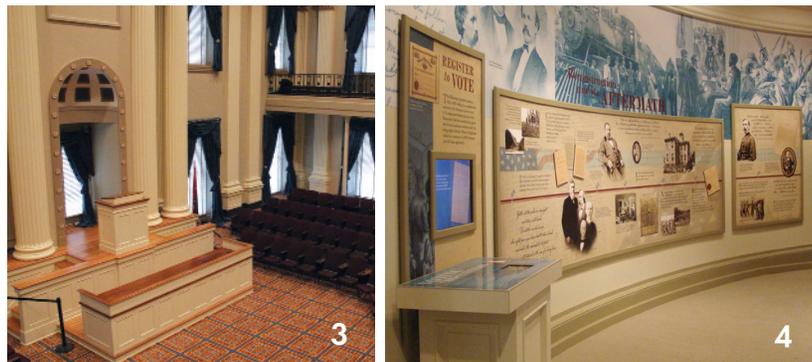


Sights to see at the OLD CAPITOL MUSEUM



FIRST FLOOR

1. History Happened Here - This permanent exhibit room charts the Old Capitol's history related to the city of Jackson. Exhibits also feature the building and city's relationship to the Civil War. Artifacts on display feature weaponry, furnishings that survived, and a reproduction of the historic ordinance of secession.

2. Governor's Office - Two wartime governors, John J. Pettus (1859-1863) and Charles Clark (1863-1865), used this office during the war. Also here, young Fred Grant reputedly appropriated a pipe after Union forces captured the city in May 1863. This room is decorated more elaborately than it would have been during the Civil War. A newspaper correspondent in June 1861 described the room as reflecting "more than republican simplicity" with sparse furniture, ragged carpet, and walls and ceiling discolored by mildew.

SECOND FLOOR

3. House of Representatives Chamber - Mississippi's most historic room, the chamber has witnessed several important events. Mississippi seceded from the Union in this room on January 9, 1861. President Davis and General Joseph E. Johnston rallied the troops in speeches made here on December 26, 1862. The video presentation features re-enactment of secession convention speeches made in January 1861.

4. Government and Constitutions Room - The permanent exhibit traces the difficult time in Mississippi history immediately after the war as the state attempted to rebuild itself. Controversial legislation and important events are explained as well the details behind the drafting of Mississippi's last two state constitutions.

The Old Capitol & THE CIVIL WAR

The Old Capitol played a prominent role in Mississippi's involvement in the American Civil War. Housing Mississippi's state government made the Old Capitol an important location for discussions leading up to secession and eventually made the Old Capitol and Jackson, Mississippi, a strategic military location as well.

The road to WAR

The Old Capitol hosted one of the first public debates in the South concerning secession when Mississippi held a statewide convention in October 1849. In the House of Representatives Chamber, delegates discussed the issue of slavery in the territories. After much discussion, they asked state leaders for prompt action should Congress pass the Wilmot Proviso, a proposed bill that prevented slavery from being allowed in any territory gained from the Mexican War. Slaveholders were also encouraged to migrate to the southwest, and more importantly, a call was made for a convention of delegates from all southern states to be held in Nashville in June 1850 to further discuss these issues.

The Compromise of 1850, the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and John Brown's raid further strained relations between the nation's two regions. Abraham's Lincoln's election as president convinced many southerners that secession was now their only recourse to insure the protection of their rights, slavery being the "right" most threatened.

On January 7, 1861, Mississippi delegates met again in the House Chamber to discuss secession. Two days later, by a vote of eighty-four to fifteen, they passed an ordinance of secession, making Mississippi the second southern state to leave the Union. Mississippi eventually joined with six other states to form the Confederacy and native son Jefferson Davis was elected President.

War Comes to MISSISSIPPI

Jackson and the Old Capitol escaped the ravages of war for the first two years. However, Union general Ulysses S. Grant's Union army threatened Mississippi beginning in late 1862. As Union forces pushed further into the state, Governor John J. Pettus asked President Jefferson Davis to return to his home state to boost morale. Davis and Confederate general Joseph E. Johnston spoke to large crowd in the House Chamber on December 26, 1862, preaching unity and vowing to defend Mississippi.

Five months later, Grant landed his army

south of Vicksburg in an effort to capture the city. After winning battles at Port Gibson and Raymond, Grant decided to attack Jackson before Vicksburg. Grant believed capturing the capital city would destroy Jackson as a communications center and scatter the Confederate forces in the area, thereby preventing a large army from operating in his rear while he moved his army toward Vicksburg.

Grant's army marched toward Jackson in two wings, one from Raymond and the other

from Clinton. Johnston believed he had too few men and inadequate entrenchments to resist Grant and decided to evacuate the city. He ordered a small contingent to hold out against Grant long enough to move key supplies and the rest of his army north toward Canton. On May 14, in a driving rainstorm, the two wings of the Union Army eventually overran the Confederate detachment. Some of the heaviest fighting took place near present-day Battlefield and Livingston Parks and the intersection of Capitol and Delaware Streets. The Union troops were victorious in capturing the city, but the Confederate force did stall the Union army long enough for supplies to escape. The Union army suffered approximately three hundred casualties, whereas Confederate forces lost over eight hundred.

Union forces quickly moved into the city. Members of the fifty-ninth Indiana placed a United States flag on the Old Capitol dome and stayed overnight to prevent it from being disturbed. One interesting story concerning the Union army's entry into the city occurred when Fred Grant, the Union general's son who traveled with the army, entered the Old Capitol and found a pipe still lit, in the governor's office. He confiscated it for his "own individual use."

Union forces remained only a short time before marching out again toward Vicksburg. Before the last soldiers left, they destroyed most of the city's manufacturing facilities and ripped up the railroads. Many homes and churches were also put to the torch. Miraculously, the Old Capitol survived, although the interior was severely damaged.

This was the first of several Union occupations of Jackson. After Vicksburg fell on July 4, Union forces returned to the capital to confront Joseph Johnston's army. During the siege of Vicksburg, Johnston had been assembling men to attempt to relieve the Vicksburg garrison, but the cautious general never attempted to attack Grant. After a brief siege of the capital city, Johnston again evacuated Jackson and Union forces occupied the city from July 17-23, the longest Union occupation during the war. Union forces left the city again, but did re-occupy the capital at least once more during the war. Each time, Union forces destroyed more city and private property, but through it all, the Old Capitol survived.

These occupations forced the state government to relocate several times. The legislature met at the Old Capitol in November 1861 and December 1862, but the May 1863 Union occupation required the state government to move. Over the next two

years, the state government operated in Enterprise, Meridian, Macon, and Columbus. During these years, the Old Capitol often stood vacant although the city of Jackson did decide to use the governor's office as a post office since the city's had been destroyed by Federal forces.

At the end of the war, Governor Charles Clark called the legislature back into session to meet at the capitol on May 18, 1865. The

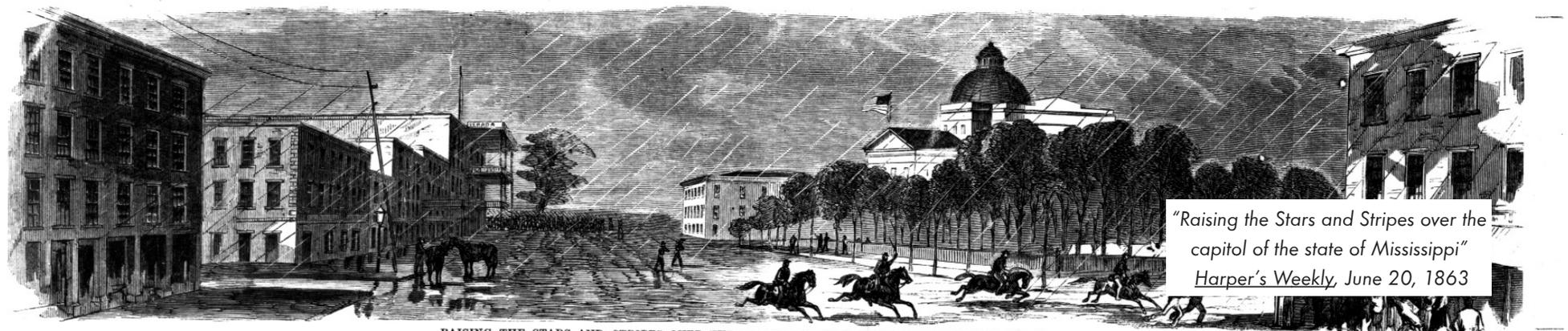
session never met due to fears of arrest by Federal authorities. The state's records were eventually turned over to the Federal government on May 22, officially ending Mississippi's participation in the Civil War.



A shirt made from brocade curtains by a Union soldier during one of the invasions



*Battle of Jackson, May 14, 1863
Map courtesy Blue and Gray Magazine,
Columbus, OH, 1-800-CivilWar*



*"Raising the Stars and Stripes over the capitol of the state of Mississippi"
Harper's Weekly, June 20, 1863*