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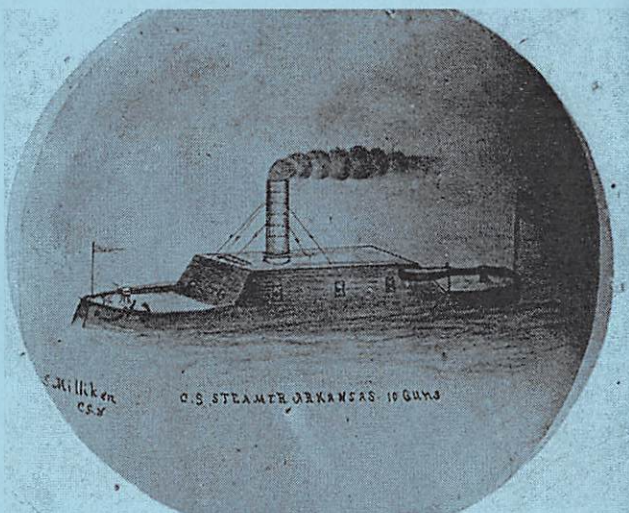
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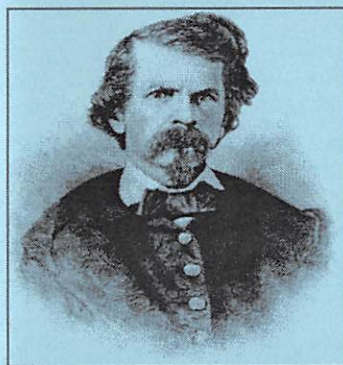
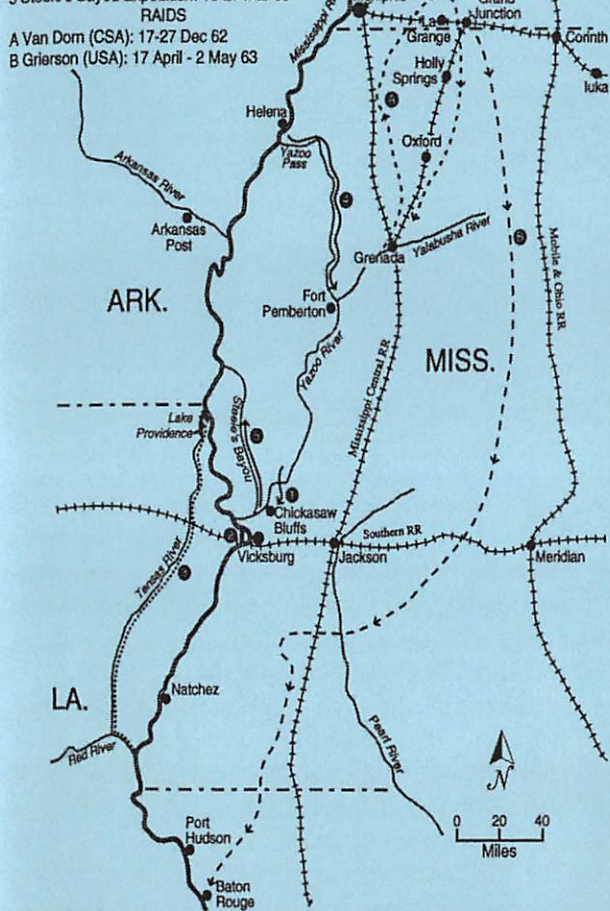
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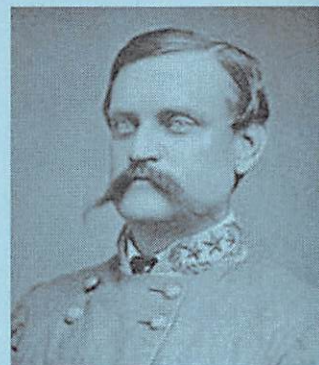
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- 1 Assault on Chickasaw Bluffs: 27-29 Dec 62
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- 3 Lake Providence Route: abandoned Mar 63
- 4 Yazoo Pass Expedition: 1 Feb - 27 Mar 63
- 5 Steele's Bayou Expedition: 16-27 Mar 63



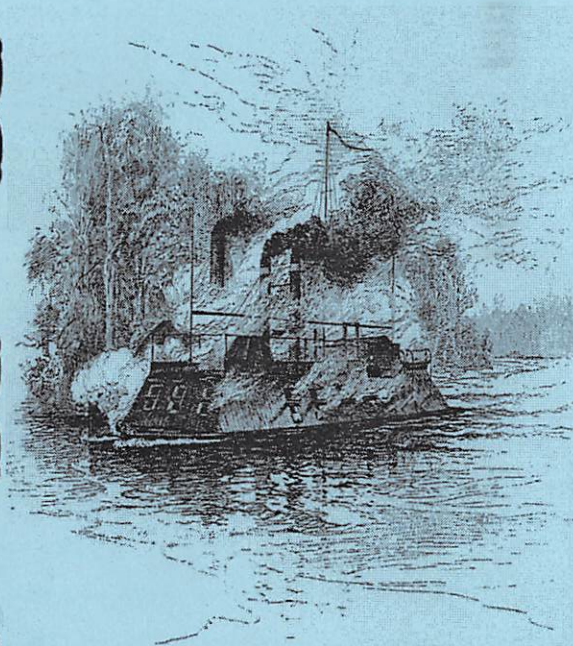
CS General Earl van Dorn



CS General J.C. Breckenridge

# C.S.S Arkansas and Her Brief Gallant History

This pamphlet is a collaboration between Robert Seal and the Staff at Port Hudson State Historic Site.



The Confederate ram "Arkansas" alongside the Union Gun-Boat "Carondelet"

## The Birth of a Naval Legend

The unfinished Confederate ironclad ram *Arkansas* originally laid down in 1861 at Memphis was evacuated to Greenwood, Ms., then relocated to Yazoo City to prevent her capture by Union forces. Lieutenant Isaac Newton Brown, CSN was given command and ordered to complete the rams construction in preparation for action. Once operational she lacked many basic refinements. Rust covered the iron ship and brown paint was applied over the rust and the result was the nickname "The Red Ironclad."

On the morning on July 14th, 1862 the *Arkansas* departed Sartartia Bar up the Yazoo River, destination Vicksburg, her mission, to break the blockade. She anchored at Haynes Bluff around midnight, and at three a.m., was underway. At sunrise entering Old River, an oxbow lake, the sight of three Union warships approaching a few miles away brought the crew to battle stations. The ironclad *Carondelet* was one of seven identical ironclad warships designed to operate in shallow inland waterways. *Tyler* and *Queen of the West* were converted from river boats to warships.

Photo # NH 66644 Cdr. Isaac N. Brown, CSN



COMMANDER ISAAC N. BROWN, C. S. N.

One half-mile separated the two forces when the *Carondelet* fired a shot at the rebel ram, backed round and at full steam ran down the river. The two escorting warships followed her maneuver.

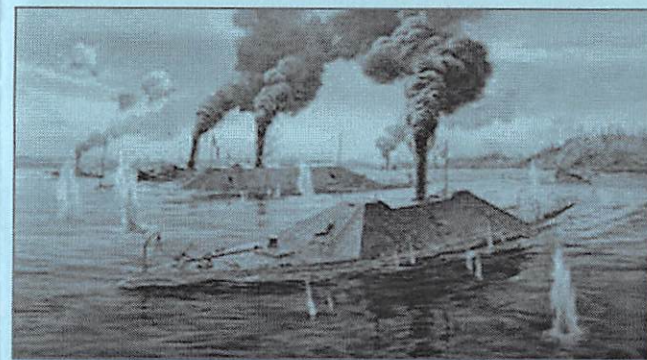
Continuing to pursue and close the range, *Arkansas* issued a steady accurate fire that penetrated the *Carondelet's* armor causing devastating damage. During this action the *Arkansas* was able to keep the escorting vessels at great distance allowing her to catch the fleeting Union ironclad and rake her with crippling broadsides. As the *Arkansas* passed closely to the *Carondelet* there was no return fire, no sign of activity from the crew, and no colors flying. The Yankee gunboat had run up on a mud bar to avoid sinking. She was completely disabled as the *Arkansas* continued past in pursuit of the retreating Federal ships.

Upon entering the Mississippi River the surprised Union fleet came into view. Admiral Farragut and Admiral Porter's fleets were composed of ocean going war ships, ironclads, gun-boats, rams, mortar boats, steamers and transports, about fifty vessels in all. With all cannons blazing "The Red Ironclad" passed through the combined fleet engulfed in a volcano of fire. Lt. Brown was not concerned with wasting shot or shell as nothing could be seen but the Union navy on all quarters.

The lone ironclad ram ran so close to the Union warships that much of their fire passed over the *Arkansas* and into the ships on the opposite bank adding to the damage caused by the Southern warship. The *Arkansas* steamed on down the river away from the massive Union fleet into the safety of the Rebel batteries at Vicksburg. The largest fleet ever assembled by the Union navy did not send forth a ship to challenge "The Red Ironclad's" daring passage.

As the Yankee navy began to disperse and move to safety up and down-river, they passed Vicksburg and attempted to destroy the *Arkansas*. The rust colored ship blended into the red clay bluffs making her difficult to detect. Once again "The Red Ironclad" escaped destruction.

The badly damaged Rebel ironclad emerged victorious to safety of the Confederate bluff batteries protecting Vicksburg. She tied up and was greeted by a jubilant population. Soon the Union ships began to disperse. The first blockade of Vicksburg was raised by a ten-gun ironclad!



## The Loss of "The Red Ironclad"

On August 4th, 1862 the repaired ironclad was ordered down river by CS General Earl Van Dorn to support CS General Breckenridge in his efforts to take Baton Rouge from the Federal invaders.

The *Arkansas* was to destroy the ironclad *Essex* and supporting warships. On August 6th, engine failure with the sight of Baton Rouge forced the crew to scuttle this gallant warship before she could influence the outcome of the battle.

The Union navy was able to fire into charging Confederate infantry formations, effectively halting their advance and securing victory for the defenders. Within a week Union forces evacuated the town leaving it burned and destroyed. The brave crew and gunners later served the big guns at the river batteries of Port Hudson and Vicksburg. The remains of "The Red Ironclad" rest under the levee in West Baton Rouge Parish near Port Allen.

