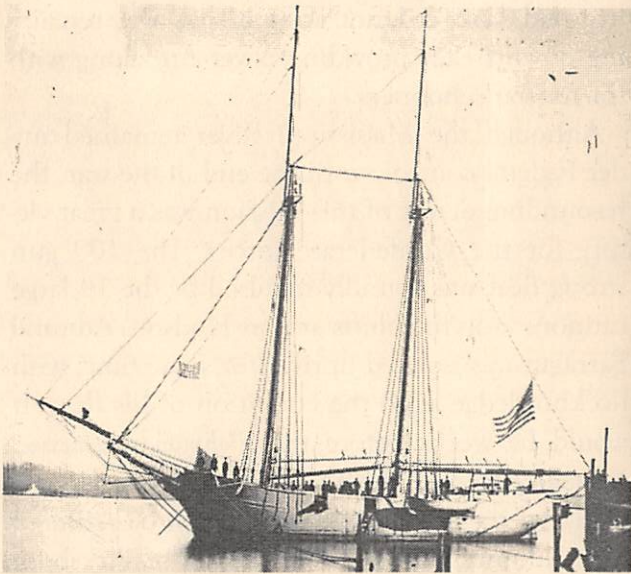


Seasonally a scale model of the CSS *Arkansas*, an ironclad ram is on display at Port Hudson as an example of Confederate naval design, but the ship was not involved in this particular action with Farragut's fleet.

Almost a year earlier, July 1862, the Confederate ironclad ram *Arkansas* broke Farragut's blockade at Vicksburg. Confederate Major General Earl van Dorn dispatched the rebel ironclad to Baton Rouge to participate in the Confederate assault. This gallant warship developed major engine failure before she could factor in the outcome and was destroyed by her crew to prevent capture. Many of the gunners and crews were later involved in the Union assaults of Port Hudson and Vicksburg manning the Confederate big guns. The remains of "The Red Ironclad" rests under the levee in West Baton Rouge Parish near Port Allen.



U.S. Navy Mortar Schooner

If you would like to read more about Admiral Farragut's naval assault we suggest the following books:

The Port Hudson Campaign 1862-1863
Author: Edward Cunningham

The Guns of Port Hudson Volume I & II
Author: David C. Edmonds

Port Hudson Confederate Bastion on the Mississippi
Author: Lawrence Lee Hewitt

A River Unvexed: A History and Tour Guide of the Campaign for the Mississippi River
Author: Jim Miles

The Civil War in Louisiana
Author: John D. Winters

Port Hudson State Historic Site

U.S. Hwy. 61, Port Hudson, La.
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Port Hudson State Historic Site

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Jackson, La. 70748

Phone: 1-888-677-3400 or 1-225-654-3775

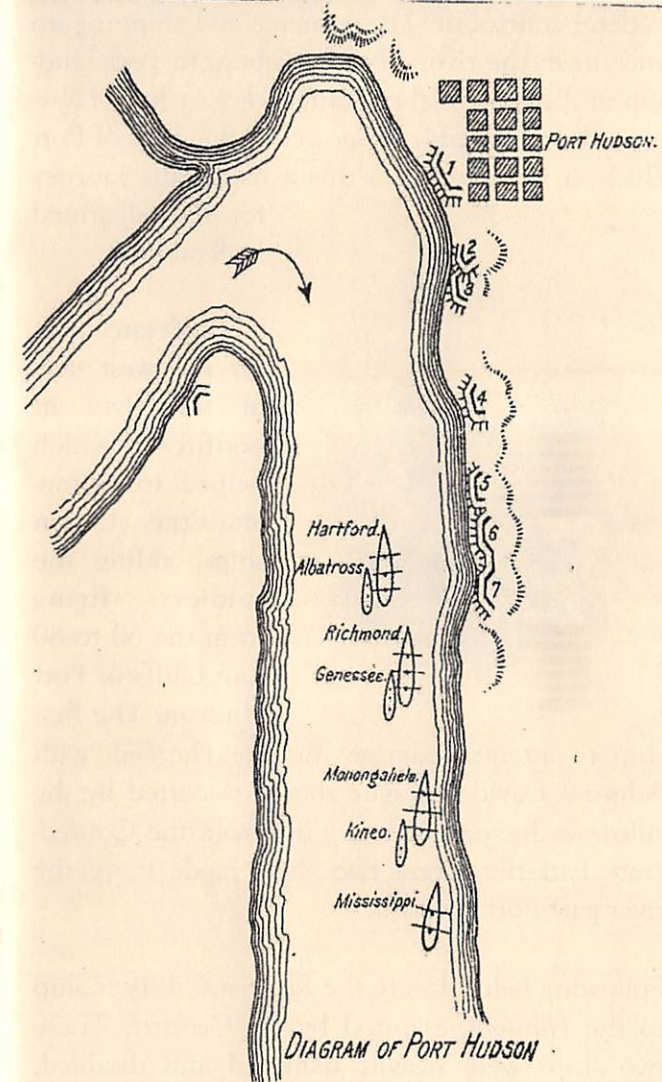
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Admiral Farragut's naval assault on Port Hudson, Louisiana 1863



A seasonal display of Admiral Farragut's Naval Assault can be observed on the pond across from the Museum parking lot.

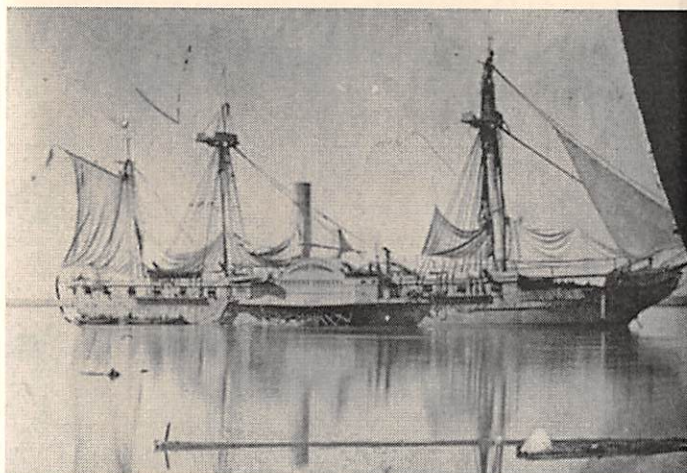
On the night of March 14-15, 1863, U.S. Navy Admiral David Farragut was leading a seven ship fleet up the Mississippi River attempting to pass the Confederate river batteries positioned along the bluffs at Port Hudson. The ultimate goal was Federal control of 1) commerce and shipping up and down the river from Vicksburg to Port Hudson and 2) to cut the Confederacy in half. However, the formidable firepower of the guns of Port Hudson were to make this a hazardous journey for the well-armed Federal fleet.



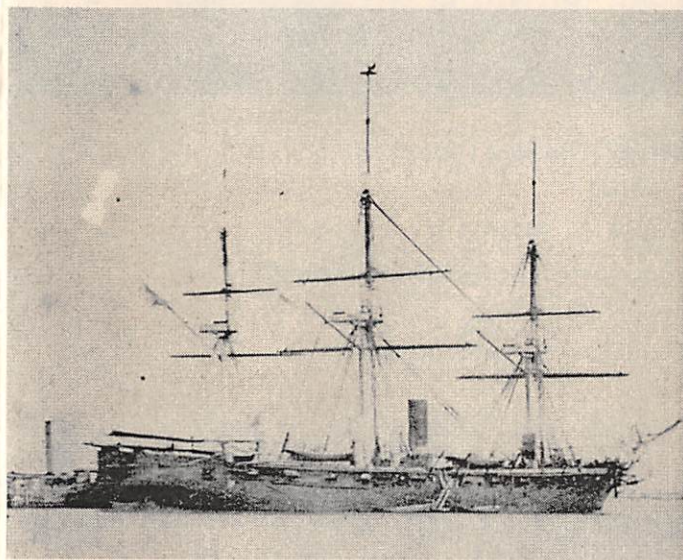
Confederate units on the west side of the river lit bonfires which helped to silhouette the Union ships, aiding the soldiers firing from the 60 to 80 foot bluffs of Port Hudson. The first

ship to attempt passage was the *Hartford*, with Admiral David Farragut aboard, escorted by the *Albatross*. In spite of heavy fire from the Confederate batteries, these two ships made it up the river past Port Hudson.

Following behind were the *Richmond*, a sister ship to the *Hartford*, escorted by the *Genessee*. These two ships were heavily damaged and disabled, forcing them to limp back down river out of harm's way. The *Monongahela* and the *Kieno*, were next in line, they were damaged to the point they lost power and drifted downstream until grounded across from the Confederate batteries, then drifting downstream to safety.



The *USS Mississippi* 1863



The *USS Hartford*

Last in line was the *Mississippi*. She came streaming upriver without escort and was pounded by the guns from the bluffs. Smoke created by the bonfires, cannon fire, and burning ships made navigation difficult. In the thick smoke and confusion, the crew of the *Mississippi* mistakenly thought they had cleared the batteries and made it to the sharp left bend in the river. They turned the ship too soon, running her into the muddy shoal of the opposite bank under the rebel guns and became a stranded target. Under heavy cannon and musket fire most of the crew took to life boats and safety downstream. Some of her crew were captured by Confederate soldiers on the banks of the river and many were killed on the doomed ship.

The *Mississippi* eventually floated free of the shoal and began to drift downriver. Fires burning on the ship ignited the gun powder and ammunition stores eventually creating a huge explosion heard miles downriver in Baton Rouge. The ironclad *Essex* did not attempt passage, remaining downstream providing cover fire along with the mortar schooners.

Although the Mississippi River remained under Federal control, until the end of the war, the resounding defeat of this mission was a great victory for the Confederate forces. The 100 gun strong fleet was soundly repulsed by the 19 large cannons atop the bluffs at Port Hudson. Admiral Farragut was isolated upriver for some time, with no knowledge as to the condition of his fleet. It would be weeks before the *Richmond*, *Genessee*, *Monongahela*, and the *Kieno* would return to operational status. The fleet would not be reunited with Admiral Farragut until the fall of Vicksburg and Port Hudson after July 9th, 1863.