col. William C. Holbrook

Third Brigade

Col. Conrad Krez

33rd Iowa, Col. Cyrus H. Mackey
77th Ohio, Lieut. Col. William E. Stevens
27th Wisconsin, Capt. Charles M. Cunningham
28th Wisconsin, Lieut. Col. Edmund B. Gray

Artillery

New York Light, 21st Battery, Capt. James Barnes
New York Light, 26th Battery, Lieut. Adam Beattie

SIXTEENTH ARMY CORPS

Maj. Gen. Andrew J. Smith

Pontoniers

114th Illinois, Maj. John M. Johnson

FIRST DIVISION

Brig. Gen. John McArthur

First Brigade

Col. William L. McMillen

33rd Illinois, Col. Charles E. Lippincott
26th Indiana, Col. John G. Clark
93rd Indiana, Col. DeWitt C. Thomas
10th Minnesota, Lieut. Col. Samuel P. Jennison
72nd Ohio, Lieut. Col. Charles G. Eaton
95th Ohio, Lieut. Col. Jefferson Brumback

Second Brigade

Col. Lucius F. Hubbard

47th Illinois, Maj. Edward Bonham, Col. David W. Magee
5th Minnesota, Lieut. Col. William B. Gere
9th Minnesota, Col. Josiah F. March
11th Missouri, Maj. Modesta J. Green
8th Wisconsin, Lieut. Col. William B. Britton

Third Brigade

Col. William R. Marshall

12th Iowa, Maj. Samuel G. Knee
35th Iowa, Lieut. Col. William B. Keeler
7th Minnesota, Lieut. Col. George Bradley
33rd Missouri, Lieut. Col. William E. Heath

Artillery

Indiana Light, 3rd Battery, Capt. Thomas J. Ginn
Iowa Light, 2nd Battery, Capt. Joseph R. Reed

SECOND DIVISION
[Transferred to General Steele's command, April 2, 1865]

Brig. Gen. Kenner Garrard

First Brigade

Col. John I. Rinaker

119th Illinois, Col. Thomas Kinney
122nd Illinois, Lieut. Col. James F. Drish, Maj. James F. Chapman
89th Indiana, Lieut. Col. Hervey Craven
21st Missouri, Capt. Charles W. Tracy

Second Brigade

Brig. Gen. James I. Gilbert

117th Illinois, Col. Risdon M. Moore
27th Iowa, Maj. George W. Howard
32nd Iowa, Lieut. Col. Gustavus A. Eberhart
10th Kansas (four companies), Lieut. Col. Charles S. Hills
6th Minnesota, Lieut. Col. Hiram P. Grant

Third Brigade

Col. Charles L. Harris

58th Illinois (four companies), Capt. John Murphy
52nd Indiana, Lieut. Col. Zalmon S. Main
34th New Jersey, Col. William Hudson Lawrence
178th New York, Lieut. Col. John B. Gandolfo
11th Wisconsin, Maj. Jesse S. Miller

THIRD DIVISION

Brig. Gen. Eugene A. Carr

First Brigade

Col. Jonathan B. Moore

72nd Illinois, Lieut. Col. Joseph Stockton
95th Illinois, Col. Leander Blanden
44th Missouri, Capt. Frank G. Hopkins
33rd Wisconsin, Lieut. Col. Horation H. Virgin

Second Brigade

Col. Lyman M. Ward

40th Missouri, Col. Samuel A. Holmes
49th Missouri, Col. David P. Dyer
14th Wisconsin, Maj. Eddy F. Ferris

Third Brigade

Col. James L. Geddes

81st Illinois, Lieut. Col. Andrew W. Rogers
108th Illinois, Col. Charles Turner
124th Illinois, Bvt. Col. John H. Howe
8th Iowa, Lieut. Col. William B. Bell

Artillery Brigade

Capt. John W. Lowell

Illinois Light, Cogswell's Battery, Lieut. William B. Elting
2nd Illinois Light, Battery G, Lieut. Perry Wilch
Indiana Light, 1st Battery, Capt. Lawrence Jacoby
Indiana Light, 14th Battery, Capt. Francis W. Morse
Ohio Light, 17th Battery, Capt. Charles S. Rice

CAVALRY

First Division

Brig. Gen. Joseph Knipe

First Brigade

Col. Joseph Karge

12th Indiana, Maj. William H. Calkins
2nd New Jersey, Lieut. Col. P. Jones Yorke
4th Wisconsin, Col. Webster P. Moore

Second Brigade

Col. Gilbert M.L. Johnson

10th Indiana, Maj. George R. Swallow
13th Indiana, Lieut. Col. William T. Pepper
4th Tennessee, Lieut. Col. Jacob M. Thornburgh

Artillery

Ohio Light, 14th Battery, Capt. William C. Myers

COLUMN FROM PENSACOLA BAY, FLORIDA

Maj. Gen. Frederick Steele

FIRST DIVISION

Brig. Gen. John P. Hawkins

First Brigade

Brig. Gen. William A. Pile

73rd U.S. Colored Troops, Col. Henry C. Merriam
82nd U.S. Colored Troops, Col. Ladislas L. Zulavsky
86th U.S. Colored Troops, Lieut. Col. George E. Yarrington

Second Brigade

Col. Hiram Scofield

47th U.S. Colored Troops, Lieut. Col. Ferdinand E. Peebles
50th U.S. Colored Troops, Col. Charles A. Gilchrist
51st U.S. Colored Troops, Col. A. Watson Webber

Third Brigade

Col. Charles W. Drew

48th U.S. Colored Troops, Col. Frederick M. Crandel
68th U.S. Colored Troops, Col. J. Blackburn Jones, Lieut. Col. Daniel Densmore
76th U.S. Colored Troops, Maj. William E. Nye

SECOND DIVISION
[Detached from the Thirteenth Army Corps]

Brig. Gen. Christopher C. Andrews

Second Brigade

Col. William T. Spicely

76th Illinois, Lieut. Col. Charles C. Jones, Col. Samuel T. Busey
97th Illinois, Lieut. Col. Francis A. Sears
24th Indiana
69th Indiana (four companies), Lieut. Col. Oran Perry, Capt. Lewis K. Harris

Third Brigade

Col. Frederick W. Moore

37th Illinois, Col. Charles Black
20th Iowa, Lieut. Col. Joseph B. Leake
34th Iowa, Lieut. Col. George W. Clark
83rd Ohio, Lieut. Col. William H. Baldwin
114th Ohio, Col. John H. Kelly

Artillery

Connecticut Light, 2nd Battery, Capt. Walter S. Hotchkiss
Massachusetts Light, 15th Battery, Lieut. Albert Rowse

CAVALRY

LUCAS' DIVISION

Brig. Gen. Thomas J. Lucas

First Brigade

Col. Morgan H. Chrysler

1st Louisiana, Lieut. Col. Algernon S. Badger
31st Massachusetts (mounted infantry), Lieut. Col. Edward P. Nettleton
2nd New York Veteran, Col. Morgan H. Chrysler, Lieut. Col. Asa L. Gurney

Second Brigade

Lieut. Col. Andrew B. Spurling

1st Florida, Capt. Francis Lyons
2nd Illinois, Maj. Franklin Moore
2nd Maine, Maj. Charles A. Miller

Artillery

Massachusetts Light, 2nd Battery (B), Capt. William Marland

THE MOBILE CAMPAIGN: GENERAL FREDERICK STEELE'S EXPEDITION, 1865

by

JOHN STUART PAINTER

B. S. Kansas State University, 1958

AN ABSTRACT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of History, Government, and Philosophy

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1959

The Mobile Campaign was one of the last campaigns of any size undertaken by the Union army during the Civil War. The glory of the success of the Union forces along the eastern coast of the Confederacy during the months of March and early part of April, 1865, has, for nearly one hundred years, overshadowed this important campaign embarked upon by over forty thousand Union soldiers in the Mobile area. It is the purpose, therefore of this thesis to focus attention upon this nearly forgotten campaign, to give a general account of the events which preceded the Union Army's operations in the area around Mobile Bay, and to provide a narrative of the Federal Army's activities in the Mobile Campaign with a detailed emphasis on the operations of General Frederick Steele's force.

This account of the Mobile Campaign, for the most part, follows a chronological order. Because there is so little known and written about this Campaign, considerable space has been devoted to the general background leading up to this extensive military movement. The limiting factor of space has permitted the author to describe only briefly the activities of the Union Cavalry and the force under the direct command of General E. R. S. Canby. Where possible, in the narration of General Steele's operations, the description as found in the letters written by Carlos W. Colby, late of the Ninety-Seventh Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment was used to give the common soldier's outlook during the operations.

In digest form this thesis includes the following: After the introduction there is a discussion of the general Union strategy in the "west" from 1863 to 1865 and the Naval Battle of Mobile Bay in 1864. Following the naval activities which preceded those of the army, a description is

given of the concentration of Union forces and the camp life at Barrancas, Florida. With the Union Army concentrated, the Northern Campaign strategy is discussed with a description of the opposing Confederate forces. The first action of the Union troops is briefly related next. This was the operation of General Canby's force and the assault by this portion of the Union army in the Mobile Campaign upon the Confederate fortifications around the Old Spanish Fort on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay. The remaining two thirds of this thesis is concerned with the activities of General Steele's force. First is a narration of his troops' march from Pensacola, Florida, northward through the Florida flats into southern Alabama and then westward to north of the city of Mobile where his column turned south to the Confederate defenses around the town of Blakely, Alabama, located almost due east of Mobile. The second portion of General Steele's Expedition is concerned with the investment, siege and assault of these Confederate works at Blakely. For the interest and benefit of the readers, following the observations and conclusions concerning the Mobile Campaign in general and Steele's force in particular, are two appendices. Appendix I contains the letters of Carlos W. Colby exactly as they were written, from which edited excerpts were used in the narration of General Steele's expedition. Appendix II includes the Organization of Union Forces in Operation Against Mobile, Alabama, March 17 to April 12, 1865.

Based upon the Official Records and using the vivid descriptions given in the Colby letters and in C. C. Andrews' book, History of the Campaign of Mobile, written in 1867, this study for the first time presents the whole story of the Union forces in the Mobile Campaign. From relating the reasons why this campaign against the area around Mobile

Bay was delayed from 1863 to 1865, through the Naval Battle of Mobile Bay, to the Federal Army's activities on the eastern side of Mobile Bay which included the last large assault of the Civil War made against Confederate fortifications by the Union troops, this study emphasizes the almost forgotten operations of the Union Army in the Mobile Campaign, especially the important part played by General Frederick Steele's expedition.