

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Mississippi
COUNTY: Leflore
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE JUN 19 1973

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Fort Pemberton *Site*

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: *W of Greenwood 49E*  
Two miles west of U. S. Highway 49E

CITY OR TOWN: Greenwood *mic.* CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: First

STATE: Mississippi CODE: 38930 COUNTY: Leflore CODE: 83

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
U. S. Corps of Engineers

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Vicksburg District

CITY OR TOWN: Vicksburg STATE: Mississippi CODE: 39180 28

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Chancery Clerk's Office

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Leflore County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: Greenwood STATE: Mississippi CODE: 38930 28

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:

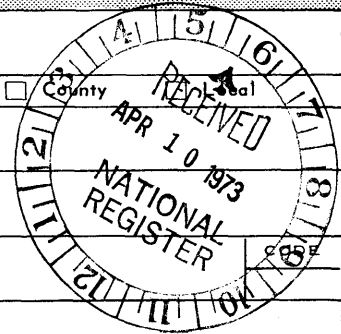
DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: Mississippi

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7. DESCRIPTION

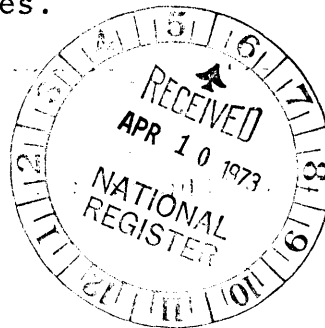
CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The fortifications of Fort Pemberton consisted of a line of earthworks which extended across the narrow strip of land between the Tallahatchie and Yazoo Rivers. These works, approximately 2,500 feet in length, were erected at approximately a forty-five degree angle from northeast to southwest. This angle in the bend of the Tallahatchie allowed the Confederate gunners a commanding control of the river for about one-thousand yards. During the attack on Fort Pemberton, the immediate area of the fort was about two feet above the level of the rivers. The battery platforms were four feet high and were protected by parapets made of earth and cotton bales ten feet in height.

Clayton's Bayou no longer connects the two rivers, but has been altered by a channel constructed by the U. S. Corps of Engineers. The channel was subsequently abandoned and dammed off. Earth from this excavation remains on the site as an undesirable visual impairment. Highway 49E cuts through the center of the earthworks, but fortunately much of the works on the south side near the Yazoo River and a portion of the works on the north side of the highway, on the Tallahatchie, remain in a good state of preservation.

A small park has been created by the county on the north side of the highway with appropriate markers telling the story of the Federal attack on the fort and of the repulse of the attack by the Confederate forces.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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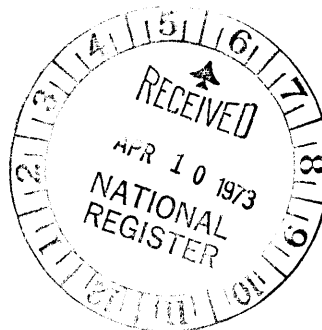
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COUNTY Leflore	
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(Number all entries)

4.

Leflore County  
% Chancery Clerk  
Greenwood, Mississippi 38930

CODE - 28



X-157711

**5. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **March 11-April 5, 1863**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

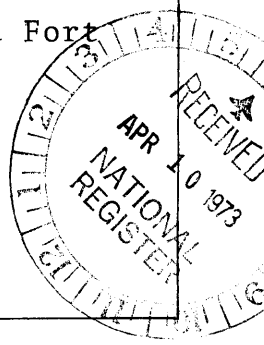
<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Fort Pemberton is the site of the Confederate fortifications which stopped the Union advance in the Yazoo Pass expedition during the early campaigns against Vicksburg in 1863. The Federals initiated three other unsuccessful expeditions to reach high ground to the rear of Vicksburg. A combined naval and infantry force of Major General William T. Sherman and Admiral David D. Porter failed in the Steele's Bayou expedition; Grant was left high and dry in his attempts to dig a canal across De Soto peninsula opposite Vicksburg and in his investigations of the bayous on the Louisiana side. Fort Pemberton's guns thwarted the final joint venture of the Federal army and navy to reach the Yazoo River and ultimately gain a foothold on the north side of Vicksburg. The failure of these four efforts eventually forced Grant to run the Union fleet past the batteries at Vicksburg.

Fort Pemberton, named for the Confederate commander-in-chief in Mississippi, John C. Pemberton, was situated on the narrow strip of land between the Tallahatchie River and the Yazoo River, near the town of Greenwood. The location was an excellent choice as it was in a "U" shaped bend of the river. The fields surrounding the fort had been cleared in case of attack from infantry which, in addition to having to cross the open fields, would have to ford Clayton's Bayou. The position of the fort also afforded command of the Tallahatchie for approximately one-thousand yards. Brigadier General William W. Loring, commander of the fort, had ordered a raft constructed across the river abreast of the fort and also had the Star of the West scuttled directly behind it in the channel. The Star of the West, formally a Union ship, had the distinction of being the target of the first shots of the Civil War which were fired on January 9, 1861, when she attempted to enter Charleston Harbor to bring supplies to the beleaguered Fort Sumter.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Bearss, Edwin C., Decision in Mississippi, (Jackson, Mississippi: Mississippi Commission on the War Between the States, 1962), pp. 142-207.

The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington: 1880-1901), Series I, Vol. XXIV, Parts I, p. 415.

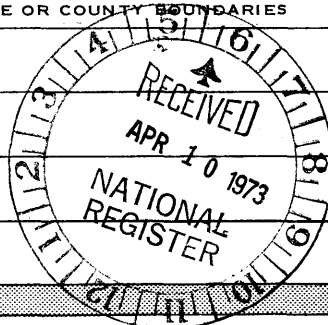
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES							
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE			LATITUDE	LONGITUDE			
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	33°	31'	53"	90°	14'	19"						
NE	33°	31'	53"	90°	13'	55"						
SE	33°	31'	38"	90°	13'	55"						
SW	33°	31'	38"	90°	14'	19"						

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **37 acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**William C. Wright, Historian**

ORGANIZATION: **Mississippi Department of Archives and History** DATE: **3/29/73**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**P. O. Box 571**

CITY OR TOWN: **Jackson** STATE: **Mississippi** CODE: **28**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: *R. A. McLemore*  
**R. A. McLemore**

Title: Director, Miss. Dept. of Archives and History

Date: March 29, 1973

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

*Robert H. Utley*  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 6/19/73

ATTEST:  
*[Signature]*  
Keeper of The National Register

Date: 6 6 73

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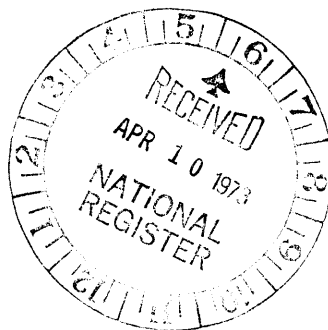
(Number all entries)

8.

The Federal fleet of gunboats and transports containing five-thousand infantry had navigated the Yazoo Pass by breaking the Mississippi River levee at Moon Lake on January 30, 1863. The trip down this waterway had consumed nearly a month because of the obstructions placed in the channel by the Confederates. Upon reaching the Tallahatchie River, the gunboat Chillicothe advanced to within eight-hundred yards of Fort Pemberton, and the Confederate gunners opened the action with their artillery. The Chillicothe was struck four times, twice by a 3-inch Whitworth and twice by a 32-pounder rifled gun which now shot a projectile weighing approximately sixty-eight pounds. The Chillicothe quickly reversed her engines and withdrew out of range.

From March 11 through April 5, 1863, the Federals tried to reduce the defenses of Fort Pemberton, but the fortifications were so surrounded by swampy countryside that the infantry was immobile. The Union navy was also helpless as no more than two ships could simultaneously engage the works, and these were only able to utilize their bow guns. After several unsuccessful attempts of combined infantry, artillery and naval assaults on Fort Pemberton, the Union troops were forced to return to their point of embarkment, Helena, Arkansas.

Fort Pemberton, with a handful of troops and eight guns, had withstood nine gunboats and over five-thousand Federal infantry and had prevented the Federal forces from reaching Vicksburg. This accomplishment was due to the strategic location of the fort in a site that was impassable for the fleet and impregnable to the Federal infantry.



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The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies (Washington; 1906), Series I, Vol. XXIV, pp. 296-300.

