

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	
DATE ENTERED	

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Champion Hill Battlefield

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Approximately 3 miles southwest of
Bolton and 4 miles east of Edwards

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

4th

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Mississippi

28

Hinds

049

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
 - PRIVATE
 - BOTH
 - IN PROCESS
 - BEING CONSIDERED
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
 - UNOCCUPIED
 - WORK IN PROGRESS
 - YES: RESTRICTED
 - YES: UNRESTRICTED
 - NO
- ACCESSIBLE**

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCES
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple private

STREET & NUMBER

Champion Hill

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

Mississippi

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Hinds County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Raymond

Mississippi 39154

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

National Register of Historic Places

DATE

May 21, 1971

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

OAHP, National Park Service

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Washington,

D. C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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

The physical appearance of the Champion Hill area is little changed in the 113 years since the battle. The hill itself, rising to a height of 354 feet, is part of a ridge system dividing the Bakers and Jackson Creek watersheds. Bakers Creek, a tributary of Fourteenmile Creek, passes to the north and then west of Champion Hill at a distance of about two miles. Jackson Creek, which flows into Bakers Creek, heads a short distance southeast of the hill. Both these streams, except after heavy rains, can be forded with ease at any of the crossings. The ridge of which Champion Hill is a part is scarred by numerous ravines. The ground, as it slopes toward the southwest and the Raymond-Edwards Road (State Highway 467), becomes comparatively level.

In 1863 much more of the land was under cultivation than today. Since the 1930's most of the area north of the historic Jackson-Vicksburg and Middle Roads and south of the Bolton-Edwards Road has grown up in timber. The Jackson Creek watershed and the Bakers Creek bottom are also heavily wooded. Large cleared areas, still under cultivation, are found along the Raymond-Edwards Road and the Ratliff Road, where the terrain is rolling.

The historic road network, which played a dominate role in the battle, is extant. The Raymond-Edwards Road has been surfaced and is today's Mississippi State Highway 467. The Middle Road and the Jackson-Vicksburg Road west of the Crossroads are unimproved county roads, passing through deep cuts. The section of the Jackson-Vicksburg Road from the site of the Champion house to the Crossroads and the Ratliff Road, connecting the Crossroads and the Raymond-Edwards Road, are traces.

The only serious intrusion on the battlefield is a gravel pit that was opened and closed in the 1930's. It is on the northwest face of Champion Hill, near the scene of bitter fighting at the salient angle.

The Champion plantation, which includes much of the battlefield, is still owned by the Champion family. The Champion house was burned in July 1863, but its site beneath giant live oaks behind the Champion Hill Church can be identified. The Roberts house, General John C. Pemberton's headquarters for much of the battle, and later a field hospital stands a quarter mile southwest of the Crossroads. No longer occupied, it has been extensively altered.

The Coker house, now owned by the Adams Egg Farm, is several hundred yards south of the Raymond-Edwards Road. Its siding is battle scarred. In its west elevation are holes made by projectiles from the 6-pounders of Company G, 1st Mississippi Light Artillery, as well as a number of smaller gouges left by minie balls.

About a mile northwest of the Coker house and on the same side of the road is "Hiawatha," a frame house, now the property of Mr. C. C. Floyd. Like the Roberts

(Continued)

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 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

May 16, 1863

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

General Grant's 19-day campaign from Bruinsburg to Vicksburg is a classic of military history, and has earned for him recognition as a great captain. Within this period Grant fought and won five battles; captured 88 cannon, many stands of colors and small-arms, and nearly 5,000 prisoners; scattered Confederate armies numbering more than 50,000; captured Jackson and destroyed its rail network; and hurled General Pemberton's army back inside the Vicksburg defenses. Union losses at the same time were about 3,500. In accomplishing this, Generals John A. McClernand's and James B. McPherson's corps marched an average of 156 miles and General William T. Sherman's 175 miles. During this time the united strength of Grant's three corps did not exceed 45,000, but he so maneuvered his troops as to decisively outnumber the Confederate at each of the battles.¹

The decisive battle of the brilliant campaign which doomed Vicksburg was fought at Champion Hill on May 16, 1863. The distinguished twentieth century British historian, General J. F. C. Fuller, has written, "The drums of Champion's [sic] Hill" sounded the doom of Richmond.² Confederate defeat at Champion Hill made inevitable the surrender of Vicksburg and Port Hudson, their last strongholds on the Mississippi, with the capture of about 37,000 soldiers and vast stores of munitions of war.

Many prominent soldiers and historians have written of the great significance of the battle of Champion Hill. The Comte de Paris, in his History of the Civil War in America, observed, "The battle of Champion Hill produced results far more important than great hecatombs like Shiloh, Fair Oaks, Murfreesboro, Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. It was the most complete defeat the Confederates sustained since the commencement of the war."³

Pulitzer prize winning historian Bruce Catton in Grant Moves South, writing of the battle, commented, while the "victory had been incomplete it was...decisive." Pemberton's army was on the "verge of demoralization, and, once and for all, he had been isolated and driven back into the fortress from which the rest of the Confederacy would be unable to extricate him."⁴

¹C. A. Dana to J. H. Wilson, 1868, Wilson Papers, Library of Congress.

²J. F. C. Fuller, The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant (London, 1929), p. 332.

³Comte de Paris, History of the Civil War in America, 4 vols. (Philadelphia, 1875-88), Vol. 111, p. 327; J. Q. A. Campbell, "The Battle of Champion Hill," Report of the Proceedings of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee (Cincinnati, 1913), p. 135.

⁴Bruce Catton, Grant Moves South (Boston, 1960), p. 445.

(Continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuation Sheet)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY more than 4,000 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 5	7 3 3 4 8 0	3 5 8 1 5 0 0	E.1 5.	7 3 0 6 2 0.	3 5 8 0 5 0 0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	1 5	7 3 3 5 4 0
						3 5 7 8 5 2 0
C	1 5	7 3 2 0 4 5	3 5 7 5 5 0 0	D	1 5	7 2 8 1 6 0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING			3 5 7 6 9 0 0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See Continuation Sheet)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Edwin C. Bearss, Supervisory Historian

Date: February 1977

ORGANIZATION

~~RAK~~

Historic Preservation-East, Denver Service Center, National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1100 L Street NW.

202-523-5105

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Washington

D.C. 20240

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

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

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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house, it was used as a hospital after the battle. In a good state of preservation, its physical appearance has been little changed in the last century.

Cisterns serve to identify other house sites associated with the battle.

There is one monument on the field. A short distance north of the Raymond-Edwards Road, 400 yards northwest of the Coker house, it locates the site where General Lloyd Tilghman was killed by a fragment from an exploding Union shell. The simple stone marker with bronze tablet was erected by the general's sons in 1904.

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General A. G. Paxton, a veteran of three twentieth century wars, argues convincingly that the "Union victory at Champion Hill was critical in the fortunes of the Union Army and especially so in the military career of Major General Ulysses S. Grant."⁵

HISTORY

The great mission of the Union in the West was to regain control of the Mississippi from Cairo, Illinois, to the Gulf of Mexico. To accomplish this goal, Federal armies, supported by river gunboats, had struck southward. After a number of bloody battles, Union forces by June 1862 had driven the Confederates from southern Kentucky and West Tennessee, and had thrust into northern Mississippi and Alabama. An oceangoing fleet had entered the Mississippi, captured New Orleans, and had ascended the mighty river to Vicksburg. The Vicksburg Confederates held, however, and the oceangoing fleet recoiled.

In November and December 1862, General Ulysses S. Grant launched his first campaign aimed at capture of Vicksburg and the opening of the Mississippi. His converging attack failed.

Grant's columns advancing southward from Grand Junction, Tennessee, through Holly Springs and Oxford, were turned back by slashing raids on their depots and supply lines. Taking advantage of this, General John C. Pemberton, the Confederate leader, rushed reinforcements from north Mississippi and defeated General William T. Sherman's divisions at Chickasaw Bayou, near Vicksburg. To reach that area, Sherman's troops had been transported down the Mississippi on river steamboats escorted by gunboats.

In January 1863 General Grant, satisfied by his recent experience that it would be difficult if not impossible to supply his army during a 200-mile overland advance, shifted his army down the Mississippi from Memphis. Joined by Sherman's troops, now commanded by General John A. McClernand, Grant's army moved into camps on the Louisiana side of the Mississippi, from Young's Point to Lake Providence.

During February and March, Grant and his generals sought to bypass Vicksburg and gain a lodgment on the high ground overlooking the Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers. Four attempts were made and ended in failure. By late March, Grant was seemingly checkmated. He now sent two of his corps on a difficult march south through the

⁵Letter, Lt. Gen. A. G. Paxton to E. C. Bearss, October 3, 1961.

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Louisiana Parishes. Under cover of darkness, on April 16, Union gunboats and several transports successfully ran the Vicksburg batteries. At New Carthage, 30-river miles below the Confederate stronghold, they rendezvoused with Grant's vanguard. On April 29 General Grant sought to cross the Mississippi at Grand Gulf; the fire of Confederate river batteries repulsed the Union ironclads. Passing the batteries at sunset, the gunboats met the army, which had marched overland, at Disharoon's plantation.

On April 30 General Grant crossed the Mississippi at Bruinsburg with two corps. Striking inland, the Federal columns quickly gained the bluffs east of the river, and defeated 8,000 Confederates near Port Gibson on May 1. By this victory, Grant secured his bridgehead. The Confederates, having failed to throw the Federals back into the river, evacuated their stronghold at Grand Gulf and retired across the Big Black River, closely pursued by Union columns. Grant now halted to regroup and bring up supplies and reinforcements.

General Sherman's XV Corps, leaving its camps in and around Milliken's Bend and Young's Point, marched south. Crossing the Mississippi at Grand Gulf on May 7 and 8, Sherman's troops reported to Grant. The Confederates utilized this respite to fortify a line covering the approaches to Vicksburg from the south, and to begin the movement of reinforcements to central Mississippi. From the Port Hudson area in Louisiana, from the South Carolina and Georgia coasts, and from Middle Tennessee thousands of troops were soon enroute.

General Grant, upon the arrival of Sherman's corps, prepared to breakout of the bridgehead. He determined not to attack Vicksburg from the south. While such a thrust might be successful and give him possession of the city, General Pemberton and his army could escape destruction by retreating to the northeast up the Mechanicsburg Corridor. Instead, Grant employed the indirect approach. He would advance to the northeast, resting his left flank on the Big Black and seize the Southern Railroad of Mississippi. Then he would wheel his army to the west, cross the Big Black, and pin the Confederates against the Mississippi. Such a campaign could lead to the destruction of Pemberton's army, along with the capture of Vicksburg.⁶

On May 9 General Grant put his three corps in motion. The morning of the 12th found General James B. McPherson's corps on the right closing in on Raymond, while General Sherman's corps in the center and General McClermand's on the left were approaching Fourteenmile Creek. General John Gregg's brigade of Texans and Tennesseans from the Port Hudson area had reached Jackson and had been rushed to Raymond.

⁶Matthew F. Steele, American Campaigns, 2 Vols. (Harrisburg, 1949), Vol. 1, pp. 405-07.

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Gregg's troops and McPherson's collided in the Fourteenmile Creek bottom, two and one-half miles southwest of Raymond. The badly outnumbered Confederates carried the fight to the Federals, but in the end numbers told. Breaking contact, Gregg's brigade retreated to Jackson. McPherson, when he sent a message to army headquarters describing the fight, exaggerated Gregg's strength.

General Grant, on receiving McPherson's report, determined to change his plans. Although his three corps during the day had crossed Fourteenmile Creek on a broad front, the news that there was a strong Confederate force on his flank caused misgivings. Reports had also reached Grant that large numbers of reinforcements were converging on Jackson from the east and south, while the redoubtable General Joseph E. Johnston was enroute from Middle Tennessee to take personal command in Mississippi.

Grant therefore called a halt to the advance of the three corps on the railroad and turned his columns toward Jackson. On the 13th McPherson's corps marched from Raymond to Clinton, where it broke the railroad and cut the telegraph. Sherman's columns pressed eastward through Raymond and approached Jackson from the southwest. McClernand's corps, which was in contact with units from General Pemberton's army south of Edwards Station, bluffed an attack. While the Confederates were digging in, McClernand's troops pulled back and, marching east to Raymond, stole a day's march on the Southerners.

On the morning of May 14, Sherman's and McPherson's corps, in a driving rain, drove toward Jackson. McPherson's column advanced from Clinton, along the road paralleling the railroad, and Sherman's, with which Grant rode, marched via the Raymond Road. Confederate General Johnston, on his arrival the previous evening, had learned that a strong Union force was at Clinton and had interposed itself between the Jackson Confederates and General Pemberton's 23,000-man field army. Johnston, satisfied that he was too late and that Jackson was doomed, ordered the city evacuated. To cover removal of supplies up the New Orleans, Jackson & Grant Northern Railroad to Canton, Johnston deployed his troops well in front of the earthworks covering the western approaches to the city.

After fighting a holding action with McPherson's and Sherman's columns, the Confederates retired into the Jackson defenses. About mid-afternoon after the rain had ceased and word arrived that the Southern trains had cleared the area, the 6,000 Confederates abandoned the rifle-pits and retreated up the Canton Road. By giving up Jackson without a battle, Johnston had blundered. While he headed north-east with his little army, a Confederate brigade enroute north from Port Hudson was

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turned back south of Jackson and detrained at Brookhaven. The eastbound trains with States Rights Gist's brigade were reversed and stopped at Forest, 40 miles east of Jackson. Trains with two brigades being rushed from Middle Tennessee were stopped in Meridian. By the capture of Jackson, Grant had scattered the reinforcements the Confederate War Department was rushing to Mississippi.

On the evening of the 14th, as Grant and his generals met at the Bowman House to exchange congratulations, General McPherson exhibited a copy of a message General Johnston had sent to General Pemberton on the evening of the 13th. Besides reporting that the Federals had seized Clinton, cutting direct communications between their armies, Johnston called for a converging attack. Pemberton was to advance and assail the four Union divisions believed to be at Clinton. General Grant moved to counter this threat. General McPherson was to have his 10,000 men on the Vicksburg road at daybreak on the 15th, while General Sherman turned his troops to wrecking the railroads, which made Jackson a communications hub. General McClernand, whose corps had spent the 14th in the Raymond area guarding against an attack on Grant's rear, would face his columns west.⁷

On the 15th General Alvin P. Hovey's division of McClernand's corps occupied Clinton and advanced west along the Jackson-Vicksburg Road to Bolton Station. Generals Eugene A. Carr's and Peter J. Osterhaus' divisions marched and camped on either side of the Middle road, near where it left the Raymond-Bolton Road. Generals A. J. Smith's and Frank P. Blair's divisions pushed forward from Raymond via the road to Edwards Station, halting a short distance northwest of where it branched off the Bolton Station Road. General McPherson's corps, with which Grant traveled, tramped through Clinton. Dusk found the vanguard bivouacked in rear of Hovey's division and its rear brigade in Clinton. During the day Grant by easy marches had concentrated seven divisions (about 32,000 soldiers) along a five-mile front, passing through Raymond and Bolton.⁸

General Pemberton had received General Johnston's order for the converging attack on the 14th. He, however, deemed the proposal "extremely hazardous." Meeting with his generals at Edwards Station, it was decided to march to the southeast and intercept and destroy Union supply trains known to be en route from Grand Gulf to

⁷The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Vol. XXIV, pt. II, pp. 13-14; Stephen D. Lee, "The Vicksburg Campaign," Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Vol. III, pp. 33-34; Ulysses S. Grant, Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, 2 Vols. (New York, 1885), Vol. I, pp. 508-10.

⁸Official Records, Series I, Vol. XXIV, pt. I, pp. 616, 639, 646, 647, 730, 736; pt. II, pp. 12-13, 41, 255; Lee, "The Campaign of Vicksburg," p. 35; Grant, Personal Memoirs, Vol. I, pp. 509-11; E.C. Bearss, Decision in Mississippi, (Little Rock, 1962) pp. 229-31

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Raymond. Orders were issued for the three division commanders to have their units ready to march at daybreak. These plans soon became unraveled. When the troops fell out on the 15th, it was found that many of the men were short of rations and ammunition. It was 1 p.m. before supplies were brought up from Vicksburg and distributed. The column then moved out the Raymond road. Two miles southeast of Edwards, the Bakers Creek bridge was out and the stream flooding from the previous day's cloudburst. To pass the creek, the column was turned into a plantation road and marched up the west side of the stream to the Jackson-Vicksburg Road. The bridge was standing, and the long column crossed Bakers Creek and trudged eastward to the "Crossroads." Here the Jackson road turned to the left and passed over the crest of Champion Hill, one-fourth mile to the north. The Ratliff road veered to the right and connected with the Raymond road, while the Middle road continued east across a high ridge on the far side of Jackson Creek. Although no one realized it, the Crossroads and the hill beyond would soon become key geographical features in the campaign's decisive battle.

Pemberton turned the head of the column into the Ratliff road, and after a round-about seven-mile march the Confederates regained the Raymond-Edwards road. Crossing Jackson Creek, Pemberton and his lead division, General William W. Loring's, halted at Mrs. Ellison's. Here a "military road" led south to the Grand Gulf-Raymond road, Grant's supply line. As it was now dusk, Pemberton called a halt, and the Confederate troops bivouacked along nearly four miles of roadway--the advance guard at Mrs. Ellison's and the trains bringing up the rear at the Crossroads.⁹

Saturday, May 16, dawned bright and clear. The three Union columns were in motion by 6 a.m. On the Raymond-Edwards road, General A. J. Smith's vanguard soon established contact with Confederate skirmishers. About this time--7:30 a.m.--a courier galloped up to Pemberton's headquarters at Mrs. Ellison's, with a message from General Johnston sent from north of Jackson on the morning of the 15th. Johnston told of the evacuation of Jackson and reiterated his orders for Pemberton to join him north of the Southern Railroad. Although he had previously rejected this move as "suicidal," Pemberton, having wasted many hours marching in a different direction, prepared to obey his superior's order. To make the situation more difficult,

⁹Official Records, Series I, Vol. XXIV, pt. I, pp. 261-62; pt. II, pp. 74-75, 87, 90, 110-14, 125; pt. III, pp. 871-72, 876-880; John C. Pemberton, Pemberton, Defender of Vicksburg, (Chapel Hill, 1942), pp. 148-50; Bearss, Decision in Mississippi, pp. 224-27, 231-34.

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Confederate pickets were already battling the Union advance on the Raymond-Edwards road. Orders were given for the column to countermarch. The rear brigade, with which the trains traveled, became the vanguard as the Confederate army began its return to Edwards, via the Jackson-Vicksburg road.¹⁰

Information now reached Pemberton that a Union column (Carr's and Osterhaus') was approaching the Crossroads by way of the Middle road. To delay this force until his divisions had passed the Crossroads, Pemberton had Colonel J. F. B. Jackson take a regiment and engage the oncoming Federals. Moving out the Middle road, Jackson and his men established a roadblock covering the Crossroads. Carr's advance guard, on encountering Jackson's Georgians, deployed and felt their way cautiously forward.¹¹

The Confederate trains and their escorting brigade cleared the Crossroads and reached Edwards, where they turned into the Brownsville road leading northeast and to a possible link up with Johnston. As General S. D. Lee's Alabama brigade was passing the Crossroads and turning into the Vicksburg road, Lee learned that a Union column had been sighted by his scouts to the northeast on the Jackson road. If allowed to continue its march, this force would reach the Crossroads, striking the army in the flank, with disastrous consequences. Lee, on his own initiative, moved up the Jackson road one-fourth mile to the crest of Champion Hill and deployed his brigade into line of battle on the ridge overlooking the Bakers Creek bottom.¹²

The Union column sighted by Lee consisted of McPherson's XVII Corps, spearheaded by General Hovey's XIII Corps division. General Grant rode with McPherson. On reaching the Champion house about one-half mile northeast of the crest of Champion Hill, General Hovey sighted Lee's Alabamans. Halting, he deployed his division into line of battle to the left and right of the Jackson-Vicksburg road. Cannoneers unlimbered their guns in a field southeast of the Champion house. Generals Grant and McPherson now arrived, with General John A. Logan's XVII Corps Division. Logan was ordered to form his division for battle on Hovey's right.¹³

¹⁰Francis V. Greene, The Mississippi (New York, 1883), p. 152; Grant, Personal Memoirs, Vol. I, pp. 511-13; Official Records, Series I, Vol. XXIV, pt. I, pp. 51-52, 148, 263, 639; pt. II, pp. 13, 31-32, 38, 40, 87-88, 93-4; pt. III, pp. 319, 884.

¹¹Official Records, Series I, Vol. XXIV, pt. 11, p. 104.

¹²Lee, "The Campaign of Vicksburg," Vol. III, p. 37; Official Records, Series I, Vol. XXIV, p. II, p. 101.

¹³Official Records, Series I, Vol. XXIV, pt. I, pp. 52, 639-40, 47, 717; pt. II, pp. 41-2, 48-9, 52-58, 94, 101-104.

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General Lee watched as the Federals marshaled a powerful host to his front. He knew that the two divisions, despite his commanding position, could overwhelm his brigade. He called for help. His division commander, General Carter L. Stevenson, rushed two brigades and several batteries to Lee's assistance. First to arrive were three regiments of Georgians led by General Alfred Cumming. They took position at the crest of Champion Hill, forming a salient angle. To make room for the Georgians and to cope with the Union build-up to their front and left, Lee's Alabamans extended their lines along the ridge to the northwest. Two of Cumming's regiments remained at the Crossroads with a 4-gun Alabama battery to support Colonel Jackson's roadblock and to maintain contact with the two Confederate divisions (Generals John S. Bowen's and William W. Loring's), which General Pemberton had halted and deployed on the high ground overlooking Jackson Creek. The other brigade (General Seth Barton's) rushed to Lee's assistance took position with its supporting batteries on the ridge on the Alabamans left.¹⁴

The position occupied by the Confederate army at the time General Grant hurled Logan's and Hovey's divisions against the three brigades holding Champion Hill formed nearly a right angle. Pemberton's right--Loring division--was anchored on the Raymond-Edwards road, with Bowen's division on its left. To Loring's front were A. J. Smith's and Blair's divisions, which, in accordance with orders, were feeling their way cautiously forward. The Confederate center, covering the Crossroads and the Ratliff road, was lightly held following the transfer of Barton's brigade to the extreme left. There was no immediate danger here, because Carr's and Osterhaus' divisions on the Middle road were also under orders to find the foe and not bring on a battle unless ordered.¹⁵

At 11:30 a.m. Logan's and Hovey's battle lines, covered by skirmishers, assailed the Confederate left. First, Barton's and then the three regiments of Cumming's brigade, on the left and right of Lee's Alabamans, were shattered. A large number of Georgians were captured along with 12 cannons. Outflanked, the Alabamans were

¹⁴ Lee, "The Campaign of Vicksburg," Vol. III, p. 40; Official Records, Series I, Vol. XXIV, pt. II, pp. 99, 101-105.

¹⁵ Bearss, Decision in Mississippi, pp. 245-46.

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slowly forced back to the Jackson-Vicksburg road. Hovey's left flank brigade (Colonel James R. Slack's) drove for the Crossroads. The two Georgia regiments and Alabama cannons manning the four guns posted there braced to meet the onslaught. Overpowered, the Confederates fled, leaving the cannon and a number of prisoners in the Federals' hands.¹⁶

General Pemberton's situation was desperate. On his extreme left, Logan's troops had brushed Barton's Georgians aside and held the Jackson-Vicksburg road in a grip of steel. While Lee's Alabamans were being hammered back to that road in savage fighting, Slack's bluecoats occupied the Crossroads. As soon as they had regrouped, Slack's men could be expected to either swing to the right and crush Lee's Alabamans or advance down the Ratliff road to take Bowen's division in the flank. By merely holding their ground, they would insure the destruction of Colonel Jackson's combat team blocking the Union advance on the Middle road.

Shortly before Slack's people drove the Georgians and Alabamans from the Crossroads, Pemberton had ordered General Bowen to support General Stevenson's mauled brigades. Marching up the Ratliff road, Bowen's vanguard reached General Pemberton headquarters at the Roberts house almost simultaneous with the rout of the Georgians. The fate of Pemberton's army was in the balance. Bowen responded with his customary alacrity. Colonel Francis M. Cockrell's Missouri brigade was deployed to the left and General Martin E. Green's Arkansas-Missouri brigade to the right. They advanced to the attack with a savage élan that made them one of the war's most respected combat units. Bowen's men drove Slack's sturdy Midwesterners from the Crossroads. Here they recovered the four guns captured by the Federals. Pressing on, the Missourians and Arkansans routed Hovey's other brigade (McGinnis') from the crest of Champion Hill, capturing two Union cannons.

Bowen's men continued their advance. Less than one-half mile to their front was the Champion house and Grant's headquarters. In the fields east of the house were parked the Union trains. If Bowen could exploit his success, two of Grant's divisions (Hovey's and Logan's) would face destruction. Fortunately for the Union, Grant did not panic. General Marcellus M. Crocker's fresh XVII Corps division had reached the field. While Crocker deployed two brigades, sending one to reinforce Logan on the right and the other (Boomer's) to plug the hole torn in the Union front by the

¹⁶ Lee, "The Vicksburg Campaign," Vol. III, pp. 40-5; Official Records, Series I, Vol. XXIV, pt. I, pp. 52, 639-40, 647, 707, 717-19; pt. II, pp. 48-49, 52-3, 57-8, 94, 99-105, 109; Greene, The Mississippi, p. 157.

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defeat of Hovey's division, cannons unlimbered 16 guns southeast of the Champion house from where they could enfilade the onrushing Confederate battle lines.¹⁷

Unlike the Federals, Pemberton did not have any reserves to exploit Bowen's success. He had called on General Loring to come to the left, but Loring, citing the strong Union column to his front on the Raymond-Edwards road, had refused. After the order was repeated, Loring marched for the battle's cockpit with two of his three brigades. He left the third, General Lloyd Tilghman's, to guard the Raymond-Edwards road. Loring, however, marched too late and by a roundabout route.¹⁸

Meanwhile, Bowen had engaged Colonel George B. Boomer's fresh brigade. Many of the Confederates had fired up the 40 rounds of ammunition carried in their cartridge-boxes. Their ammunition train had left the field. After a desperate struggle, the Federals regained the upper hand. Bowen's men slowly gave ground. The crest of Champion Hill and then the Crossroads were recovered by McPherson's troops. This was the third and final time that this ground changed hands this bloody day.¹⁹

General Loring came up with his division in time to cover Bowen's retreat. With the Federals astride the Jackson-Vicksburg road, the defeated Confederate army, if it were to escape annihilation, would have to retreat via the Raymond-Edwards road. Fortunately for Pemberton, Bakers Creek had fallen and the ford was now passable for infantry. But if the army were to survive, it was mandatory that Tilghman's brigade hold its roadblock to the last minute.²⁰

¹⁷ Official Records, Series I, Vol. XXIV, pt. I, pp. 718-724, 730-31, 776, 779, 783; pt. II, pp. 55-6, 110-12, 116, 120-21; Greene, *The Mississippi*, p. 158; Ephraim McD. Anderson, *Memoirs, Historical and Personal; including Campaigns of the First Missouri Confederate Brigade* (St. Louis, 1868) p. 313.

¹⁸ Lee, "The Campaign of Vicksburg," Vol. III, p. 48; Official Records, Series I, Vol. XXIV, pt. I, p. 264; pt. II, pp. 76, 69-80, 83, 91, 126.

¹⁹ Official Records, Series I, Vol. XXIV, pt. II, pp. 15, 44, 50, 56, 63, 84, 111, 117.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

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Because of the circuitious routes followed by staff officers, it was after 2 p.m. before General Grant's order for the Middle and Raymond roads columns to cease feeling for the enemy and to attack reached General McClernand. More time was lost as McClernand communicated this order to his division commanders. Pressing forward, Carr's and Osterhaus' troops on the Middle road smashed Colonel Jackson's roadblock and reached the Crossroads, soon after Bowen's retreat. In accordance with orders from Grant, Carr's division continued west along the Jackson-Vicksburg road and secured the Bakers Creek bridge. On the Raymond-Edwards road, as A. J. Smith's and Blair's divisions advanced, there were fierce artillery exchanges, as General Tilghman yielded ground to gain time. During one of these, he was struck by a fragment from an exploding shell and killed. Shortly thereafter, word reached Colonel Arthur E. Reynolds, who had succeeded to Tilghman's command, that Stevenson's and Bowen's divisions had forded Bakers Creek. Disengaging his brigade, Colonel Reynolds retired up the Raymond-Edwards road.²¹

By the time Loring's vanguard had waded Bakers Creek, Carr's Union division had crossed the Bakers Creek bridge and was advancing down the west side of the stream. Sighting a Confederate column marching up the Edwards road, Carr's artillerists unlimbered their cannons and opened fire. Satisfied that it would be impossible to follow the route taken by the other units of the army, Loring recalled his advance guard. After he had reassembled his division on the far side of Bakers Creek, Loring, with the Federals closing in, led his division on a march down the east bank of the stream. He hoped to cross at a lower ford and rejoin Pemberton in Edwards. There were no roads and the bottom was muddy. The artillery and wagons were soon abandoned. About midnight Loring saw the glare of fires to the north, and, realizing that Edwards had been abandoned, gave up his efforts to rejoin the army. He turned his division to the southeast, and, marching by way of Crystal Springs, reached Jackson on the 19th, where he reported to General Johnston.²²

Grant's troops having won the decisive battle of the Vicksburg Campaign bivouacked on the field. The late afternoon and evening were spent by the victors succoring

²¹Ibid., pp. 15, 80-1, 102, 112, 255, 263, 266; pt. III, p. 318; Anderson, History of the 1st Missouri Confederate Brigade, p. 314.

²²Official Records, Series I, Vol. XXIV, pt. II, pp. 74, 77-8, 81, 89-90.

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the wounded, burying the dead, and counting the prisoners and spoils of war. Although Pemberton's army had escaped destruction, it had been terribly mauled. Incomplete returns filed by Confederate officers listed their losses as 381 killed, 1,018 wounded, and 2,441 missing. Twenty-seven Southern cannons had been left on the field. Union casualties included 410 killed, 1,844 wounded, and 187 missing.²³

Not knowing that General Loring had abandoned his efforts to rejoin the army, General Pemberton halted his retreat at the Big Black. General Stevenson's shattered division crossed to the west side of the river, and General Bowen's troops, reinforced by a fresh brigade, took position in the rifle-pits covering the approach to Big Black Bridge.

General Sherman's corps, having completed its work of destruction in and around Jackson, had evacuated that city on the morning of May 16. Making a forced march, Sherman's troops camped for the night north of Bolton.

On the morning of May 17 General Grant resumed his advance. West of Edwards Station, General McClelland's XIII Corps, which was advancing via the Jackson-Vicksburg road, deployed in front of the rifle-pits held by Bowen's reinforced division. A charge by a Union brigade broke the Confederate defense line. Abandoning 18 cannons and 1,800 prisoners, the Southerners fled across the Big Black, burning the bridges.

During the afternoon of the 17th Pemberton's routed army retreated into the Vicksburg defenses. There they found two fresh divisions. Under the cover of darkness, Grant's troops bridged and crossed the Big Black. On the 18th Union columns advanced and drove in the pickets posted in front of the Confederate defense perimeter guarding Vicksburg. The next day General Grant established contact with the Union fleet on the Yazoo River, northeast of the city. Although Pemberton and his army would repulse two Union assaults and endure a 47-day siege, their fate, as well as that of the city, had been sealed at Champion Hill.

²³ Ibid., pp. 7-10, 82, 86, 93, 99, 112, 120.

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The boundary begins at point A on the west section line of sec. 21, T6N, R3W, 3,300 ft. south of the northwest corner of said section, then proceeds south 9,800 ft. to point B on the west section line of sec. 33, T6N, R3W, then proceeds in a southwesterly direction following Jackson Creek 9,600 ft. to a point on the west section line of sec. 5, T5N, R3W, 3,400 ft. south of the northwest corner of said section, then proceeds east 500 ft. to a point in the southwest quarter of said section, then proceeds south 2,600 ft. to a point in the northwest corner of sec. 8, T5N, R3W, then proceeds in a northwesterly direction 11,700 ft. to a point on the west section line of sec. 1, T5N, R4W, 2,700 ft. from the northwest corner of said section, then proceeds north 2,700 ft. to the northwest corner of said section, then proceeds east along the north section line of said section to the northeast corner of said section, then proceeds north one mile to the northwest corner of sec. 31, T6N, R3W, then proceeds north 4,150 feet to point E in the northwest quarter of sec. 30, T6N, R3W, then proceeds in a northeasterly direction 9,900 ft. to point A, the beginning point. The boundary encloses the site of the major events of the Civil War Battle of Champion Hill, May 16, 1863, in which Union forces under General U. S. Grant defeated and drove the Confederates back toward Vicksburg.