

HE 100 14-73

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Mississippi	
COUNTY: Coahoma	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	001 19 1973

1. NAME

COMMON:
Mississippi River Levee

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Yazoo Pass Levee *W. H. H.*

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Sections 25 and 30, T 30 N, R 3 W

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE: Mississippi CODE: 28 COUNTY: Coahoma CODE: 027

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Public Acquisition:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both <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	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
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 type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) Levee

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Yazoo-Mississippi Delta Levee Board

STREET AND NUMBER:
C. G. Bobo, Commissioner

CITY OR TOWN: Clarksdale STATE: Mississippi CODE: 28

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

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

STREET AND NUMBER:
Coahoma County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: Clarksdale STATE: Mississippi CODE: 28

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County

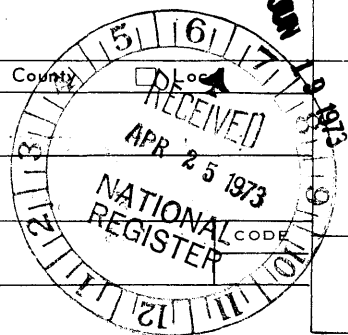
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Mississippi
COUNTY: Coahoma
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7. DESCRIPTION

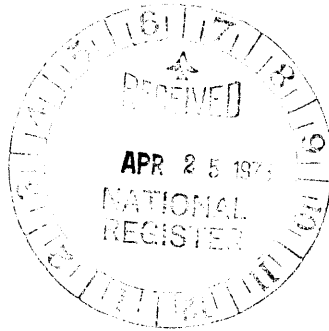
CONDITION

(Check One)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated
		<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
(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

When the Federals cut the Mississippi River levee, at Moon Lake on January 29, 1863, Yazoo Pass was a narrow, snag-filled slough with mammoth trees overhanging its channel. Its appearance was suddenly changed by the inundating flood caused by the Federal operations, raising its stage by approximately eight feet. Many of the huge trees still had to be cut, however, to prevent damage to the boats' chimneys.

Today, as in 1863, the banks of the pass are lined with large cotton producing plantations. The pass is once again a sluggish slough filled with snags and slow moving waters, which run beneath a canopy of overhanging trees.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

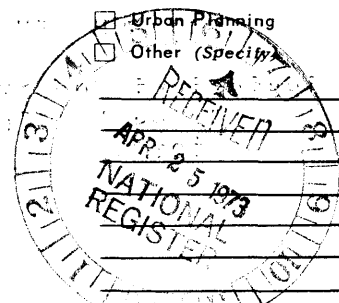
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **January 30, 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"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy |
| <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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Prior to the construction of a levee between Moon Lake and the Mississippi River in 1856, the Yazoo Pass was utilized to link the Mississippi, Coldwater, Tallahatchie, and Yazoo Rivers. During the Civil War, Major General Ulysses S. Grant recognized that breaking the levee at Moon Lake would enable forces to move through the narrow Yazoo Pass and the aforementioned rivers and ultimately establish positions on the east bank of the Yazoo River north of Vicksburg. The Yazoo Pass expedition, therefore, became one of four attempts by Grant to gain a foothold on the high ground near Vicksburg by avoiding a direct confrontation with the fire of the Vicksburg batteries and that of the Confederate fortifications at Snyder's and Haynes' Bluffs on the Yazoo. In addition to the Yazoo Pass campaign, Grant tried to cut a canal across the narrow neck of DeSoto Peninsula to change the course of the river in front of Vicksburg on the Louisiana side. He also investigated the bayous from Lake Providence through east Louisiana, and eventually sent Acting Rear Admiral David D. Porter's fleet of shallow-draft boats and troops under Major General William T. Sherman, up Steele's Bayou and Deer Creek in an attempt to re-enter the Yazoo River above Snyder's and Haynes' Bluffs. These attempts failed because of low water and Confederate resistance, whereas, the Confederate fortifications and high water at Fort Pemberton, near Greenwood, doomed the Yazoo Pass expedition.

Commander Isaac N. Brown, of the Confederate Navy, had warned Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton of the possibility that the Federals might seize upon the idea of re-opening Yazoo Pass by breaking the levee at Moon Lake. Pemberton agreed with Brown's warning and sent Lieutenant Francis E. Shepperd, C. S. N., with a party of fifty Negroes to fell trees and obstruct the pass. The importance of the pass was also recognized by President Jefferson Davis, who, on January 29, 1863, wired Pemberton: "Has anything or can anything be done to obstruct the navigation from Yazoo Pass down?" Before Pemberton could reply, the Federals made their move. Grant sent Lieutenant Colonel James H. Wilson, his chief topographical engineer, to examine the possibility of

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.

Grant, Ulysses S., Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, (New York: The Century Company, 1903), Vol. I, pp. 375, 376.

Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Series Z: James L. Alcorn and Family Papers, No. 317 (unpublished diary).

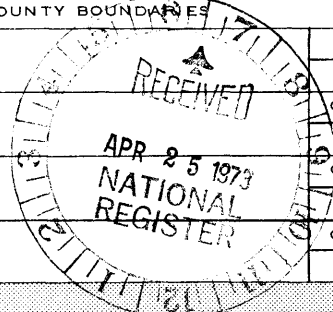
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	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
NW	34	27	06"	90	33	11"			
NE	34	27	06"	90	32	53"			
SE	34	26	48"	90	32	53"			
SW	34	26	48"	90	33	11"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **10 Acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
William C. Wright, Historian

ORGANIZATION: **Mississippi Department of Archives & History** DATE: **4/19/73**

STREET AND NUMBER:
Post Office Box 571

CITY OR TOWN: **Jackson** STATE: **Mississippi** CODE: **39205** STATE CODE: **28**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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 April 19, 1973

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

Robert A. Utley
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 6/19/73

ATTEST:
W. S. Maulsby
Keeper of The National Register

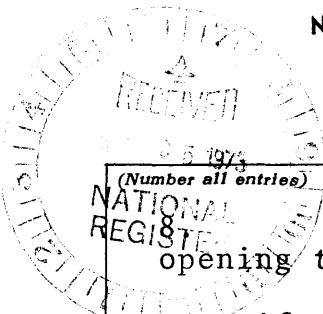
Date 6 14 73

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Mississippi	
COUNTY	Coahoma	
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		JUN 19 1973



(Number all entries)

opening the pass.

After arriving at the levee, Wilson observed that the level of the Mississippi was eight and one-half feet above the level on the opposite side of the levee. Transverse cuts were made in the levee and mines were placed in shafts between these cuts. Explosions ripped the levee, causing Wilson to report on January 30, 1863: "The opening was 40 yards wide, and the water pouring through like nothing else I ever saw except Niagara Falls, logs, trees, and great masses of earth were torn away with the greatest ease. The work is a perfect success." The breach in the levee was seventy-five yards wide by the morning of February 4, 1863.

After waiting until the 7th of February for the water to level off, the Forest Rose entered the pass. James L. Alcorn, a former brigadier general of Mississippi State Troops who lived nearby, told Wilson and Captain James P. Foster, of the Chillicothe, that they should have little difficulty reaching the Yazoo River. Alcorn probably was not informed of the Confederates' efforts to block the pass or of the Fort Pemberton fortifications being constructed on the narrow strip of land between the Tallahatchie and Yazoo Rivers.

As the Forest Rose tied up near the point where the pass emerges from Moon Lake, three men in a dugout were captured. These men informed Captain George W. Brown, U. S. N., that a force of Confederates and about one-hundred Negroes had been engaged for several days in felling timbers across the stream. Brown lowered a skiff to reconnoiter the pass and observed that the obstacles could be overcome. The trees had, for the large part, either washed against the bank or sunk out of sight. Many of the huge overhanging trees would, however, have to be cut to prevent damage to the boats' chimneys.

The advance of the fleet of nine gunboats and twenty-seven transports containing five-thousand infantry was slow and tedious. Most of the clearing had to be done with the muscle power of two-hundred and fifty to four-hundred men, aided by windlasses and winches. This tremendous operation of clearing the pass of obstructions cost the Federals precious time. It was almost a month before the fleet entered the Coldwater River, approximately thirty miles from its point of embarkment. Brigadier General William W. Loring was apprised of the Union progress and had prepared to receive the expedition at Fort Pemberton, which was located in a "U" shape bend of the Tallahatchie River.

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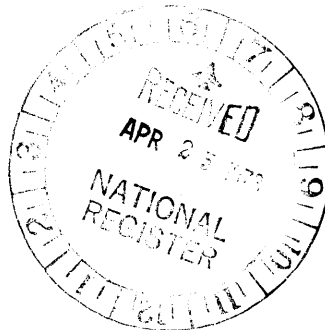
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Loring had ordered a raft constructed across the river and the ill-fated Star of the West scuttled directly behind the raft. Eight guns were placed in battery commanding the bend of the river. Most of the surrounding ground was inundated as a result of the breach in the levee. The only approach that could possibly be utilized by assaulting infantry would necessitate the Federal troops crossing six-hundred yards of cleared field, as well as fording a bayou to reach the works.

On the morning of March 11, the Chillicothe came within eight-hundred yards of the fortifications before the works were sighted. At once, the batteries opened fire. The Chillicothe was struck and forced to withdraw.

From the opening engagement until April 5, the Federals assaulted, bombarded or scouted for means to breach the Confederate works, but the inundated countryside served as a moat. After repeated failures, the battered gunboats and transports left Fort Pemberton on April 5, and retreated back to the Yazoo Pass and the safety of the Mississippi.



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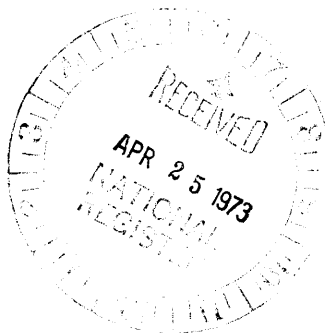
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COUNTY Coahoma	
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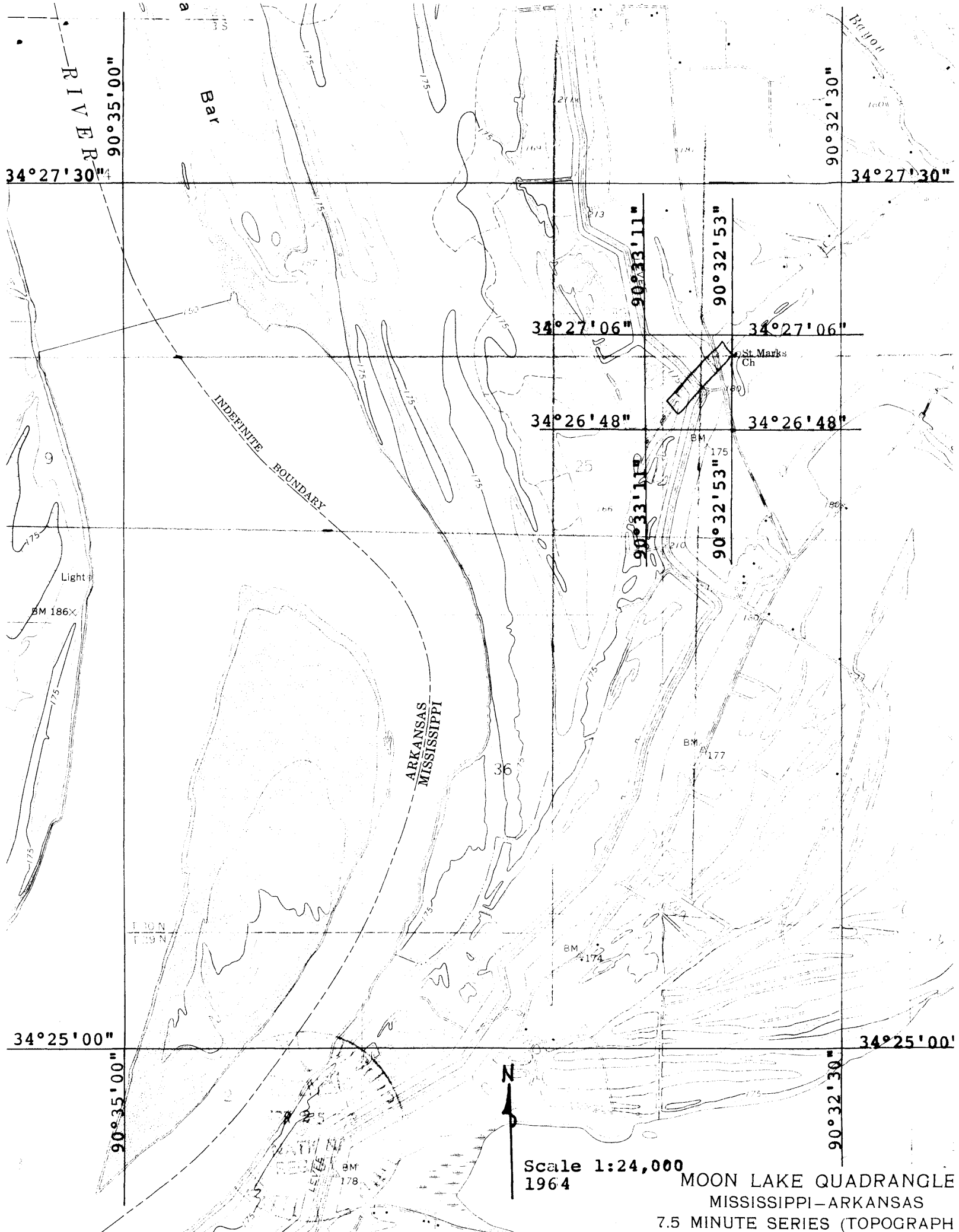
(Number all entries)

9.

The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington: 1880-1901), Series I, Vol. XXIV, Part III, pp. 36-39, 56, 86, 93, 95, 105, 112, 118, 119, 123, 127, 128, 132-134, 159, 623-717, 725, 737, 740.

The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies (Washington: 1906), Series I, Vol. 24, pp. 228-304, 389, 420, 448, 541, 543, 693-700, 709, 715.





RIVER
90°35'00"
34°27'30"

90°32'30"
34°27'30"

34°25'00"
90°35'00"

34°25'00"
90°32'30"

Scale 1:24,000
1964
MOON LAKE QUADRANGLE
MISSISSIPPI-ARKANSAS
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPH