

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED APR 29 1975
DATE ENTERED MAY 21 1975

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Star of the West - C.S.S. St. Philip

AND/OR COMMON

Star of the West

2 LOCATION

W of Greenwood on Falla Katchie River

STREET & NUMBER

Fort Pemberton

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Greenwood vic.

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Tallahatchie River

VICINITY OF Greenwood

Second

STATE

Mississippi

CODE

28

COUNTY

Leflore

CODE

083

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

General Services Administration

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Washington

— VICINITY OF

STATE

D. C. 20405

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

General Services Administration

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Washington,

STATE

D. C. 20405

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

— FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

When the Star of the West was built in 1852, she was designed for the sole purpose of ferrying passengers between the California coast and New York. The vessel was never intended to be a war ship. She is described as being brigantine-rigged side-wheeler of 1,172 tons; length, 228 feet, 4 inches; breadth, 32 feet, 8 inches; depth, 24 feet, 6 inches; speed, 11.5 knots. During her period of Confederate ownership the vessel was changed only slightly. On January 16, 1862, the firm of N. & A. F. Tift, New Orleans, Louisiana, wrote Secretary of the Navy (Confederate) Stephen R. Mallory:

Sir: We have examined the Star of the West. She is in good order and is now occupied as a receiving, recruiting, and hospital ship, and would be invaluable as a transport. We would not advise the alteration, (into an ironclad gunboat) on account of the expense and difficulty of protecting the machinery. Commander Hollias concurs in the opinion.

N. & A. F. Tift

However, the vessel was armed at New Orleans with two 68-pounder and four 32-pounder guns. It is possible that her masts were shortened for operation on inland rivers.

The guns were removed from the Star of the West while she was at Yazoo City and were probably either taken to Greenwood for Fort Pemberton, sent to Grenada, or emplaced in Yazoo City. When the vessel settled on the bottom of the Tallahatchie she still had her machinery on board. John Locke, a naturalized Englishman, in a statement given to Brigadier General Hugh T. Reid, reported that "the old Star of the West is sunk alongside of the raft at Greenwood to keep it from going downstream. She had never been converted into an ironclad, as some of our naval officers supposed, and the machinery is all in her still." On February 15, 1864, Lieutenant Commander Elias K. Owen, U.S.A., commanding an expedition in the Yazoo River, reported: "The Star of the West is still in the channel in the Tallahatchie with her wheels and upper works out" (Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, ser. 1, vol. 24, p. 296).

There are no parts of the Star of the West - C.S.S. St. Philip above water today. It is probable that the above-water section was salvaged after the war by individuals or simply removed to clear the passage, and that all that remains in the watery grave is the lower section, which is deep enough to allow for safe navigation.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1852 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Jeremiah Simonson

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Star of the West, sunk in the Tallahatchie River to provide an obstacle to navigation in front of Fort Pemberton, had the unique distinction of being the recipient of the first shot fired in the American Civil War. During her brief, but colorful history she served both the United States and the Confederate States in different capacities and under different names.

Originally built as the San Juan at a cost of \$250,000 by Jeremiah Simonson at Greenspoint, New York in 1852, the vessel's name was changed to the Star of the West before she was placed in service. The Star of the West operated for nine years as a passenger steamer between the California coast and New York (Civil War Naval Chronology, p. VI-297).

On January 5, 1861, as the clouds of war gathered, the Star of the West departed New York, under charter by the United States government with a detachment of 250 men and four officers on board, bound for the Federal garrison of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. Major Robert Anderson, Federal commander of the fort, had refused the state of South Carolina's demands that he abandon the fort and surrender all public property to the state. The Federal government had also been notified that any attempt to supply or reinforce Fort Sumter would be regarded as an act of war.

At 1:30 A.M. on the morning of January 9, 1861, the Star of the West arrived off the Charleston bar. All coastal navigation lights had been extinguished and the marker buoys had been removed, so rather than risk running aground, the Star of the West anchored in 4 1/2 fathoms to wait until daylight. At dawn the Star of the West was spotted by a small inshore vessel which signaled the coastal defenses with one blue and two red lanterns that the Star of the West was loaded with troops and was not there to remove the garrison (History of the Confederate States Navy, p. 495).

The Star of the West steamed into the channel until she was about two miles from Fort Moultrie and Fort Sumter, when a battery on Morris Island flying a red Palmetto Flag belonging to the Citadel cadets opened fire on the steamer. She continued under fire for about ten minutes, while she progressed closer to Sumter. Several of the shots passed over her; one shot passed just clear of the pilot house, another passed between the smokestack and the walking beam of the engine. Another struck the ship just aloft of the fore

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships. Vol. 2 C-F Carriers; Confederate Forces.
 Washington: Navy Department, Office of Chief of Naval Operations, Naval History
 Division, 1963.

Scharf, J. Thomas. History of the Confederate States Navy from its Organization to the
 Surrender of its Last Vessel. New York: Rogers & Sherwood, 1887.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 9

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 | 75,619,5,0 | 371,34,6,0
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B | |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C | |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D | |
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

William C. Wright, Historian

April 18, 1975

ORGANIZATION

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 571

TELEPHONE

(601) 354-6218

CITY OR TOWN

Jackson,

STATE

Mississippi

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Elbert R. Hilliard

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

April 22, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

August A. Connally

DATE

MAY 21 1975

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

5/20/75

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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ITEM NUMBER 8

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(continued)

rigging and stove in the planking, while another nearly took away the rudder. At the same time two steamers, one towing an armed schooner, were seen moving to intercept the Star of the West, and, fearing capture, she recrossed the bar outward at 8:30 A.M. and returned to New York (ibid., p. 496).

The repulse of the Star of the West with needed supplies and men subsequently caused the surrender of the garrison at Fort Sumter and resulted in the War Between the States. Several historians have speculated that the Star of the West was deliberately sent into the harbor with troops on board to test the intentions of South Carolina.

Three months later the United States again chartered the Star of the West to the Texas coast to remove the Federal soldiers who had been stationed there prior to the secession of Texas. The vessel lost an anchor on the way, and was standing offshore awaiting troops to be ferried out by the Fashion, when seventy-one men under the command of Colonel Earl Van Dorn using the General Rusk boarded her by force. Van Dorn placed a crew on board to take the Star of the West to New Orleans, where she was assigned to the Confederate States Navy, which in turn changed her name to the C. S. S. St. Philip and armed her with two 68-pounder and four 32-pounder guns. (Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, ser. 1, vol. 16, p. 534. Hereafter referred to as O.R.N.) Although the Star of the West lost her designation, she did not completely lose her identity. Often in Confederate records she was still referred to as the Star of the West in official correspondence.

While in New Orleans, the ship served as a receiving ship until April 1862, when the Federal fleet passed the forts below the city and New Orleans was in imminent danger of capture. The C. S. S. St. Philip was assigned the task of transporting the Confederate government specie up the Mississippi River to the safety of the interior (O.R.N. ser. 1, vol. 18, p. 350). The vessel delivered her cargo to the Confederate authorities safely inland and proceeded up the Yazoo River to the Naval Yard at Yazoo City where she remained until the Federals broke through the levee into the Yazoo Pass in an effort to gain a footing north of the Confederates at Snyder's Bluff (Mills) twelve miles north of Vicksburg. On order to counter the Federals, the Confederates fortified the narrow strip of land between the Yazoo and Tallahatchie Rivers west of Greenwood, and named the site Fort Pemberton. In front of the fort, in the Tallahatchie River, the Confederates constructed a large raft, which was chained to the banks and anchored. Behind this raft they placed the Star of the West and the John Walsh, which were scuttled as soon as the Federal fleet appeared. (O.R.N. ser. 1, vol. 24, p. 269).

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The Federals made repeated attacks against the fortifications, but were prevented from training their heavy guns by the obstructions in the channel. After nearly a month of trying to pass the guns of Fort Pemberton and remove the obstructions, the Federal fleet gave up and returned to the safety of the Mississippi River. The sacrifice of the Star of the West to the muddy bottom of the Tallahatchie proved to be the most significant and certainly the most successful event of the ill-fated vessel's history.

9. Bibliography (continued)

United States. Navy Department. Naval History Division. Compiled Civil War Naval Chronology, 1861-1865. Washington: Navy Department, Naval History Division, 1971.

United States. Navy. Office of Naval Records and Library. Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion. Series 1, Vols. 4, 16, 18, 19, 24, 25. Series 2, Vol. 1. Washington: Navy Department, 1895-1921.