

A BGES
CIVIL WAR FIELD UNIVERSITY PROGRAM:
THE REAL HORSE SOLDIERS:
GRIERSON'S 1863 MISSISSIPPI RAID
WITH TIM SMITH

The more you look at US Grant's Vicksburg Campaign the more you see how dynamic and innovative it was. Over the past 25 years a seemingly independent cavalry action through Mississippi in late April and early May and another from Eastport Mississippi towards Georgia at the same time now are clearly associated with Grant's risky and essential Louisiana march along the Mississippi River. The former conducted by Colonel Ben Grierson, a peace time dance instructor, caught the eye of the famous western actor, John Wayne who, working with William Holden, created a popular romanticized movie "The Horse Soldiers." The movie bears little resemblance to the historical event—with the notable exception of Newton Station. However, we now know just how important this raid was—so much so that Grant specifically designated Grierson for the command. We also know that it was extremely successful in distracting the Confederates from Grant's march and that the Georgia ride through Alabama kept the feared Confederate cavalryman, Nathan Bedford Forrest away from the Grierson Raid as he pursued Colonel Streight's raid.

The actual route of Grierson's raid and indeed the essential components of it were hardly known until Grierson's diary and memoir were discovered and published. Now historian Tim Smith has extrapolated all these new details and in his book, **The Real Horse Soldiers** has developed the closest approximation of the route known to date. Indeed, the known points suggest this will be the most accurate mapping of the operation ever done. Tim has published the book. In 2021, the Delta Variant of the COVID virus cut registration for this tour by 60% in a week's time. Those who went declared it a classic and were the first to register for this encore. This is Dr. Smith's public tour of the route he has discovered! It has been done only for BGES. You do not want to miss it.

Wednesday, August 9, 2023

6 PM Gather at our headquarters hotel, the Fairfield Inn in Pearl where Tim will introduce you to Colonel Grierson, the "Big Picture" concept, his thinking and flexibility in planning. He is an interesting character whose Command View is both strategic and advanced tactical. He was a man who displayed characteristics of leadership that stayed with General Grant and which Grant considered essential if his own operation towards Grand Gulf was to be conducted with a minimum of Confederate curiosity. Hotel and dinner are included.

Thursday, August 10, 2023

7:30 AM: We need to leave early, so have your bags on board by 7:20, for our 3 ½ hour ride to LaGrange, Tennessee. We will use the time, once all have awoken, to share either the movie *The Horse Soldiers* with you or Tim will give you a bonus presentation on Grant's Mississippi Central Operation from late 1862. From LaGrange, Tim will layout the first five days of the raid, April 17-21. You will see how Grierson dove into Mississippi and beat off the only Confederate force that might disrupt his operations. By splitting his force in a diversion the Rebels took the bait and when Grierson went south the Rebels were headed Northeast. We will move with the main body through Ripley, New Albany, Pontotoc and then Starkville where we will overnight at the Hampton Inn. While enroute we will stop at several plantations identified by Grierson—they include the Ellis, Sloan, Daggett and Kilgore Plantations. We will also see the Palo Alto battlefield where Grierson's diversionary force fought one of the few shooting engagements of the operation. Your hotel, breakfast and lunch are included. Dinner is on your own.

Friday, August 11, 2023

8:15 AM: Today our mission is to cover days 6-11 (April 22-27) of the raid. Grierson is pushing southward through Louisville, Philadelphia and Newton Station. Here at Newton Station fiction meets reality as Wayne attacks, so too does Grierson. This operation is significant in that it catalyzes a frenzied Confederate response. As with so many other cavalry raids Grierson does not elect to turn back towards the north where he has already stirred up a response he continues south. We will continue "forward" through Garlandville, Raleigh and Westville.

Dramatically, Grierson finds himself nearly trapped as he is presented with the challenge of crossing the Pearl River, he successfully crosses and then makes another hit on the Confederate railroad system at Hazelhurst. This move shows he is trying to cooperate with Grant who is readying his effort to cross the Mississippi River. Confederate resistance at Grand Gulf extends Grant's operation and he and Grierson miss connections.

The most impressive portion of this modern day sleuthing of the route is the survival of the plantations mentioned in Grierson's notes—you will see Estes, Bender, Nichols, McAdory, Williams and Thompson's Plantations. We also have permission to access some private property before heading to overnight at Brookhaven. in the Hampton Inn. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included.

Saturday August 12, 2023

8:15 AM: We will finish our program in our tireless horseless carriage—our forage needs and the recruitment of our worn flesh from miles of road travel cannot compare to the condition of Grierson's men and horses as we revisit the third week of the raid. Today we finish following days 12-16—April 28-May 2nd—the day after Grant fights at Port Gibson. We will follow the destructive path of Grierson's men along the railroad at Brookhaven, Bogue Chitto, and Summit. We will also examine the light military

engagements at Union Church and Wall's Bridge where Confederates successfully closed on the blue column. We will visit other plantation sites owned by Messers Gill and Spurlock and bridge crossing sites where Grierson shook his pursuers and made for Baton Rouge and his encampment (which was photographed) at Magnolia Grove. The raid is over.

We will deadhead back to Jackson—about 150 miles where you can head on home or spend the night at your own expense. Breakfast and lunch are included.

About the Faculty:

Tim Smith is a well established star in the Civil War community. In three tours with BGES he has played well with his cohorts and his offerings are increasing in popularity with our membership. This tour is based upon his book **The Real Horse Soldiers**; however, his other publications are too numerous to mention—all focus on war in the Mississippi Valley with his most recent scholarship returning to the Vicksburg Campaign. All together Tim has published more than 20 books and he is not slowing down. He teaches at the University of Tennessee at Martin.

Hotel Information:

Your registration fee includes 3 nights hotel starting on August 9th in Pearl. The headquarters hotel is The Fairfield Inn, 407 Riverwood Dr. Pearl, MS 39208 (601) 936-3434. Our rate there is \$124 plus tax should you want to stay the night of the 12th at your own expense or perhaps arrive the 8th. The other hotels are the Hampton Inn, Starkville, MS (August 10) and Hampton Inn Brookhaven (August 11). **The final night hotel on August 12th is not included in your registration fee.**

Transportation:

The servicing airport is Jackson (JAN) which is primarily serviced by Southwest and Delta although you may also connect on American and United. The area is bisected by I-20 and I-55. Jackson is also served by Amtrak.

Recommended Reading:

You will be provided with maps upon arrival. The following books are suggested to enhance your readiness for the program. These books are available on line.

Timothy Smith: **The Real Horse Soldiers**

Dee Brown: **Grierson's Raid**

Bruce Dinges ed: **A Just and Righteous Cause: Benjamin H. Grierson's Civil War Memoir**

REGISTRATION FORM

**THE REAL HORSE SOLDIERS:
GRIERSON'S 1863 MISSISSIPPI RAID
A BGES CIVIL WAR FIELD UNIVERSITY PROGRAM
PRESENTED BY TIM SMITH
AUGUST 9-12, 2023 FROM PEARL (JACKSON), MISSISSIPPI**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Registration includes three nights lodging, three breakfasts, three lunches and two dinners, maps, the academic program, support of a professional historian, tour director and transportation. We will also provide snacks and cold bottled water.

_____ Registration \$1175 (single) _____ \$1990 per room Double occupancy

_____ Current BGES member \$1100 _____ \$1840 per room Double occupancy

_____ I am not a member but would like to join so that I can get the member's rate or I am a member who is past due to renew. Please accept my donation of

\$_____ (must be \$75 or more which is tax deductible)

_____ I am sending a deposit of \$300 per person plus full payment for any memberships. Total enclosed is \$

I will pay the balance due before August 8, 2023.

_____ Check enclosed

Charge my (circle one) MC VISA AMEXP Discover \$_____

Exp: _____ CVV: _____

Signature: _____

Mail to BGES Seminars, PO Box 1176, Chatham, VA 24531, or fax credit cards to 434-432-0596 . You may also register on line at www.blueandgrayeducation.org.