

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

# Learning Lagniappe: Educator Extras

## Vicksburg National Military Park Photographs

Series 573

[http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital\\_archives/series/573](http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/573)

The collection contains 328 items, primarily photographs taken in Vicksburg National Military Park from its inception in 1899 until 1923. The materials, collected and maintained by park commissioner William T. Rigby, document the design and construction of the park and its many monuments to the Confederate and Union units and soldiers who fought there. Included are images of battlefield terrain, sites, roads, bridges, buildings, monuments, memorials, forts, batteries, dedication ceremonies, park commissioners and officials, visiting dignitaries, and veterans attending reunions.

**Subjects that can be addressed within this Digital Archive:**

The Civil War, the 1863 battle for Vicksburg, the 1917 Blue and Grey Reunion, national park system, historic preservation, monument and memorial design and construction, bridge building, battlefields and battlefield terrain, dedication ceremonies, veterans, and park promotional products.

**Suggested Classroom Activities:**

Monuments continue to be added to Vicksburg National Military Park today. Have students design their own monuments, not only deciding what it would look like but also where it would be located in the park and who it would honor. Learn more about Vicksburg National Military Park at <http://www.nps.gov/vick/index.htm>.

*Teacher Discussion Guide on Reverse*

## Teacher Discussion Guide

Use images from the MDAH Digital Archive entitled “Vicksburg National Military Park Photographs” (found at [http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital\\_archives/series/573](http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/573)) to lead your class in a discussion analyzing and interpreting the following images:

- 1. Type “Coovert” in the “search for keyword” box. What is the man in this image showing the children? What does this tell you about the legacy of the Civil War in Vicksburg over 30 years later?**

The man is showing the children motor shells and cannonballs. The fact that these items were still on the Vicksburg battlefield over 30 years after the battle took place give you an idea of how much shelling and firepower was used in the battle, how (despite the best of efforts) it was impossible to completely remove all traces of the battle from the landscape, and demonstrates the importance of teaching young people the history of such a significant event.
- 2. Type “Vicksburg Evening Post” in the “search for keyword” box. From this article what can you learn about the importance of the Vicksburg Campaign to the men who were a part of it?**

The veterans reunited 54 years after the battle. All were elderly and it couldn't have been easy for some of them to make such a lengthy journey from places such as Chicago and Minneapolis. They also came to place a bronze portrait tablet nearby the Shirley House in memory of a comrade who had been killed there on June 25, 1863. This shows a respect for the men they served with, both alive and dead.
- 3. Type “restoration” in the “search for keyword” box. What role did the Shirley House play in the siege of Vicksburg that made it an important building to restore when the battlefield became a park?**

The Shirley House (also known as the White House by Union soldiers) was owned by James and Adeline Shirley. On May 18, 1863, soldiers were ordered to burn it but were killed before they could do so. Mrs. Shirley, her son, and several servants were trapped in the house during the cross-fire. After three days they tied a white sheet to a broom handle on the upper front porch and were escorted to the safety of a cave by Union soldiers. After the siege the home and surrounding property were so destroyed the family had to move into Vicksburg. It is the only wartime structure remaining inside Vicksburg Military Park.
- 4. Type “peace” in the “search for keyword” box. Why would the figure of Peace be an appropriate statue in Vicksburg Memorial Park?**

After the Civil War, people throughout the country worked to reunite the country. The figure of Peace (as it had throughout history) became a symbol of that reunification.
- 5. Type “dedication” in the “search for keyword” box. What can you infer from the photographs depicting the dedications of various monuments throughout the park?**

Dedications were important events that were well-attended by both the public and important (often political) figures. Speeches by politicians and orators were commonplace and patriotism is evident by the presence of American flags. While there are more photographs of monument dedications by northern states than southern, all seem to have been given equal fanfare.
- 6. Type “conceptual drawing” in the “search for keyword” box. How would a conceptual drawing help in the planning of a new monument?**

A drawing could help in revising a monument to fit a specific location in the park and immortalize a specific group of people or idea. A drawing that was shown to potential donors or published in a local newspaper could help its builders raise funds for its construction.
- 7. Type “multiple view card souvenir” in the “search for keyword” box. Do you think these would have been a popular souvenir of someone's visit to Vicksburg? Why or why not?**