

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC Pemberton's Headquarters

AND/OR COMMON
Willis-Cowan House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
1018 Crawford Street

CITY, TOWN Vicksburg VICINITY OF Fourth

STATE Mississippi CODE 23 COUNTY Warren CODE 149

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME William H. Robbins

STREET & NUMBER 1018 Crawford Street (601-638-8521)

CITY, TOWN Vicksburg VICINITY OF Mississippi 39180

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC Warren County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER P. O. Box 351

CITY, TOWN Vicksburg STATE Mississippi

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE National Register of Historic Places

DATE July 23, 1970 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service

CITY, TOWN Washington, D. C. STATE

49-A

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input 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

The large two-story brick house which General Pemberton and staff used as headquarters during most of the Siege of Vicksburg in the spring and summer of 1863 is at least six blocks uphill from the river, in the old section of Vicksburg, directly across from the Catholic Sister's School and on the same block as the Balfour House, both of which also withstood the siege.

Ownership of the property has been traced back to Newet Vick in 1814-19, but the house was probably built 1834-36 by William Bobb. In 1836 it was sold to the family of John Willis, a successful plantation-owner, and the Willis family retained it until 1874 when it was mortgaged. There were at least two other owners before the Sisters of Mercy who owned the house 1910-1973 and used it for a boarding school and nursery school. In spring 1973 the present owner acquired the property, after a number of years of disuse and he has begun restoration of the house. The original house has been added to on the southeast (rear), but the exterior and interior of the historic portion is relatively un-altered.

Built during the second quarter of the nineteenth century the house was originally a substantial L-shaped structure of brick, with two-story porches on both front and rear. The doorways, woodwork and fireplaces were finished in simple Greek Revival style detail. High-ceilinged parlors with many large windows and wide hallways with folding doors were all connected by porches in the open and spacious manner characteristic of that region's architecture.

A wooden two-story gallery (porch) stretches across the central three bays of the front facade, with a simple pediment above the second level. The columned door frame of the main entrance is identical to that of the door on the gallery directly above. Two wooden columns in a modified Ionic order, on raised square block, flanked by plain pilasters, support an entablature. The slightly recessed doors have narrow sidelights which brighten the wide hallways within. The wooden doors, with original box locks, appear to have once been grained.

A small wooden one-story covered porch, on a brick foundation, shelters the side entrance which leads to the main interior stairway of the house. Both this side porch and the front galleries have the same small brackets and dentil detailing and wooden balustrade with turned spindles. The windows of the original portion are large, 12 over 12 sash, and the exterior lintels all have cornerstones of a common circle-in-a-square design. A c. 1900 photograph shows exterior shutters on the windows.

The original L-shaped house plan plus its additions, has been sketched on the enclosed plan. The floor plan of the first and second stories were the same, and although the house has been added to, the original rooms are otherwise unchanged. Judging from the fabric, the house originally had porches on the southeast rear as well as the front and side. The high-ceilinged rooms were joined by hallways and porches, a typical plan for that region, to promote cross-ventilation. Hallways and porches often were used as rooms and the kitchen was in a separate building.

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 22-July 4, 1862

BUILDER/ARCHITECT not known

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

During most of the 47-day siege of Vicksburg, beginning in late May of 1863, Confederate commander Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton and members of his staff occupied this large house in the center of the city as their headquarters. In this house, July 3, 1863, Pemberton held a council of his chief officers to discuss plans for capitulation, prior to his decision to surrender, which was effected July 4, 1863.

Vicksburg is considered by many military historians to have been the most critical campaign of the Civil War. For the Union forces under Ulysses S. Grant, the capture of the fortified city which occupied a commanding defensive position on the Mississippi River, culminated a long campaign to free the entire Mississippi from Cairo, Illinois, to its mouth from Confederate hands. For the Midwest, control of the Mississippi and freeing the river from enemy hands, was the most imperative strategy of the war and their prime motivation for fighting against the Confederacy. Militarily, Grant's victory accomplished the destruction of a Confederate army numbering 40,000--in the largest surrender in American history until Bataan in 1942, as well as the capture of great stores of arms--called by Grant the most important of the war.

Loss of Vicksburg severed the Confederacy geographically, cutting the three states west of the Mississippi from the eight states to the east, and economically crushing the South by slicing vital supply lines carrying beef and corn from the Trans-Mississippi states and arms and supplies from the east. The surrender was made even more dramatic as it occurred on July 4, 1863, the national holiday and the exact same day that the Southern armies under General Robert E. Lee were repulsed in the Gettysburg campaign, regarded as most symbolic by the Union forces.

Pemberton's headquarters, known also as the Willis-Cowan House, remains a substantial two-story brick structure with spacious interiors. Although the house has received additions to the rear, most of the original portion is quite unaltered and the present owner hopes to restore the building as a house museum.

HISTORY

The most important documentation of the historic associations of the house as Confederate headquarters is an affidavit prepared for the Vicksburg Park Commission in 1903 which stated:

(CONTINUED)

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1/2 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 5	6, 9, 9	7, 3, 0	3, 5	8, 0	8, 3, 0	B					
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING				ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		
C							D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The national historic landmark boundary is conterminous with the town lot boundary on which the house is located, and which is delineated on the Sanborn map (enclosed) as the "Cowan Place."

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

Blanche Higgins Schroer, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

August 1976

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street, NW.

TELEPHONE

523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington,

STATE

D. C.

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

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

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The two front parlors, with their large windows, fireplaces and fluted woodwork with circle-in-square motif cornerblocks, open east and west from the main entrance hall. At the opposite end of the hall a wide doorway of folding panels is framed by a glass-paned transom and pilasters with Ionic capitals. This was an original entrance from a porch, since the opposite side of the doorway has the same lintel treatment as the window exteriors, and the walls are of exterior brick.

The side entrance porch leads to a hallway where the main curved stairway to the second story is located. The plaster walls of this two story space are curved to accentuate the graceful lines of the stair and the woodwork of the window above is curved to follow the wall. The staircase has a full-round handrail, with plain square spindles.

This side hallway which connects to the dining room, west front parlor and the second story, also ends with a wide folding door with transom, which must have once opened onto a porch. The original floor plan on the second floor appears to have been identical to the first floor, including the treatment of these interior hallway doors, indicating that the original southeast porch must have been two-storied, connecting the hallways on both levels.

As was common in that region, the second floor rooms had somewhat more decoration than those on the first floor. The only ceiling decoration in the house appears to have been the egg and dart plaster molding which outlines the ceiling of the front hallway on the second floor, which was apparently used as a room. The finest mantelpiece in the house is in the east front second floor room, with fluted colonettes, curved freize and paneled end blocks supporting the mantel shelf.

The plan of the original rooms is intact, as are the doors, windows, a fireplace with rather simple mantelpiece in each room, the original woodwork, as well as some hardware. The Sisters of Mercy, who owned the house 1910-1973, added to, but did not alter the original house, except to replace the hardwood floors in the front first floor section.

Judging from the fabric, sometime after the house was built, and probably during the nineteenth century considering the material and workmanship, an addition was constructed on the southeast side, replacing the two-story porch on both levels. A room, with small fireplace built into the corner, was added south of the front

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east parlor, with a similar room directly above it. The dining room was enlarged to the east, moving the windows to the new exterior walls, but leaving portions of the original wall as supporting columns in the center of the room. The built-in cabinets in the dining room may also date from the time of this alteration. Upstairs, the space above the dining room addition became a separate room, now used as a bathroom. Construction of the new rooms also created a connecting hall between the two entrance halls on each level.

The date of this alteration is still undocumented, and although by the fabric it appears early, it was not necessarily antebellum. On the one hand, the affidavit of Lt. Morrison described four rooms on the first floor and one on the second occupied by the Confederate staff. These would appear to have been the two front parlors, the dining room and probably the stair hallway. On the other hand, the Morrison affidavit, dated 1903, stated that the "house remains almost as it was in 1863."

Originally the kitchen was a separate small, one-story brick building, with a gable of vertical clapboarding and a small porch enclosed by latticework (as seen in the enclosed c. 1900 photograph), and was only perhaps a dozen feet from the house, south of the dining room. Between 1920 and 1930 a two-story clapboarded addition, on a raised brick foundation, and encircled with windows on the upper level, was built between the house and kitchen buildings. The addition was actually constructed over the kitchen, incorporating its north wall and a portion of the north roof into the new addition. The addition which extended across the whole width of the house and was perhaps 20 feet long, was left as one large room on both levels, connected by a back staircase. A small frame, one-room addition, used for a bathroom, was added to the southeastern corner of the house, perhaps at this same time.

The old kitchen is one open room on the interior and badly deteriorated. The floor is collapsing in places, the roof is damaged and much of the old fireplace has fallen, or been taken, apart. An old cistern remains in the lattice-enclosed open space underneath the c. 1920 addition. The present owner plans to renovate this twentieth century addition for his residence.

The house is on a town lot of about one-quarter acre, with a two-tiered terrace in front. A wrought-iron fence on top of a low brick wall lines the property at the sidewalk edge and two small flights of brick stairs lead up to

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the house. A brick walk, one section laid in herringbone pattern, runs along the west side of the house. Along the west exterior wall, beneath the front parlor, is a low brick section, apparently a foundation support. Several trees now shade the front of the house and plans are being made for landscaping the small yard to the west.

To date no detailed descriptions or inventories of the house during the nineteenth century have been located. This description has been based on an inspection of the house June 23, 1976, made with the assistance of architectural historian Lisa Reynolds of the State of Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

The present owner has begun to repair and restore the house, beginning with the historic front section. The layer of gray paint will be removed from the original red brick and the exterior trim will be painted white. The original rooms, which are remarkably unaltered, retain original woodwork, fireplaces, some hardware and reportedly the original plaster. Beginning with the front west parlor, which General Pemberton used as his office, the major rooms will be gradually repainted, based on the color schemes obtained from paint samples, and refurnished with period pieces. No furnishings original to the house have yet been located, nor have any inventories or descriptions of interior furnishings been found. The owner plans to retain and repair the c. 1920 frame addition on the rear, to be used as his residence, while the historic main section will some day be opened as a house museum.

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Lieut. James H. Morrison, Aide-de-Camp to Lieut. Gen. John C. Pemberton, having visited Vicksburg by order of the War Department, and being in the office of the Park Commission on this 18th day of April, 1903, states that Gen. Pemberton's headquarters were, for the first days of the defense, in a building then standing on or near the present site of the Catholic Brothers' School; that his headquarters remained at that place not longer than five days and were then moved to 110 East Crawford St., as the houses in Vicksburg are now numbered; that the house, which he has to-day visited, remains almost as it was in 1863; that Gen. Pemberton's office was in the room on the first floor at the right of the hall as one enters the building on the Crawford St. side or front entrance; that the office of the Adjutant General of the Department, Major R. W. Memminger, was immediately in rear of the General's office, and, still farther to the rear, was the general office in which the work of the Department was done; that on the opposite side of the hall and on the same floor, Lieut. Col. J. S. Saunders, Chief of Ordnance, had his office; and that Maj. W. H. McCardle, Assistant Adjutant General of the Department, had his office in the room above Gen. Pemberton's office....¹

Emma Balfour lived next door to the Willis-Cowan House and wrote in her diary May 30, 1863, that the shelling was so heavy that the Willis House was struck twice, two horses were killed in the street in front, and that General Pemberton and his staff were forced to leave the house.² It is probable that Pemberton and staff retreated to some better sheltered place, such as the caves used by many Vicksburg citizens, during the periods of heaviest bombardment. An article in The Pittsburgh Evening Chronicle of July 14, 1863, discussed the location of Confederate headquarters:

¹ Subscribed to in the office of the Park Commission this 18th day of April, 1903....(signed)....James H. Morrison, Late Lieut. & A.D.C. to Lt. Gen. John C. Pemberton. Located in book of affidavits in the custody of Vicksburg National Military Park, Vicksburg, Mississippi.

² National Register inventory form, prepared June 24, 1970.

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It is likely some such cavern was hewn out for use as Pemberton's headquarters in times of intensest shelling. However, it is known positively only that he made use of the residence of Lieutenant Ludwell Blackstone Cowan for the duration of the siege. Cowan's home stood on the south side of Crawford Street, opposite the Convent.³

The Siege of Vicksburg

In perhaps the most important strategic campaign of the war, beginning in 1861, Federal forces gradually wrested control of the Mississippi River from the Confederates in a long series of engagements. But Vicksburg, situated in a naturally defensive position on high bluffs on the east side of the river, and protected from the lowland and swamps, was seemingly impregnable.

When on April 25, 1862, New Orleans fell to the Federals, reinforcement of Vicksburg by the Confederates was the result. On May 19, 1862, David G. Farragut's fleet arrived in sight of the Vicksburg defenses and commenced a heavy bombardment of the city. The defensive geography of the city, bolstered by Confederate batteries, rendered the naval attacks fruitless, and on July 28, 1862, the Federal fleet recoiled. During the next months, and throughout the winter, Confederate engineers undertook an extensive construction program to improve and extend the Vicksburg defenses. On October 14, 1862, John C. Pemberton took command of the Department of Mississippi and East Louisiana. Pemberton, a Pennsylvania-born West Pointer, a career Army officer with a long record, had chosen to fight for the Confederacy. He was a staunch admirer of Jefferson Davis, but was sometimes held suspect by Southerners because of his Yankee background. Pemberton had to defend a long front extending from Port Hudson, 130 miles south of Vicksburg, to Fort Pemberton 100 miles to the northeast, and also maintain a force in northern Mississippi to observe Union activities along the Memphis & Charleston Railroad.⁴

A Federal column moved toward Vicksburg from the north, under Ulysses S. Grant, initially in the autumn of 1862 and attempted several unsuccessful schemes of bypassing Vicksburg altogether, by digging canals or navigating backwater

³ From the Pemberton Collection, University of North Carolina, quoted by John C. Pemberton, in Pemberton, Defender of Vicksburg, p. 239.

⁴ Edwin C. Bearss, Decision in Mississippi, p. 214.

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streams, out of range of the Confederate guns. In Spring 1863, after spending the winter in the lowlands west and northwest of Vicksburg, Grant settled on a daring plan of attack. He marched his armies down the west (Louisiana) side of the Mississippi. Then, under cover of night, on April 16, 1863, a large part of the Federal fleet north of the city, under Admiral David D. Porter, first ran the Confederate batteries, and then on April 30 transported Grant's army across the Mississippi south of Vicksburg. Once in Mississippi Grant's army, numbering approximately 33,000, quickly moved on Jackson, 40 miles east, the state capital and major supply base and railroad center.

Although outnumbered by the Confederate forces in the area, Grant had effectively surprised the Confederates, with a brigade of Union cavalry providing excellent diversion, and successfully cutting railroad and communication lines. Grant moved against the army of Joseph Johnston, supreme commander of the Confederacy between the Mississippi and Appalachian, and as Johnston retreated northeasterly, Grant occupied Jackson. Johnston, recognizing that Pemberton's army would be trapped in Vicksburg, ordered Pemberton to withdraw from the city and join his forces.

General John C. Pemberton faced a dilemma, in that he had received orders from Jefferson Davis, in Richmond, to hold Vicksburg. He did not obey Johnston's orders to evacuate Vicksburg but did send part of his army-- however, too few and too late. Pemberton's men met Grant at Champion Hill, midway to Jackson, and were beaten and driven back, closely pursued and routed across Big Black River, retreating to the protection of the well-developed Vicksburg defenses.

Close behind, the Federals secured high ground along the Yazoo River, a position accessible to supply boats and reinforcements. Grant attacked from earthworks guarding the eastern approaches to Vicksburg twice, on May 19 and May 22, with such terrible lossess that he then resorted to siege tactics. Pemberton had about 32,000 troops, while Grant initially had perhaps 42,000 men but was gradually reinforced to 77,000.

For 47 days, beginning May 18, the siege continued. The Federals dug lines of entrenchment, finally extending about 15 miles, surrounding and roughly paralleling the Confederate lines, and then steadily tightened their investment. Each night both sides continued digging and repairing rifle pits, mining and countermining, until in many places the opposing lines were so close that soldiers in the trenches conversed with the enemy. Throughout the siege the

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Federals bombarded the city so that most of Vicksburg's population retreated to the shelter of caves dug into the hillsides in and above the town, perhaps as many as 500 in number.

Despite orders from Jefferson Davis and the Secretary of War that Vicksburg must not be lost, General Johnston sent orders to Pemberton on May 13th and 15th to evacuate the city. But throughout the campaign, many of Johnston's orders and Pemberton's replies were captured or lost, and Confederate hopefuls continued to believe that Johnston's force of 32,000 would attack Grant from the east. As the siege wore on such a hope proved futile. Confederate reserves were low, soldiers and civilians resorted to eating mules and then whatever staples were left. An estimated 5600 persons in the city were under medical care, most sheltered in private homes, as at least 100 houses were set up as hospitals. An estimated 6,000 soldiers were killed, wounded, or incapacitated and almost every structure in the city suffered damage-- Vicksburg became a mass of craters, fire-gutted ruins, and shattered glass.⁵ Civilians, numbering about 4,000, mostly lived in the caves in and about the town, while the Confederate soldiers sought shelter in the rifle-pits and bombproofs for the duration.

Describing the decision to surrender the army and city in an article written a decade later, General Pemberton wrote:

Feeling assured that it was useless to hope longer for assistance from General Johnston, either to raise the siege of Vicksburg or to rescue the garrison, I summoned division and brigade commanders, with one or two others, to meet in my quarters on the night of the second of July. All the correspondence that had taken place during the siege was laid before these officers. After much consideration it was advised that I address a note to General Grant, proposing the appointment of commissioners to arrange terms of capitulation.⁶

After soliciting and receiving reports from division commanders as to the condition and ability of their men to evacuate Vicksburg and survive a forced

⁵ The Pittsburgh Evening Chronicle, July 14, 1863, in the Pemberton Collection, quoted by Pemberton in Defender of Vicksburg, p. 239.

⁶ John C. Pemberton, Lt. Gen., CSA, "The Terms of Surrender" written in Philadelphia June 12, 1875, published in Battles and Leaders of the Civil War III, 543.

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marched to the south, and learning that "not a solitary brigade or regimental commander favored the scheme..." as Pemberton wrote in his official report, "With this unanimous opinion of my officers against the practicability of a successful evacuation, and no relief from General Johnston, a surrender with or without terms was the only alternative left me."⁷

Pemberton therefore addressed a letter to General Grant (from Headquarters, Vicksburg) on the morning of July 3, 1863, proposing an armistice of several hours during which arrangements might be made by a commission of three men from each side for "terms for the capitulation of Vicksburg." About two hours later Grant's reply arrived, rejecting a commission to arrange terms and demanding an unconditional surrender.

Pemberton interpreted Grant's reply as a wish for a personal conference of the two commanding officers, and agreed to a meeting at 3 P.M. between the lines. Pemberton, accompanied by two officers met Grant and his officers, and while Grant and Pemberton adjourned, Confederates John Bowen and L. M. M. Montgomery consulted with Federals James B. McPherson and A. D. Smith. The meeting concluded with the arrangement that Grant would communicate with Pemberton by 10 P.M., hostilities ceasing in the meanwhile.

About the appointed time, Grant's "proposition for the surrender of the city of Vicksburg, public stores & c" arrived at the Confederate Headquarters in the Willis-Cowan House, where Pemberton had assembled his division brigade commanders, and staff in a council of war. Grant relinquished his initial demand for unconditional surrender and finally agreed that the defeated garrison be paroled at Vicksburg, instead of being sent north as prisoners of war. "This letter was immediately submitted to a council of general officers"

⁷ General Report No. 11, Lt. Gen. John C. Pemberton, C. S. Army, Commanding Department of Mississippi and East Louisiana, of operations April 4-July 4, prepared at Gainsville, Ala. August 2, 1863, published in Official Records of the War of Rebellion, Vol. 24, part 1, p. 283.

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Pemberton reported, "My own inclination was to rejected these terms, but after some discussion I addressed General Grant..." late on the night of the 3rd, generally agreeing to his terms of capitulation.⁸ On the morning of the 4th, Grant's reply was received, accepting Pemberton's modifications to his terms--that the Confederates would march out carrying their colors, and that officers could retain personal property.

Of the surrender on the morning of July 4, 1863, Pemberton officially reported that "In accordance with this agreement, the garrison was surrendered at 10 a.m., and the Federal forces immediately took possession of our works and placed guards in the city..."⁹ After Vicksburg surrendered, Port Hudson, the last Confederate stronghold downstream fell within a week, and as Lincoln wrote, the Father of Waters finally rolled unvexed to the sea.

Bruce Catton wrote that the loss of Vicksburg, and with it control of the Mississippi Valley, was a mortal wound for the Confederacy, that "losing at Gettysburg, the Confederates had lost more than they could well afford to lose; at Vicksburg, they lost what they could not afford at all."¹⁰

⁸ Lt. Gen. John C. Pemberton in his official report p. 285.

⁹ Lt. Gen. John C. Pemberton in his official report p. 286.

¹⁰ Bruce Catton, The Civil War, p. 147.

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Pemberton's Headquarters

CONTINUATION SHEET

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PAGE 1

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Field trip to the site and consultation with Lisa Reynolds, architectural
historian, Mississippi Department of Archives and History June 23,
1976.

Report completed with the assistance of Edwin C. Bearss, historian, National
Park Service.

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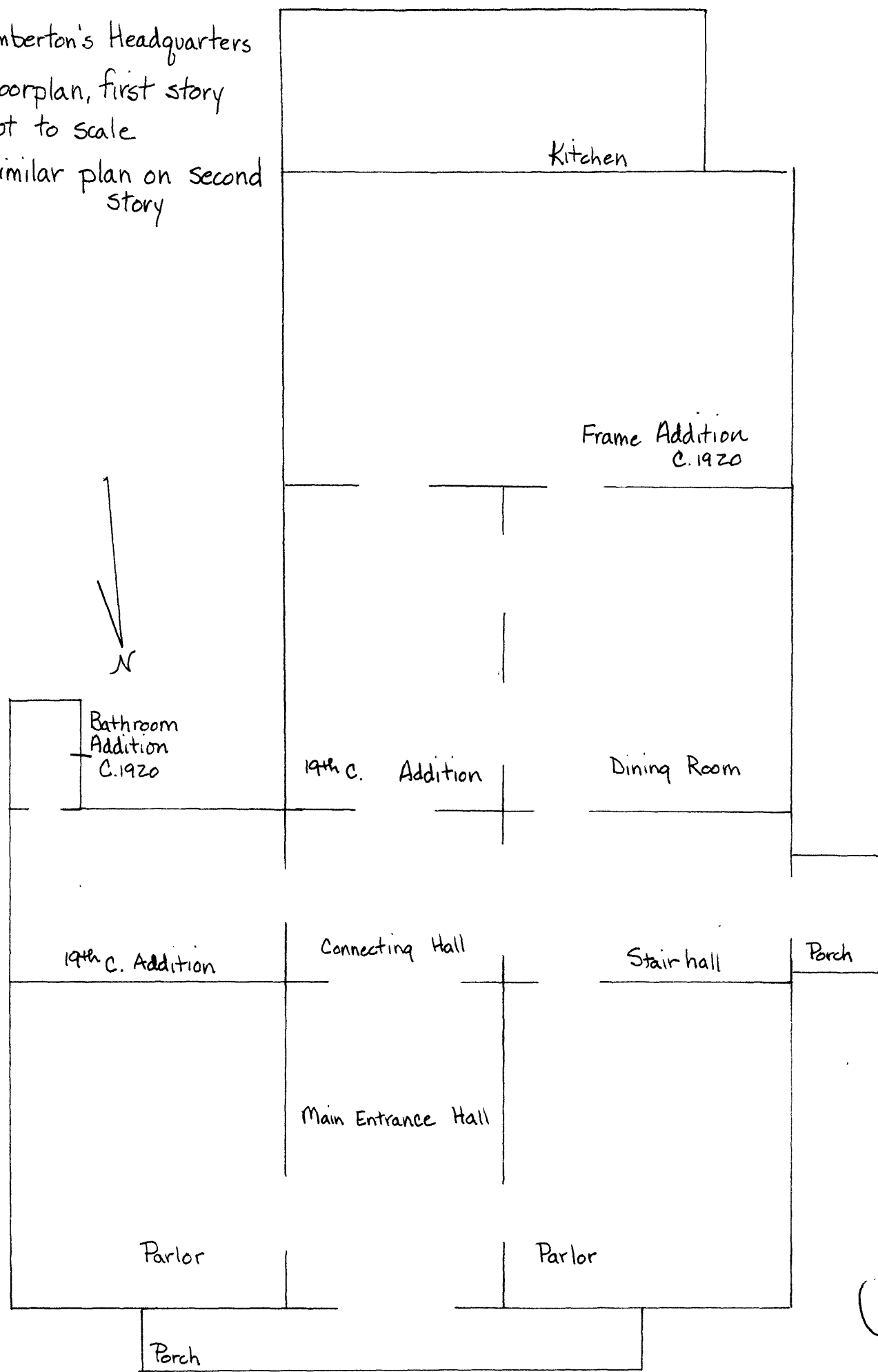
Photographs and Their Descriptions

Location: Pemberton's Headquarters, Vicksburg, Mississippi

Photo credit: J. Mack Moore Collection

- Photos: 1. Old Courthouse Museum earliest known headquarters, 1900
2. West side, with entrance porch and frame, 1920 addition.
Original kitchen building, now partially covered by 1920 addition.
3. Front north facade; front and east facades
4. Columned doorways of the two front galleries; entrance and gallery,
second story.
5. View through main entrance hall into the west front parlor.
Mantlepiece in east front room, second floor.

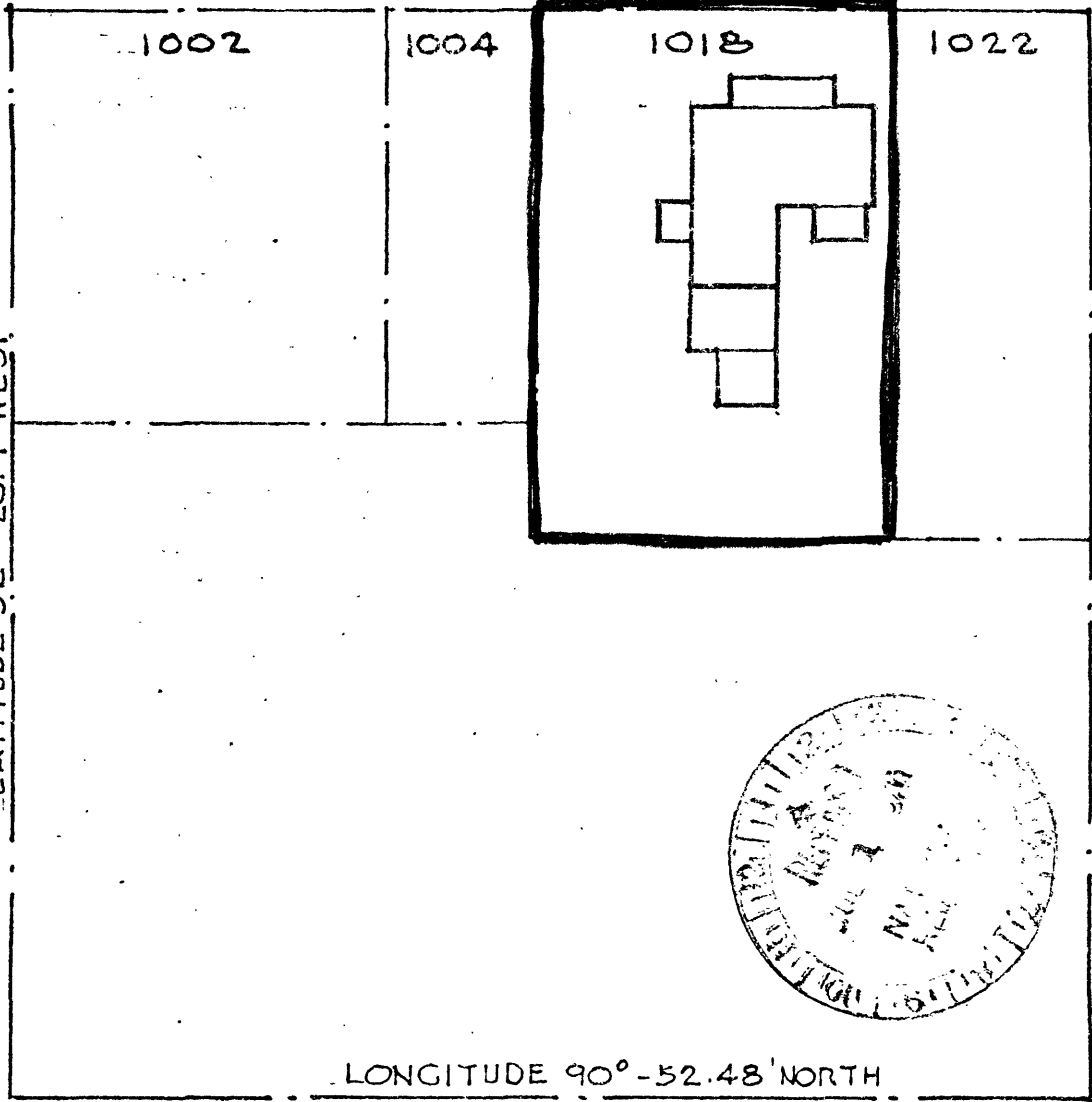
Pemberton's Headquarters
Floorplan, first story
Not to scale
Similar plan on second story



4
National Historic Landmark Boundary
CRAWFORD ST.

C H E R R Y S T

LATITUDE 32° - 20.9' WEST



P L O T

SCALE 1" = 50 FEET

50 40 30 20 10 0 50

PUBLISHED BY

SANBORN MAP COMPANY, NEW YORK N.Y. 1925 REV. 1960

COWAN PLACE
VICKSBURG, MISS.

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