

“A Perfect Hurricane of Shot and Shell”: The Battle of Arkansas Post

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The historiography of the American Civil War has always overemphasized events in the East while virtually ignoring those in the West. The Trans-Mississippi Theater, comprising the lands west of the Mississippi River, was long disregarded as an insignificant backwater. Only in recent decades have the campaigns that shaped the western war been accepted as deserving of scholarly attention. However, they are still usually regarded as isolated events that had no impact beyond the rural fields and thickets in which they were fought. The Battle of Arkansas Post demonstrates the deficiencies of this view. The Arkansas Post expedition is usually presented as only a sideshow of the Vicksburg campaign, but Confederate failures in the Trans-Mississippi earlier in the war created a situation that made this battle a deciding factor in the struggle for Arkansas. The Battle of Arkansas Post was also the climax of the wartime career of John A. McClernand, a Union general whose desire for military glory begat plots and schemes at the highest levels of command. The battle also demonstrates the importance of combined operations by the Army and Navy to the war in the West. The complex causes and effects of the Arkansas Post campaign provide a striking example of the interconnected nature of Civil War theaters and show the importance of operations in the Trans-Mississippi.

Control of the vast river network was a crucial part of both sides' western strategy. The Industrial Revolution had barely touched the South prior to the Civil War. The importance of rivers as a method of transportation in areas where railroads were not yet common cannot be overstated. Historian William Shea explains, “[T]he generation of Americans who participated in the Civil War... viewed navigable bodies of water as highways, not obstacles.”¹ The Union's grand strategy for winning the war rested in part on regaining control of the most important of these highways, the Mississippi River. Early in the war, Lieutenant General Winfield Scott concocted a plan to strangle the nascent Confederacy. The “Anaconda Plan,” as it was dubbed, called for a blockade of southern ports and a thrust into the lower Mississippi River Valley that would cut the Confederacy in two. Scott's plan was derided by the media, but President Abraham Lincoln agreed with the aging warhorse, in large part because he recognized the strategic importance of the Mississippi River: “The Mississippi is the backbone of the rebellion,” Lincoln declared. “It is the key to the whole situation.”²

¹ William L. Shea, “The War We Have Lost,” *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* LXX, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 108.

² William L. Shea and Terrence J. Winschel, *Vicksburg is the Key: The Struggle for the Mississippi River* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 1.

“A PERFECT HURRICANE OF SHOT AND SHELL”

The Confederacy constructed fortifications at vital points along its banks to defend against Union incursions into its waterways. However, they failed to consider the inherent problems of static shore defenses. First, poorly engineered fortifications are vulnerable to naval bombardment. Second, the soldiers manning such positions face the danger of being turned or enveloped by enemy troops moving overland. The latter was demonstrated at Vicksburg in the summer of 1863, the former several months earlier at Arkansas Post.³

The Union campaign for control of the Mississippi River launched in the spring of 1862 and made rapid progress. A joint operation by Brigadier General John Pope and Commodore Andrew H. Foote took Island No. 10, a Confederate stronghold on the river between Missouri and Tennessee, on April 7. Weeks later, warships from Flag Officer David G. Farragut’s West Coast Blockading Squadron entered the Mississippi from the Gulf of Mexico. Farragut quickly captured New Orleans, the largest city in the Confederacy, and Baton Rouge, one of its state capitals. Not to be outdone by their oceangoing counterparts, the so-called Brown Water Navy’s Western Flotilla defeated a motley collection of Rebel boats at Memphis on June 6. In just a few months, the Confederacy had lost control of the great river except for a 100 mile corridor between the fortresses at Vicksburg, Mississippi, and Port Hudson, Louisiana.⁴

Vicksburg was too well fortified to be battered into submission by the Navy. The Rebels’ “Gibraltar on the Mississippi” would have to be taken by the Army. President Lincoln believed that Vicksburg was the most important Union objective of the war. “See what a lot of land these fellows hold, of which Vicksburg is the key,” Lincoln told his military advisors in November 1862. “The war can never be brought to a close until that key is in our pocket.”⁵ The task fell upon Major General Ulysses S. Grant’s Army of the Tennessee. Grant began planning operations against Vicksburg in the fall of 1862, but his campaign was temporarily derailed by problems in his chain of command.⁶

Major General John A. McClernand was a former Democratic Congressman from Illinois whose devotion to the Union cause had earned him a general’s commission. As a division commander in the Army of the Tennessee, he had proven himself a capable amateur. However, he disliked serving under Grant and the relationship between the two steadily deteriorated throughout 1862. That summer, McClernand began using his political connections to lobby the President for an independent command. On a visit to Washington in September-October 1862, McClernand outlined for Lincoln his plan to take newly raised troops from the Midwest down the Mississippi to make an amphibious landing north of Vicksburg. General-in-Chief Henry Halleck did not trust McClernand to command such an expedition, but Lincoln overruled his

³ Ibid., 4.

⁴ James M. McPherson, *War on the Waters: The Union & Confederate Navies, 1861-1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 78-82, 88; Gary D. Joiner, *Mr. Lincoln’s Brown Water Navy: The Mississippi Squadron* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 58-62; James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 417-420; Shea and Winschel, 10-14.

⁵ Michael B. Ballard, *Vicksburg: The Campaign That Opened the Mississippi* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 24.

⁶ Shea and Winschel, 38-39.

GRAND PRAIRIE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

objections. On October 21, McClelland received orders from Secretary of War Edwin Stanton to make preparations for the campaign. In two months, the fruits of McClelland's efforts had manifested in the form of a sizeable force assembling at Memphis. However, machinations were underway to deprive McClelland of his command.⁷

The wording of Stanton's order had explicitly left the application the troops assembled at Memphis up to the General-in-Chief's discretion. When Grant asked Halleck what he was to do regarding the expedition from Memphis, Halleck assured him that that "You have command of all troops sent to your Department, and have permission to fight the enemy where you please."⁸ Grant promptly sent Major General William Tecumseh Sherman to Memphis to take command. McClelland was still finishing up his work in Illinois, and Grant hoped that Sherman would get the expedition underway before McClelland arrived. "I feared that delay might bring McClelland," Grant wrote frankly in his memoirs, "[and] I doubted McClelland's fitness."⁹

Sherman executed a plan much like the one McClelland had proposed to the President a few months before. The operation was a complete fiasco. The plan called for Sherman's troop transports, escorted by gunboats of Rear Admiral David D. Porter's Mississippi Squadron, to enter the Yazoo River and land at Haynes' Bluff, fifteen miles north of Vicksburg. Grant would hold the main Confederate force's attention at Grenada, some 100 miles away, while Sherman proceeded inland to threaten Vicksburg from the rear. Nothing went according to plan. Grant was forced to pull back from Grenada after Rebel cavalry looted his supply depot and cut his communications. Sherman and Porter, meanwhile, found their progress up the Yazoo blocked by mines and chose instead to land several miles downriver from Haynes' Bluff at Chickasaw Bayou. Sherman's force consisted of 32,000 men: the new recruits from Memphis, a division from Grant's army, and troops reassigned from west of the Mississippi. On December 29, they attacked 6,000 entrenched Rebels under Brigadier General Stephen D. Lee. Forced to advance uphill through heavily wooded swamp, the Federals did not make it far before the attack bogged down. Sherman lost 1,776 dead, wounded, and missing at the Battle of Chickasaw Bayou to Lee's 187. The bloodied Federals pulled out of Chickasaw Bayou on New Year's Day, 1863.¹⁰

McClelland arrived at Memphis on December 29 and was surprised, angry, and embarrassed to find that Sherman had already left with his command. He proceeded downriver and met Sherman and Porter at Milliken's Bend, Louisiana, on January 3. The troops on the Chickasaw Bayou expedition had been organized into two corps on orders from Halleck in late December. The new thirteenth corps was to be commanded by McClelland, the fifteenth by Sherman, both part of Grant's command. Grant had written McClelland to inform him of the

⁷ Mark K. Christ, *Civil War Arkansas, 1863: The Battle for a State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 48; Shea and Winschel, 39; Richard L. Kiper, *Major General John Alexander McClelland: Politician in Uniform* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1999), 115-149.

⁸ Kiper, 140; Major General Ulysses S. Grant to Major General Henry W. Halleck, November 10, 1862, in *Official Records* series I, vol. XVII, part I: 469; Halleck to Grant, November 11, 1862, in *Official Records* series I, vol. XVII, part I: 469.

⁹ *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant* (New York: Charles L. Webster & Company, 1894), 254-255.

¹⁰ Shea and Winschel, 41-55.

“A PERFECT HURRICANE OF SHOT AND SHELL”

change in organization, but the Rebel cavalry’s disruption of Union communications prevented the message from reaching him. McClelland believed that he had the President’s authority to lead an independent command. Sherman acquiesced based on McClelland’s order from Stanton. McClelland took command of what he called the Army of the Mississippi and prepared for his first (and only) operation as an army commander. Another move against Vicksburg was, for the moment, impracticable. Instead, McClelland, Sherman, and Porter planned to take care of a troublesome Confederate garrison on the Arkansas River at Arkansas Post.¹¹

Control of the Arkansas River was crucial to the western Confederacy. Entering its namesake state near Fort Smith, the river flows east and south through Arkansas before emptying into the Mississippi. The river valley contained twenty percent of the state’s farmland and produced much of its food and forage. Further, Arkansas had only thirty-eight miles of railroad tracks and its roads were terrible. This made the river even more important, as it was the Confederacy’s only direct link to the Indian Territory. Just as Union control of the Mississippi would cut the Confederate States in half, control of the Arkansas would cut off much of Arkansas and the Indian Territory from the rest of the Trans-Mississippi Confederacy.¹²

The Confederate military situation in Arkansas was already bleak at the beginning of 1863. In March 1862, Major General Samuel Curtis had defeated a larger Confederate force under General Earl Van Dorn at Pea Ridge, near the Missouri border. Van Dorn was then ordered to Mississippi, where the Rebels were massing for a strike against Grant in Tennessee. In his enthusiasm, Van Dorn took every Confederate soldier and all of the war materiel in the state with him, abandoning Arkansas to the Union. Curtis marched through the state and set up an enclave on the Mississippi River port of Helena while Confederate authorities scrambled to build a force to defend Arkansas against the Federals. These efforts, supervised by Major General Thomas C. Hindman, went better than anyone could have expected. In only a few months, Hindman had assembled a respectable Confederate force in northwest Arkansas. This force was soundly defeated by Brigadier General James G. Blunt in December 1862 at Prairie Grove. As the New Year began, Hindman’s makeshift army was in full retreat toward Little Rock. Confederate morale in Arkansas was at an all-time low and desertions were rampant. The only significant Confederate force remaining in the state was at Arkansas Post.¹³

In September 1862, Lieutenant General Theophilus H. Holmes, commanding the Confederate Trans-Mississippi Department from Little Rock, ordered construction of fortifications to defend the lower Arkansas River Valley against Union gunboats. He placed Colonel John W. Dunnington, late of the Confederate Navy, in charge of the state’s river defenses. Dunnington chose to anchor his defense at Arkansas Post. Founded in 1686 by French

¹¹ Shea and Winschel, 55-56; *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman, By Himself* (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1957), 296.

¹² Christ, 5-8.

¹³ William L. Shea & Earl J. Hess, *Pea Ridge: Civil War Campaign in the West* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 286-304; William L. Shea, *Fields of Blood: The Prairie Grove Campaign* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 2-12, 250-251.

GRAND PRAIRIE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

fur trappers, Arkansas Post was the first European settlement in present-day Arkansas. Strategically located on a hairpin curve in the Arkansas River, the “Old Post” had been the site of various French, Spanish, and American forts. The Rebels impressed local slaves to build a massive square earthwork 100 yards long on each side, eight feet high, and protected by a twenty foot wide moat. Its big guns were shielded by timber and iron reinforced casemates. Trenches were dug on the landward side to protect against envelopment. The fort, christened Fort Hindman, was manned by about 5,000 men under the command of Brigadier General Thomas J. Churchill.¹⁴

On November 16, Brigadier General Alvin P. Hovey mounted an expedition against Arkansas Post from Helena, loading 8,000 troops on transports escorted by the ironclad *Carondolet*. This first Arkansas Post campaign failed not because of the Confederate defenses, but because of the rivers themselves. Historian Edwin Bearss explains, “At this season of the year, the Arkansas River could only be entered from the White River through a cut-off a few miles above its mouth.”¹⁵ The expedition had to be abandoned when the White fell five feet in two days and the river was made impassable by a previously unknown sandbar now only thirty inches below the waterline.¹⁶

The direct cause of McClelland’s expedition to Arkansas Post stemmed from Churchill’s orders for his cavalry to harass Union shipping on the Mississippi. The food and supplies they captured were a blessing to the Confederates, and their loss led to hungry nights for Union troops in the lower Mississippi Valley. On December 28, Rebel cavalry operating out of Arkansas Post captured the steamer *Blue Wing*, “a particularly fat prize” that provided the Rebels with much needed food, ammunition, and coal.¹⁷

Accounts differ on whether the campaign was devised by McClelland or Sherman. Porter wrote in his memoirs that Sherman recommended the expedition before McClelland arrived from Memphis. Sherman claimed that it took two days to convince McClelland to go to Arkansas Post. However, those accounts were written years after the war, when both men tended to conveniently misremember things. Accounts written at the time show that McClelland decided on the objective at a conference with the commanders at Helena on December 31. A staff officer present at the meeting wrote that “General McClelland thinks it highly important

¹⁴ Christ, 39-44; Edwin Cole Bearss, *The Campaign for Vicksburg*, vol. 1, *Vicksburg is the Key* (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside House, 1991), 349-351.

¹⁵ Brigadier General Alvin P. Hovey to Major Henry Z. Curtis, November 22, 1862, in *Official Records Navy series I*, vol. XXIII: 491-492; Bearss, 353-354.

¹⁶ Christ, 41-42.

¹⁷ Christ, 44-46; Bearss 355.

“A PERFECT HURRICANE OF SHOT AND SHELL”

that Old Post be reduced at the earliest day.”¹⁸ Regardless, both generals’ accounts indicated that the capture of the *Blue Wing* was what alerted them to the need to take Arkansas Post.¹⁹

McClelland’s transports and Porter’s gunboats set out from Milliken’s Bend on January 4. They entered the Arkansas River via the White River cutoff and made slow but steady progress toward Arkansas Post, despite obstructions in the river. Churchill received reports of the approaching Federals on January 9 and began deploying his troops into the trenches running west of Fort Hindman. Colonel Robert R. Garland’s brigade formed to the left of the fort, with Colonel James Deshler’s brigade on Garland’s left. The Rebel battle line ran 720 yards from the fort, ending about 200 yards short of Post Bayou. The fort’s big guns were manned by Confederate sailors under Colonel John Dunnington, the officer who had directed the fort’s construction.²⁰

The Federals landed at Frederic Notrebe’s farm three miles downriver and made a difficult march through swampland, reaching the front on January 10. Sherman’s XV Corps deployed roughly opposite the Confederate trenches. The XIII Corps, under Brigadier General George W. Morgan, formed opposite Fort Hindman. The fort’s heavy guns opened up on the Union infantry, complicating their deployment. McClelland asked Porter to run interference. That evening, the ironclads *Baron de Kalb*, *Louisville*, and *Cincinnati*, the timberclad *Lexington*, and the steamer *Black Hawk* moved up the Arkansas and fought a hot duel with the Rebel cannoners. “Our big guns on the fort belch forth death and destruction and the gun boats return the favor,” wrote Samuel T. Foster of the 24th Texas Cavalry.²¹ The tinclad *Rattler* moved forward to enfilade the fort, but was heavily damaged by artillery fire when it became tangled in snags the Rebels had placed in the river. *Rattler* withdrew, concluding the first day’s action. The gunboats’ sortie allowed the foot soldiers to reach their positions. Men on both sides of the line hunkered down and waited for the battle they knew would come the next day.²²

The gunboats resumed their work on Fort Hindman at 1:00 PM on January 11. “They knock the iron off the fort, make [it] fly in every direction. Knock those big square logs about like they were fence rails,” Foster recalled.²³ The Federals blasted the fort to pieces; the guns fell silent. “No fort ever received a worst battering,” wrote Porter.²⁴ With the guns no longer a concern, the

¹⁸ David D. Porter, *Incidents and Anecdotes of the Civil War* (New York: D. Appleton, 1885), 129; Sherman, *Memoirs*, 296; Kiper, 156-159; Colonel N. P. Chipman to Major General Samuel R. Curtis, December 31, 1862, *Official Records* series I, vol. XXII, part I: 887.

¹⁹ Major General John A. McClelland to Lieutenant Colonel John A. Rawlins, January 1863, *Official Records* series I, vol. XVII, part I: 709; Sherman, *Memoirs*, 296.

²⁰ Christ, 51-72; Bearss, 418-419.

²¹ Christ, 54-59; McClelland to Rawlins, January 20, 1863, *Official Records* series I, vol. XVII, part I: 703-704; *One of Cleburne’s Command: The Civil War Reminiscences and Diary of Capt. Samuel T. Foster, Granbury’s Texas Brigade, CSA*, ed. Norman D. Brown (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980), 16.

²² Christ, 59-61; Acting Rear Admiral David D. Porter to Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, January 11, 1863, *Official Records Navy* series I, vol. 24: 107-08.

²³ Foster, *One of Cleburne’s Command*, 19.

²⁴ Porter to Welles, January 11, 1863, in *Official Records Navy* series I, vol. 24: 108.

GRAND PRAIRIE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

tinclads *Glide* and *Rattler* and the Ellet ram *Monarch* moved past the fort and cut off the Rebels' retreat.²⁵

Meanwhile, Sherman's artillery opened up on the Confederate trenches. "It seemed as if the elements were in rebellion and made the earth tremble," wrote one Union soldier.²⁶ After a fifteen minute barrage, the Federals advanced. The Rebel infantry had not been heavily involved in the battle thus far and were spoiling for a fight. "[W]e gave them a very deadly fire," wrote Deshler.²⁷ Union Colonel Thomas Kilby Smith described it as "a perfect hurricane of shot and shell."²⁸ The heavy fire forced the Federals to take cover, halting the attack. However, the Rebels' position was untenable. They were grossly outnumbered and under constant fire from both the gunboats and the artillery. Their own cannons had been damaged in the barrage, leaving them little besides small arms with which to return fire. As the Federals prepared to make another assault, men in Garland's command raised white flags. By 4:30 PM, it was over.²⁹

Union troops rushed into Fort Hindman. "The inside of the fort presented a terrible site [sic]," wrote William Wiley of the 77th Illinois Infantry. "The ground was literally [sic] covered with dead men and horses all cut to pieces and strewn in every direction where our gun boats and batteries had done their deadly work."³⁰ McClelland arrived and accepted Thomas Churchill's surrender. Dunnington, the Confederate Navy man, insisted on surrendering to Admiral Porter. Deshler, meanwhile, was in a tense standoff with Sherman's infantry, maintaining that he would not surrender without orders. At Sherman's behest, Churchill went to Deshler and said simply, "You see, sir, that we are in their power, and you may surrender."³¹ The Federals lost 1,092 killed, wounded, and missing. The Confederates lost at least 135 killed and wounded and 4,791 captured, almost the entire garrison. One of the defenders wrote that it was "as fierce an engagement... as has occurred during the war."³²

McClelland's Arkansas Post expedition was a complete success, but his days as an army commander were numbered. The news that he had diverted troops from the mission to take Vicksburg infuriated Grant. "McClelland has... gone on a wild-goose chase to the Post of Arkansas," Grant fumed in a note to Halleck.³³ Sherman later convinced Grant that the expedition had been worthwhile (and Sherman's idea), but Grant's antipathy toward McClelland

²⁵ Christ, 67-69.

²⁶ Ibid., 69.

²⁷ Colonel James Deshler to Captain B. S. Johnson, March 25, 1863, *Official Records* series I, vol. XVII, part I: 793.

²⁸ *Life and Letters of Thomas Kilby Smith: Brevet Major General, United States Volunteers, 1820-1887*, ed. Walter George Smith (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1898).

²⁹ Christ., 69-76. In his official report, Churchill claimed that Garland surrendered without orders, while Garland claimed that he had been ordered to surrender by one of Churchill's staff. Garland made multiple requests for a court of inquiry to clear his name, but the War Department declined to investigate the matter.

³⁰ *The Civil War Diary of a Common Soldier: William Wiley of the 77th Illinois Infantry*, ed. Terrence J. Winschel (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 33.

³¹ Christ., 76-79; Porter to Welles, January 11, 1863, *Official Records Navy* series I, vol. 24: 108; Sherman, *Memoirs*, 300-301.

³² Shea and Winschel, 58.

“A PERFECT HURRICANE OF SHOT AND SHELL”

was not softened. Grant met the returning transports at Napoleon, Arkansas, on January 20 and sent them back to Milliken’s Bend. McClelland was long looked upon poorly by historians, though recent studies have provided a more balanced assessment of the political general. He had done well in the Arkansas Post campaign and was dismayed at being reduced back to a subordinate role. McClelland blamed others for his woes and refused to acknowledge his own flaws. “I believe my success here is gall and wormwood to the clique of West Pointers who have been persecuting me for months,” he complained to Lincoln.³⁴ The plot against McClelland was real, but he brought it on himself with his arrogance and bad attitude. He performed well as a corps commander in the Vicksburg campaign, but continuing problems with Grant led to his removal later that summer.³⁵

The Union Army and Navy conducted several joint operations on western rivers in 1862-1863. Studies of those campaigns often portray the Navy as mere sidekicks. The few accounts of Arkansas Post have largely followed this trend, highlighting McClelland’s role while underemphasizing the contributions of the Navy. In truth, Porter’s gunboats won the battle. The sortie by his ironclads on the first evening took the attention of Fort Hindman’s guns away from the vulnerable Union infantrymen moving in the Rebels’ front, allowing the foot soldiers to complete their dispositions. On the second day, the boats pounded the fort into submission and sealed the defenders’ fate. The Union infantry never broke through against the Confederate trenches. The Rebels gave up once the fort had been neutralized, a task accomplished solely by the Navy. The importance of Porter’s Mississippi Squadron to the Union victory was summed up succinctly by Colonel Dunnington to Admiral Porter at the surrender: “You wouldn’t have got us had it not been for your damned gunboats.”³⁶

“Vicksburg is going to be a hard nut to crack, but I think our affair at the Post of Arkansas will help some,” wrote Sherman shortly after the battle.³⁷ The campaign was launched to remove the threat to Union traffic and communications on the Mississippi. It accomplished that and a good deal more. The victory was a boon to Union morale, which had plunged after the Chickasaw Bayou debacle. The battle also gave many of the green Midwestern recruits raised by McClelland in the fall of 1862 their first battle experience, a great benefit to men destined to attack Vicksburg. While Arkansas Post did not change the military situation at Vicksburg, it had a profound impact on the struggle for Arkansas. Confederate forces there were already reeling from the defeat at Prairie Grove when the Union captured Arkansas Post and opened the way to Little Rock via the Arkansas River. William Shea explains, “The disasters at Prairie Grove and Arkansas Post... effectively knocked Confederate Arkansas out of the war.”³⁸ The troops

³³ Grant to Halleck, January 11, 1863, *Official Records* series I, vol. XVII, part II: 553.

³⁴ Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 260-261; McClelland to President Abraham Lincoln, January 16, 1863, *Official Records* series I, vol. XVII, part II: 566.

³⁵ Shea and Winschel, 152.

³⁶ Christ, 77; Chester G. Hearn, *Admiral David Dixon Porter: The Civil War Years* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1996), 172.

³⁷ Shea and Winschel, 58.

³⁸ Christ, 86; Shea, *Fields of Blood*, 284.

GRAND PRAIRIE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

captured at Arkansas Post constituted twenty five percent of Rebel military strength in Arkansas, Missouri, and the Indian Territory. Their loss left the Confederacy unable to mount significant opposition to the Union conquest of Arkansas. By the end of the year, the Stars and Stripes flew over Little Rock and most of the state was under Union control.³⁹

In recent decades, historians have finally begun to show interest in the war west of the Mississippi. However, studies of this area often neglect Arkansas Post, the battle that arguably won Arkansas for the Union. It warrants attention for that reason alone. More importantly, Arkansas Post was the confluence of the campaign for the Mississippi River Valley and the struggle to restore Arkansas to the Union. The Battle of Arkansas Post demonstrates that events in the Trans-Mississippi were not isolated incidents in an insignificant backwater. One cannot understand the complete picture of the American Civil War without understanding the war in the West.

³⁹ Shea and Winschel, 58.

This article was recently given an award for “Best Paper on Arkansas History” by the Phi Alpha Theta Arkansas Regional Conference. The author will graduate from the University of Arkansas-Monticello in May with a B.A. in History, and has been accepted into Master of Arts programs at several universities. We hope he will share more of his writings for future *Historical Bulletins*.

