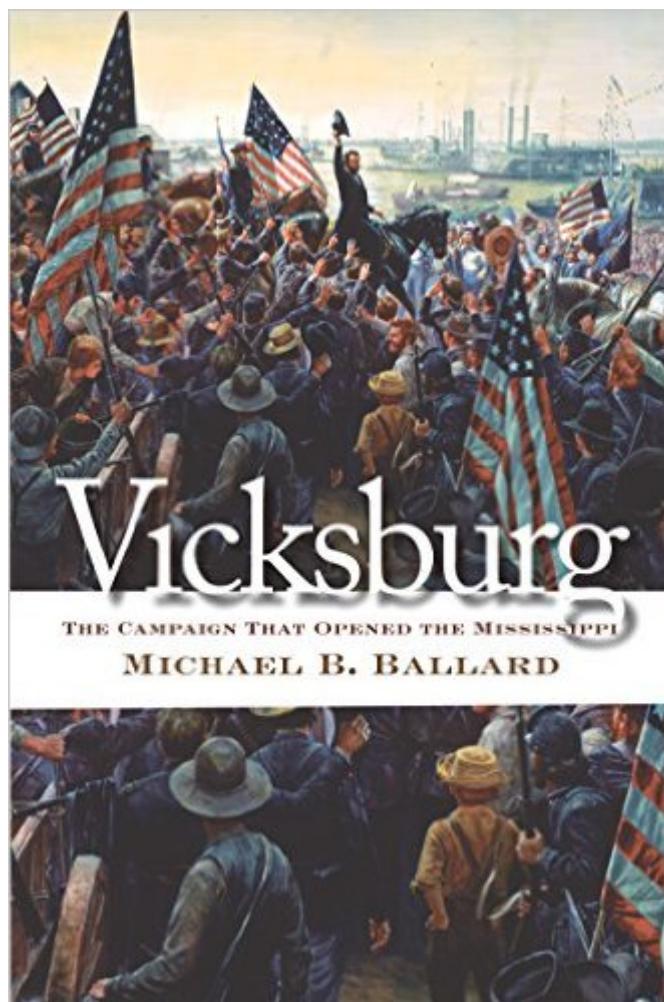


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Vicksburg: The Campaign That Opened The Mississippi (Civil War America)



Synopsis

Michael Ballard provides a concise yet thorough study of the 1863 battle that cut off a crucial river port and rail depot for the South and split the Confederate nation, providing a turning point in the Civil War. The Union victory at Vicksburg was hailed with as much celebration in the North as the Gettysburg victory and Ballard makes a convincing case that it was equally important to the ultimate resolution of the conflict.

Book Information

Series: Civil War America

Hardcover: 512 pages

Publisher: The University of North Carolina Press; 1st edition (October 25, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0807828939

ISBN-13: 978-0807828939

Product Dimensions: 9.6 x 6.2 x 1.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.9 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 starsÂ [See all reviewsÂ](#) (20 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Mr. Ballard's book is another popular history, it contains little if any new information excepting a defense/excuse of the CS commander Gen. Pemberton. US Gen. Grant is given considerable credit and deservedly so. The various Union naval commanders; Farragut, Porter etc get much attention also. Mr. Ballard does do a fair job of placing credit on both side's better commanders and lambasts CS Gen. Joe Johnston constantly. He lists the maneuvering and prior failures of Union forces throughout the Mississippi region but successfully does so without losing the reader. However, detail is lacking and the writing style itself is tepid and uninspiring. Contrary to some of the other reviewers, I found the maps poorly drawn and overly cluttered. Done in one color, roads and streams litter the maps; competing with arrows listing advances and retreats and unit markers do not differ between CS/US, infantry or cavalry...an attempt to clarify this on these small maps lists various brigade/division unit commanders but without listing what side is what. Numerous

misspellings imply either poor editors or poor research. He consistently describes units as "crack" outfits to the point of the reader wondering, were there any "normal" units present? Any force smaller than a battalion or regiment is listed as a patrol or roadblock. His handling of first person history, the best aspect of recent military writings, is slipshod and often generalised. Few regiments are listed and in general, brigades get the most mention in combat descriptions. A bright spot was the emphasis on the various naval movements in and about the Vicksburg area. Union naval ability and the Confederate lack of, gets serious and well deserved attention. Mr.

This is a good book for anyone interested in studying on the Civil War. As the author mentions, this campaign to capture Vicksburg is a rather unknown period of the war and this is a good book on this campaign. It has its plusses and its minuses. On the positive side, it covers the campaign in detail with a number of human interest stories. The experiences of the citizens and soldiers who lived in Vicksburg, e.g. living in caves, the casualties, the experiences of soldiers in the hospitals (for example, he goes through the procedure that a doctor used to remove a leg - interesting although somewhat gruesome but it highlights the suffering). He is an apparent fan of Pemberton (although he recognizes his mistakes well) and not a fan of Joe Johnston (but I haven't found a Civil War writer who is...). He covers them well and also the top Union generals: Grant, Sherman and McClelland, including Grant's supposed bouts with alcohol and the feud between McClelland and Grant. This is a balanced coverage. On the minuses side, I found myself getting confused at times about what was really happening. For example, the coverage of the battles including the maps which are very confusing, which ramble about this unit and that unit going this way and that. The early book with this Confederate general and that Confederate general doing this and that is also confusing and may cause you to get you to get frustrated with the book, but stick with it. At one point, he has Pemberton in Vicksburg and needing to go to Vicksburg in the same paragraph. So, I read it again, and... huh. But then the story picks up when Grant tries one approach versus another to reach Vicksburg and decides on approaching it from the South.

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