

M2072

LISTS OF CONFEDERATES CAPTURED AT VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI,
JULY 4, 1863

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Introduction

On the single roll of this microfilm publication, M2072, are reproduced lists of Confederate soldiers captured at Vicksburg, Mississippi, July 4, 1863. These records are part of the War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group (RG) 109, and are part of the series identified as Entry 212, Parole Rolls of Confederates, 1862-1865, in Elizabeth Bethel, *Preliminary Inventory of the War Department Collection of Confederate Records (Record Group 109)* (National Archives, 1957; reprint, Iberian Publishing Co., 1994).

Background

The city of Vicksburg, located on the east bank of the Mississippi River midway between Memphis, TN, and New Orleans, LA, was the site of a key Confederate river defense and the focal point of Union Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's operations in the west from October 1862 to July 1863. The surrender of its fortifications and a garrison of 29,500 men on July 4, 1863, was a severe psychological blow to the Confederacy and, combined with the simultaneous defeat of the Army of Northern Virginia at Gettysburg, PA, represented a manpower loss the South could ill afford.

In 1861, Vicksburg was a commercial center and transportation hub for Mississippi and Louisiana. When the war began, Vicksburg took on an even greater significance as one of the key links between the eastern Confederacy and the Trans-Mississippi South, serving as a transit point for troops and as a port of entry for Louisiana salt, sugar, and molasses, the latter two frequently exchanged for meat for the armies. Efforts to safeguard the city became crucial in the spring of 1862 when Memphis and New Orleans fell to Federal forces. Vicksburg then remained the only railhead on the east bank of the river and, as such, provided the last direct link between the eastern and western halves of the Confederacy. Its retention also effectively blocked Federal waterborne communications down the river.

Grant, eager to take Vicksburg and avoid a protracted siege, attacked the city's defenses on May 19 and again three days later. Both assaults were repulsed with heavy casualties. He thus was forced to resort to a siege. Once completed, the 12-mile long Federal siege line paralleled the Confederate earthworks from an average distance of six hundred yards and was anchored at both ends on the Mississippi River. By mid-June, 77,000 men surrounded the city.

By the end of June, the situation within Vicksburg was rapidly deteriorating. Citizens sought shelter from daily bombardments by hiding in basements or digging caves into the hillsides. Water became scarce and bread rations were reduced. As the meat supply dwindled, mule meat was substituted for bacon.

On July 3, the Confederate commander, Maj. Gen. John C. Pemberton, met Grant between the lines and arranged to surrender the following day.

Records Description

These lists are on printed forms with columns which annotate the following information about each prisoner: name, rank, regiment, company, and date and place of capture, and remarks.

The lists are arranged alphabetically by the state each unit is from; thereunder by type of unit (cavalry, artillery, and infantry); thereunder by regiment number; and often thereunder by company.