



**Official Newsletter of the BG Micah Jenkins  
SCV Camp 1569**

**Volume X Number I**

**January 2011**



## *Honoring the Gray*

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*Honoring the Gray*  
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### **Commander's Comments**

At the time of this writing I hope that you and your family are doing well. As we start the Sesquicentennial of the War Between the States beginning with the South Carolina Ordinance of Secession that was passed in convention on December 20<sup>th</sup> 1860. The ordinance of secession was the actual legal language by which the State of South Carolina could sever the connection with the Federal Union.

Let us also not forget that the state of South Carolina and later the Confederate States of America were exercising their rights to defend the Constitution of the United States from a tyrannical federal government that had over reached its authority. During the next five years of the Sesquicentennial we will have an opportunity to tell our neighbors in our community ***“the real causes”*** leading up to the war.

I ask that all of our camp members live up to the charge set forth for us by Lt. General Stephen Dill Lee: ***“To you, Sons of Confederate Veterans, we submit the vindication of the cause for which we fought; to your strength will be given the defense of the Confederate soldier’s good name, the guardianship of his history, the emulation of his virtues, the perpetuation of those principles he loved and which made him glorious and which you also cherish. Remember it is your duty to see that the true history of the South is presented to future generations.”***

There will be a scheduled meeting of the executive council on January 6th to discuss the camp’s agenda for 2011.

A good book to read: A Southern View of the Invasion of the Southern States & the War of 1861-1865 by Samuel A’Court Ashe.

*Your Humble & Obedient Servant,  
Brad Blackmon, Commander*

### **Camp Meeting**

**Tuesday, January 11<sup>th</sup> 2011**

Regularly scheduled meeting at the Mayflower Seafood Restaurant @ 7:00 PM.  
Come early join the fellowship and eat.

Guest Speaker for January is Robert Roper III,  
who will be speaking on the South Carolina Secession Convention.

## Slavery, No; Secession, Yes by Joseph Sobran

Two Bush cabinet nominees are being accused of a thought crime: being on the side of history's losers. John Ashcroft, prospective attorney general, and Gale Norton, prospective secretary of the interior, have said favorable words about the Confederacy (while taking care to say that slavery was wrong).

What both Ashcroft and Miss Norton said was that the South stood for states' rights and resistance to an all-powerful federal government. Yes, it was also defending slavery, but that doesn't negate the good principles it fought for, any more than the American Revolution is discredited by the fact that Washington, Jefferson, and many other revolutionaries owned slaves. Unfortunately, many Northerners insist on equating the perfectly constitutional principle of states' rights – more properly, the powers reserved to the states – with slavery and segregation.

You can (and should) be pro-secession without being pro-slavery, as in fact many Americans, North and South, were. The right of secession was affirmed by two Northern states, New York and Rhode Island, when they ratified the Constitution.

As a friend of mine points out, the Tenth Amendment implies the right of secession, since it reserves to the states and the people “the powers not delegated to the United States [i.e., the federal government] by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states.” The Constitution doesn't prohibit the states from seceding, so that power remains with them. The fact that the North won the Civil War doesn't alter the principle, unless might makes right.

During the debate over ratification of the Constitution, opponents of ratification made many dark predictions: the Constitution would enable the federal government to impose tyranny, it would lead to “consolidated” – centralized and monolithic – government, and so forth. But nobody complained that the Constitution would prevent the states from reclaiming their independence, as they certainly would have done if the Constitution had been understood to rule out secession. After all, the Declaration of Independence had established the right of the people to “alter or abolish” any form of government that injures their rights.

Since the Constitution doesn't forbid the states to secede, the North found it necessary to violate the Constitution in order to suppress Southern independence. Lincoln was forced to usurp legislative powers by raising troops and money and by suspending the writ of habeas corpus; when Chief Justice Roger Taney ruled such acts unconstitutional, Lincoln

wrote an order for Taney's arrest! He never followed through on that, but he did illegally arrest 31 antiwar members of the Maryland legislature and install a puppet government. He went on to crush freedom of speech and press throughout the North. Such was Lincoln's idea of “preserving the Constitution” and “government of the people, by the people, for the people.”

The notion that Lincoln “saved the Union” is as naive as the notion that he “freed the slaves.” The Union he saved was not the one he set out to save. The Civil War destroyed the “balance of powers” between the states and the federal government which he had promised to protect in his 1861 inaugural address. This was not Lincoln's intention, but it is the reason many of his champions praise him. James McPherson celebrates Lincoln's “second American Revolution”; Garry Wills exults that Lincoln “changed America” with the Gettysburg Address, which he admits was a “swindle” (albeit a “benign” one).

In other words, Lincoln's war destroyed the original constitutional relation between the states and the federal government. His own defenders say so – in spite of his explicit, clear, and consistent professed intent to “preserve” that relation.

The Civil War wasn't just a victory of North over South; it was a victory for centralized government over the states and federalism. It destroyed the ability of the states to protect themselves against the destruction of their reserved powers.

Must we all be happy about this? Lincoln himself – the real Lincoln, that is – would have deprecated the unintended results of the war. Though he sometimes resorted to dictatorial methods, he never meant to create a totalitarian state. It's tragic that slavery was intertwined with a good cause, and scandalous that those who defend that cause today should be smeared as partisans of slavery. But the verdict of history must not be left to the simple-minded and the demagogic.

—January 31, 2001

*Joe Sobran is a nationally syndicated columnist. He also writes “Washington Watch” for The Wanderer, a weekly Catholic newspaper, and edits SOBRAN'S, a monthly newsletter of his essays and columns.*

*Get a free copy of Joe Sobran's lecture, “How Tyranny Came to America” by subscribing to SOBRAN'S. See [www.sobran.com](http://www.sobran.com) for details. For a free sample of SOBRAN'S or for more information, call 800-513-5053.*

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### Prayer Closet

- Continue to pray for our those effected by the economy; especially those unemployed.
- Please add Dean Wade to your prayers. Dean recently had eye surgery.
- Please keep the following members of the Palmetto Battalion to your prayers: Leland Summers, & Steve Wilson. Each has been an accident or has a serious illness.
- Lets all keep in prayer Bob Jackson, he has a broken leg. Also, Jack Morton's wife Connie, she is healing from a broken arm.
- Our Commander, Jim Floyd is almost recovered from the surgery on his shoulder. Let's keep Jim in our prayers for a quick recovery.
- Please add Laddie's mother (Clara Parrish) on your prayer list.
- Please continue to pray for our President & government leaders. The SCV, national, division and brigade.
- Pray for our service men and women and for their families.

### **Honoring the Gray** **Needs your input each month.** **Do you have an article you would like to see in the the newsletter?**

If so, please send to Jerry Brown at [jenkinsscv@yahoo.com](mailto:jenkinsscv@yahoo.com) or call Jerry at 803-327-2834. Articles may be funny or serious as long as it reflects the ideals and purpose of the SCV. Please limit the size of articles for mailing purposes.

### **Time Line: January 1861**

- January 2nd** - The USS *Brooklyn* is readied at Norfolk, Va to aid Fort Sumter.
- January 3rd** - Georgia state troops take over Fort Pulaski.
- January 4th** - Alabama state troops seize the U.S. Arsenal at Mount Vernon, Alabama.
- January 5th** - U.S. Senators from Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and Florida meet in Washington, D.C. to discuss secession. Alabama seizes Forts Morgan and Gaines. *The Star of the West* replaces the USS *Brooklyn* to aid Fort Sumter.
- January 6th** - The state of Florida takes over the Apalachicola Arsenal.
- January 7th** - Mississippi and Alabama State Conventions meet to discuss secession. Florida state troops takeover Fort Marion.
- January 8th** - In Florida, Federal troops at Fort Barrancas fired warning shots on Florida state troops demanding that the Federal troops surrender the fort.
- January 9th** - Mississippi secedes from the Union. *Star of the West* fails to relieve Fort Sumter and land supplies (fired upon by cadets from the Citadel). *See page 7 for more on the Star of the West.*
- January 10th** - Florida secedes from the Union. Jefferson Davis addresses the Senate, calling for a decisive response to Southern demands decrying the use of physical force to settle those demands.
- January 11th** - Alabama secedes from the Union. Louisiana's troops occupy the Federal hospital near New Orleans.
- January 13th** - Buchanan receives envoys from Major Anderson and Governor Pickens and emphasizes that Sumter will not be turned over to South Carolina.
- January 16th** - The Crittendon Compromise killed in the U.S. Senate. The compromise was perhaps the last-ditch effort to resolve the secession crisis of 1860-61 by political negotiation.
- January 19th** - Georgia secedes from the Union.
- January 20th** - Mississippi troops take Fort Massachusetts on Ship Island.
- January 21st** - Five senators from Alabama, Florida and Mississippi withdraw from the Senate, all making farewell speeches, including Jefferson Davis.
- January 24th** - Georgia state troops take over the U.S. Arsenal at Augusta.
- January 26th** - Louisiana secedes from the Union.
- January 29th** - Kansas becomes a state.
- January 31st** - In New Orleans, the United States Branch Mint, the Customs House and the schooner *Washington* are seized by Louisiana.

If you would like to receive ***Honoring the Gray*** each month by email, please send me your email address to: [jenkinsscv@yahoo.com](mailto:jenkinsscv@yahoo.com).

*Yours in the Cause,*  
*Jerry Brown, editor, Honoring the Gray*

## **John Pemberton - The Wrong Man at the Wrong Place**

### **By Robbie C. Smith**

John Pemberton in the minds of many, if not most, Civil War historians the name John Clifford Pemberton is synonymous with failure, defeat, and ruin. Lieutenant General John Pemberton's career and life are defined by the events that culminated at Vicksburg, Mississippi on July 4, 1863. With the capitulation of Vicksburg, the South relinquished its hold on the final section of the Mississippi River under its control. Vicksburg was recognized as the "Gibraltar of the Confederacy" due to its elevation on the high bluffs overlooking the great rivet. Forfeiture of that bastion resulted in the envelopment of that half of the Confederacy east of the Mississippi and its severance from those Southern states across the muddy waters to the west. The verdict of history as well as Civil War-era contemporaries laid the responsibility for the Confederate loss squarely at the feet of John Pemberton.

Pemberton's very loyalty to the South and its cause was called into question. After the battle of Champion Hill on May 16, Confederate Surgeon John A. Leavy voiced the harshest criticism:

Today proved to the army and the country, the value of a General. Pemberton is either a traitor or the most incompetent officer in the Confederacy. Indecision, indecision, indecision ... Is he a traitor? Time will show. I cannot believe him such a villain. He is incompetent. Our soldiers and officers are determined not to be sold if they can possibly help it.

Sentiments remained unchanged when the Southerners stacked their arms and relinquished Vicksburg. William Pitt Chambers, who served with the 46th Mississippi Infantry, believed it a "conviction" among many Confederate soldiers, "that our Commanding General had been false to the flag under which he fought." Although the accusations plagued Pemberton for the remainder of his life, it was the charge of incompetence that became inseparably attached to his reputation. While the accusation of false loyalty was unfounded, undoubtedly prompted by the fact that he was born and reared in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the criticism of Pemberton's generalship was valid — if severe.

It is instructive to distinguish between John Pemberton's suitability as a staff officer and his abilities as a battlefield commander. An examination of his talents, interests, education, and antebellum career demonstrate that while he was proficient in the former, he was sorely lacking in the experience, skills, and qualities necessary for the latter. In October 1862, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant general to command the Department of Mississippi and East Louisiana, a responsibility that proved to be beyond his capabilities. Nothing in his background or natural ability provided him with the skills necessary to meet the Confederacy's need in its greatest crises. Time and again during the

campaign leading to the siege of Vicksburg, Pemberton failed to exhibit the necessary qualities of a battlefield commander.

Pemberton was born into an influential Philadelphia family on August 10, 1814. His father, also named John, was a merchant and land speculator who was politically connected at the national level with none other than President Andrew Jackson: A romantic by inclination, young John Pemberton exhibited an affinity for languages and art. These were the same subjects in which he excelled during his West Point career. The Pemberton family was a close and supportive one. In several instances, family members with prominent friends gained favors for John. His acceptance into West Point, for example, was accomplished when his mother wrote to family friend Andrew Jackson. Life at West Point agreed with Cadet Pemberton as he frequently expressed in letters throughout his four-year residence. Phrases such as "much pleased," "a devilish pleasant life," "not a finer place in the world," "a peculiar lilt for the life," and "I like the place better every day I stay here" were common refrains in reference to West Point. Unfortunately his "peculiar liking for the life" proved a preference for the camaraderie, tradition, and social life of the military academy rather than a penchant for or commitment to academic discipline. He graduated 27th of 50 cadets in the class of 1837.

Guided by the inclinations of his youth, Pemberton excelled in both art and languages. However, his effortless ability to achieve high marks in subjects that held his interest disguised a less than average performance in areas of a more technical and purely military nature. Over the course of three years, his performance in art was just short of perfect while in French he held a score of 95. By contrast, his performance in tactics, artillery, math, and engineering was dismal. His averages in those courses were 46, 52, 68, and 55 respectively. West Point policy allowed a cadet to seek tutoring in subjects in which he struggled. Cadet Pemberton did request private tutoring — however, it was in the area in which he already excelled. He requested what amounted to private art lessons while demonstrating little interest or effort in more military matters. Instead of making an effort to improve in those subjects in which he showed serious deficiencies, he spent his free time sketching. Both his own future and that of his adopted country suffered, at least partly, because he lacked the foundation that a strong academic performance in military science could have provided.

John Pemberton's army career began auspiciously, with an appointment to the artillery branch of the army. His standing in his graduating class

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would normally have only, guaranteed acceptance into one of the less prestigious cavalry or infantry branches of the service; however, his father pulled some strings. Lieutenant Pemberton was assigned to the Fourth Artillery regiment and saw combat with that unit during the Second Seminole War. During that period Pemberton gained valuable experience while in command of an ordnance depot. When war erupted with Mexico, First Lieutenant Pemberton participated in the action at Palo Alto and commanded a company at the Battle of Resaca de la Palma. While serving on the staff of General William Worth, he was awarded the brevets of captain and major respectively for his conduct during the Battles of Monterrey and Molino del Rey.

Pemberton served honorably in the United States Army for twenty-four years. Nevertheless, on April 24, 1861, he resigned his commission and offered his services to the fledgling Confederacy with whose ideas of duty and honor he sympathized. He began his new career as a lieutenant colonel of Virginia State troops, but within two months experienced an unexplainably meteoric rise to brigadier general. Nine months later he was a Confederate major general in command of the Department of South Carolina and Georgia, which included the pillar of states' rights doctrine: Charleston. The following September, merely six months later, Pemberton was replaced as department commander largely due to his inability to assure South Carolina Governor Francis Pickens that Charleston would be held at all costs.

On October 25, 1862, Union Major General Ulysses S. Grant was appointed commander of the Department of the Tennessee. Almost immediately he began preparations for combined land and naval operations against Confederate-held Vicksburg. For the better part of the next six months, Grant made multiple attempts to reach Vicksburg, moving in various directions in the process. On March 29, 1863, Grant ordered his Thirteenth and Seventeenth Corps to begin marching south on the Louisiana side of the Mississippi River. Thirty-two days later, the leading elements of the Thirteenth Corps crossed the great river and landed unopposed at Bruinsburg. Confederate forces under the command of Brigadier General John S. Bowen challenged the advance of Grant's army shortly after midnight on May 1 as it began moving toward the interior of Mississippi. What became the Battle of Port Gibson continued

through the day until the early evening of May 1, when Bowen's 8,000 Confederates were forced to withdraw by Grant's numerically superior force of 24,000.

Circumstances leading up to the crossing of Grant's army on April 30 — May 1, 1863, and the consequent battle of Port Gibson demonstrate in Pemberton an absence of both perspective and intuition. During the six months in which Grant operated against Vicksburg prior to the landing at Bruinsburg, Pemberton had numerous opportunities to become acquainted with his adversary's operational methods. It should have come as no surprise to Pemberton then, during the spring of 1863, that Grant's movements were numerous and complex as were his diversions. But it did.

While the Thirteenth and Seventeenth Corps of Grant's army were moving south in Louisiana, the Fifteenth Corps was making a demonstration north of Vicksburg. In early April, Brigadier General Frederick Steele commanded an expedition that operated in the Greenville area north of Vicksburg. Shortly thereafter, on April 17, Colonel Benjamin H. Grierson led three regiments of cavalry south from La Grange, Tennessee, primarily to operate against the rail system in Mississippi. The challenge facing Pemberton was divining Grant's intention and identifying the true threat to Vicksburg. As late as April 12, Pemberton believed Grant's forces were withdrawing to Memphis. On April 15, Pemberton was satisfied that Grant's army was moving to reinforce Major General William Rosecrans. Twenty-four hours later, Pemberton offered to forward two brigades to General Joseph Johnston even though by that time he was less confident that Grant was withdrawing. Within the week, all of Pemberton's available cavalry was in motion in reaction to Grierson's raid leaving no mounted force to scout the movement of Grant's infantry.

Meanwhile, Union gunboats and transports passed the river batteries at Vicksburg en route to their rendezvous with the Thirteenth and Seventeenth Corps. Pemberton's use of his cavalry indicates that he perceived that Grierson's raid posed the greatest threat in his department. In response to numerous and complex enemy advances, Pemberton remained on the defensive and thus surrendered all initiative to his adversary. Pemberton simply reacted to Grant's movements, was consistently distracted by diversions, and consequently failed to discern true threats.

Similarly, indecision and the complete loss of command and control over his army marked Pemberton's leadership before and during the Battle of Champion Hill. On May 14, in response to an order from General Johnston, Pemberton prepared to

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**Micah Jenkins Website**

**The web address is:  
[bgmicahjenkins.org](http://bgmicahjenkins.org)**

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advance his army toward Union forces occupying Clinton, Mississippi. When second thoughts about moving farther from Vicksburg gripped Pemberton, he halted the advance and convened a council of war. Contrary to the majority of his subordinates who favored obeying Johnston's orders, Pemberton instead chose to march south against Grant's supply line at Dillon's plantation. Pemberton intended for his troops to move out at 8 a.m. on the morning of May 15. Mismanagement and a failure to reconnoiter the intended avenue of advance caused delays and the Confederates had marched only a few miles beyond their point of departure by the early hours of May 16. Unbeknownst to Pemberton, during these same hours Grant's Army of the Tennessee was marching west on three parallel routes of advance toward the Confederates. The Battle of Champion Hill opened when the leading elements of the Union advance met Confederate cavalry along the Raymond road around 7 a.m. on May 16. It was at this point that Pemberton received courtesy of the U.S. Army a second communication from Johnston restating his previous order to advance north for the purpose of uniting their forces. Pemberton, in compliance with the directive of his commanding officer, changed his orders but in doing so he also changed the direction of his army in the face of a numerically superior enemy.

As the battle intensified, the situation deteriorated to the point that the commanding general exercised little control over his army. To one Confederate officer, Pemberton seemed "confused." He also noted that Pemberton "gave orders in ...[an] uncertain manner that implied to me that he had no matured plans for the coming battle." Another soldier noticed the commanding general along a roadside during the battle. To him, Pemberton "seemed to be somewhat excited; he and his staff were vainly endeavoring to rally some stragglers, who had already left their commands in the fight." These instances illustrate that Pemberton lacked the mental endurance necessary to sustain an army through the rigors of an engagement.

Historically, successful battlefield commanders possessed certain common characteristics. Civil War commanders such as Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant are notable because they shared the qualities of perspective, responsibility, intuition, daring, and endurance. These traits were conspicuously lacking in the leadership of Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton during the Vicksburg campaign.

*Robbie C. Smith is a Park Ranger at  
Vicksburg National Military Park.  
Take Action - Support CWPT*

**Financing The Confederacy**

Confederate Secretary of the Treasury Christopher G. Memminger assumed his duties in February 1861 by floating government loans and creating an instant national debt. In 1861 the Confederacy sold bonds worth \$150 million in the so-called Bankers Loan, which secured much-needed specie. The government also tapped agricultural staples through the Produce Loan, in which planters pledged their produce in exchange for government paper. Against the receipts of these loans, Memminger issued Treasury notes, circulating paper money with which the government paid its bills. In August, 1861 the Confederate Congress passed a War Tax on various kinds of property to increase government resources. Unfortunately Memminger's department was inefficient in collecting the produce subscribed to the Produce Loan, and he allowed taxes to be paid in inflated state currency. Consequently government paper money fed inflation, which served as an inverse tax on Confederate citizens.

By 1863 Memminger realized that inflation was threatening the government's ability to support itself and the war. Accordingly he proposed and Congress passed a graduated Income Tax and a 10% Tax In Kind on agricultural products. In March, 1863 the Confederacy accepted a \$15 million loan from the French banking house of Emile Erlanger that yielded much less than its face value (about \$8.5 million), but given the tenuous nature of Southern nationhood, the Confederates made the best deal possible. Still, Memminger's printing presses moved faster than the government could collect revenue, and inflation accelerated. In desperation, in 1864 Memminger imposed a Compulsory Funding Measure, which devalued those Treasury notes not exchanged for noncirculating government bonds. This failed too, as Confederates continued to exchange government paper for goods and services.

In July 1864 Jefferson Davis replaced Memminger with another South Carolinian, George A. Trenholm, but there was little Trenholm could do. The Confederacy never had more than \$27 million of specie. The national debt ran over \$700 million and the overall inflation was about 6,000%. That the Confederacy persisted as long as it did amid this financial chaos was a wonder.

*Source: "Historical Times History of the Civil War"*

## Star of the West

The Star of the West was a 1172 ton steamship built by Jeremiah Simonson, of New York for Cornelius Vanderbilt, and launched June 17, 1852. Its length was 228.3ft and its beam 32.7ft, with wooden hullside paddle wheels and two masts. She started service between New York and San Juan de Nicaragua on October 20, 1852 and continued this service for Charles Morgan from July 1853 to March 1856. In June 1857, she started the New York to Aspinwall service for the United States Mail Steamship Company until September 1859 when it went onto the New York, Havana, New Orleans service. In January 1861, she was chartered to the War Department.

On January 9, 1861, before the Confederacy was formed, the Star of the West was fired upon by cadets from The Citadel stationed at the Morris Island battery as the ship entered Charleston Harbor. This prevented the Star of the West from resupplying Major Robert Anderson's garrison at Fort Sumter. The Star of the West was given a warning shot across the bow and turned about to leave the harbor mouth. She was hit three times. The mission was abandoned and the Star of the West headed for her home port of New York Harbor.

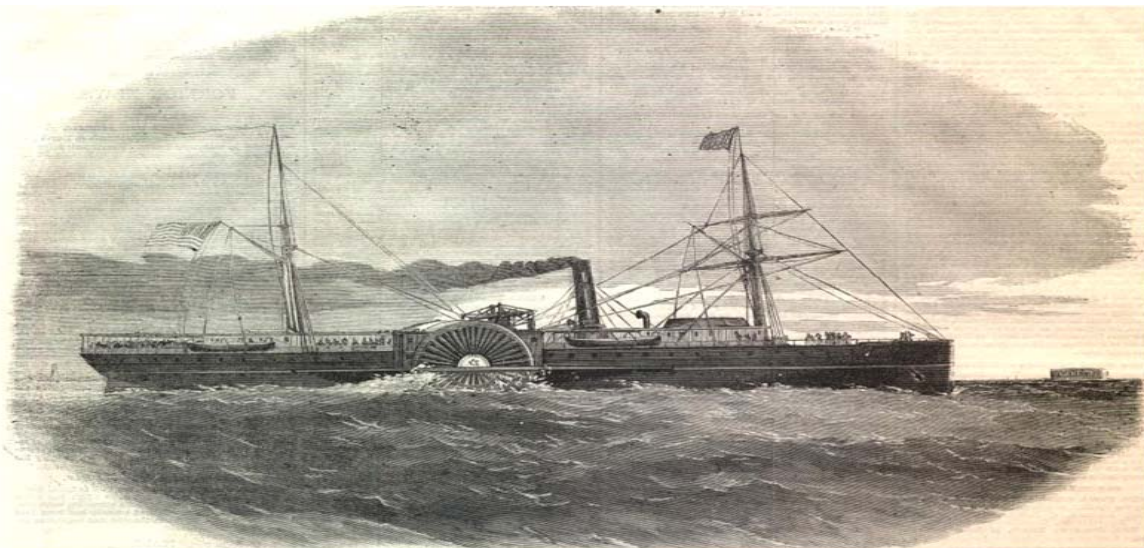
The ship was then hired out of New York as a troop transport for \$1,000 a day under its master, Elisha Howes. The Star of the West sailed for Texas to pick up seven companies of United States troops assembled at Indianola. On April 18, 1861, while anchored off Pass Caballo bar leading into Matagorda Bay, the ship was captured by Colonel Earl Van Dorn and members of two Galveston militia units, the Wigfall Guards and the Island City Rifles. Two days later the ship was taken to New Orleans, where

Louisiana's Governor Moore changed its name to the CSS St. Philip. The old name persisted, however, and the Star of the West served as a naval station and hospital ship until Admiral David Farragut captured New Orleans.

Still under Confederate control, the Star of the West escaped recapture by transporting millions in gold, silver, and paper currency to Vicksburg and continued to Yazoo City, Mississippi. When federal Lieutenant Commander Watson Smith tried to lead two ironclads and five smaller vessels through the Yazoo Pass into the Tallahatchie River to attack Vicksburg from the rear, Confederate defenders hurriedly constructed Fort Pemberton, and Major General William W. Loring had the Star of the West sunk broadside in the Tallahatchie near Greenwood to block the passage of the Union flotilla. In a skirmish on April 12, 1863, the Union forces suffered heavy casualties and were forced to withdraw. Following the war, the owners of the Star of the West collected \$175,000 in damages from the United States government for their loss.

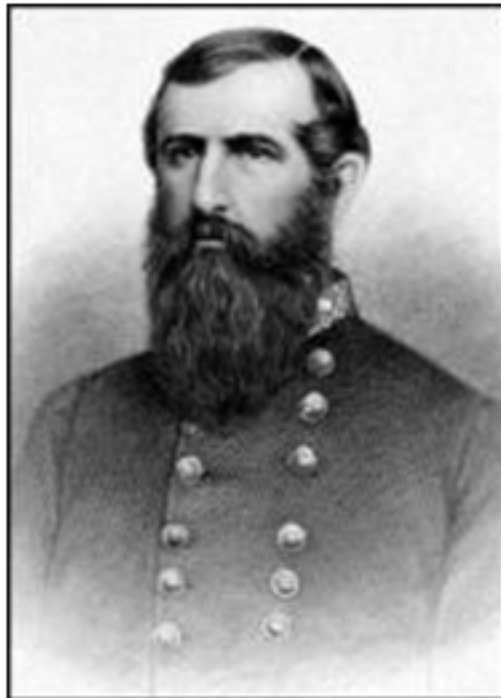
The incident looms large in a novel by John Updike, *Memories of the Ford Administration* (1992). Although Updike's protagonist is trying (in the early 1990s) to write about the mid-1970s, he spent those years seeking to write a book about President Buchanan, and his mind keeps reverting to the 19th century and, among other incidents, the mission of this sloop to Sumter.

The Star of the West Medal is awarded annually to the "best drilled cadet" at The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina. Each medal awarded has a small piece of wood salvaged from the original Star of the West ship.





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**John Clifford Pemberton August 10, 1814 – July 13, 1881**