

**The Louisiana Campaigns:
Fort Jackson, New Orleans,
Baton Rouge, and Port Hudson**
A BGES Civil War Field University Program
With Richard Holloway
February 13-16, 2025, from Slidell, LA

By early 1862, it was clear that Union General-in-Chief Winfield Scott's Anaconda Plan—a two-pronged strategy designed to blockade the Southern port cities along the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico and to split the Confederacy via control of the Mississippi River—was beginning to take shape. For this plan to be successful, New Orleans, located at the mouth of the “Great River,” or “Father of the Rivers,” had to be taken.

Union Flag Officer David G. Farragut, commander of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron, was assigned the task and provided with the necessary resources by the United States War Department and Navy. Meanwhile, the Confederate government in Richmond, through a series of blunders, poor appointments, and an underestimation of the risk of losing New Orleans, siphoned off vital resources and manpower from Louisiana to other regions of the South. The result was the shocking fall of the Confederacy's largest city in April 1862. Baton Rouge quickly fell, too, and the high bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River at Port Hudson became a critical choke point, as it controlled access to the Red River and its riverboat connection to Texas. By this point, southeastern Louisiana and the mouth of the Great River were firmly in Union hands.

In response, Confederate Maj. Gen. Earl Van Dorn, commanding the defenses at Vicksburg, Mississippi, dispatched Maj. Gen. John C. Breckinridge with 4,000 troops to join Brig. Gen. Daniel Ruggles, who commanded a small force at Tangipahoa, Louisiana, in an attempt to retake Baton Rouge. This effort, hampered by illness, travel fatigue, extreme heat, and the failure of the powerful ironclad *Arkansas* to arrive in time from Vicksburg, ended in defeat at the Battle of Baton Rouge on August 5, 1862. Although victorious, the Federals soon abandoned Baton Rouge, only to retake it in late December of that same year. A small consolation for the Confederacy was the fortification of Port Hudson, which protected Confederate shipping via the Red River and provided Vicksburg with a defense from the vulnerable southern flank. However, this defense would be short-lived, as a massive Federal siege culminated in the capture of Port Hudson in July 1863, five days after the surrender of Vicksburg.

In this exciting tour, join veteran historian Richard Holloway, a Louisiana native, as he guides you through the Big Easy and beyond. He will take you to Fort Jackson, Baton Rouge, and Port Hudson, providing fresh insights from the perspectives of each of the participants. How and why New Orleans fell into Union hands so quickly, the importance of retaking Baton Rouge, and fortification of Port Hudson are key to understanding this pivotal corner of the Civil War map and will foreshadow events to come.

Beyond the battlefields, Richard will regale you with stories and sights as you visit the graves of important generals like P.G.T. Beauregard, Richard Taylor, and John Bell Hood, as well as the

once-occupied tomb of President Jefferson Davis. From the French Quarter and Bourbon Street to Jackson Square and Confederate Memorial Hall, Richard will provide a unique perspective on New Orleans, Civil War style. Join him in the Big Easy for a deeper understanding of Louisiana's role in the war.

Itinerary

Thursday evening, February 13, 2025, 6:00-7:00 p.m.: Orientation

Join historian Richard Holloway for a one-hour orientation program, providing an overview of the sights and events covered during the tour. Your program materials will be handed out (or the next morning for late arrivals), and Richard will also present some original artifacts.

Dinner is on your own.

Friday, February 14, 2025, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.: Fort Jackson and New Orleans

We will begin our day with a tour of Fort Jackson, New Orleans' first line of defense against the ships and gunboats of United States Flag Officer David G. Farragut. At Fort Jackson, along with nearby Fort St. Phillip, Confederate Maj. Gen. Mansfield Lovell frantically tried to fashion a defense. Despite deploying three ironclad gunboats—the *Louisiana*, the *Mississippi*, and the *Manassas*—the Confederate Navy's small fleet would repel the larger and more powerful Union fleet.

Next, we will explore Metairie Cemetery, Jackson Square, the U.S. Mint, St. Louis Cathedral, the French Market, Cabildo, and Confederate Memorial Hall. As we stroll through the streets, we will stop at Café du Monde for beignets.

Lunch is included, but dinner is on your own.

Saturday, February 15, 2025, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.: Baton Rouge

On Saturday, we will head to "Red Sticks," or Baton Rouge. Along the way, we will stop by Houmas House grounds and the Great River Road Museum. In Baton Rouge await several historical sites, including the Old State Capitol, the Capitol Park Museum, Magnolia Mound Plantation, and Magnolia Cemetery, where the August 5, 1862, Battle of Baton Rouge took place. Richard will set the scene and guide us through the action of the battle, and discuss its aftermath. We will examine why the Confederate attack failed and view the terrain where both sides fought during the confusing and foggy battle. Throughout the day, we will visit numerous museums and learn about the history of Louisiana's capital and its role in the war.

Lunch is included, but dinner is on your own.

Sunday, February 16, 2025, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.: Port Hudson

On Sunday, we will go to the Port Hudson State Historic Site, where we will explore the Confederate occupation of the heights in August 1862 and their efforts to improve and fortify the area. Richard will then shift focus to the Federal siege and the ultimate capture of Port Hudson in July 1864. Following this, we will visit Grace Cemetery and the Rosedown State Historic Site, returning to our headquarters hotel by 5:00 p.m.

Lunch is included, but dinner is on your own.

About the Faculty

Richard H. Holloway is a former senior editor of *Civil War Times* and *America's Civil War* magazines. He has contributed to books on the Vicksburg Campaign and Confederate generals in the Trans-Mississippi region. He was also served as a curator for the Louisiana National Guard and as Records Manager for George Washington University in Washington, D.C. While living in England, he conducted tours of American Civil War sites in Liverpool.

Hotel Information

This program will be headquartered at Hampton Inn Slidell, 56460 Frank Pichon Road, Slidell, LA 70458; 985-726-9777. The BGES special hotel rate is \$129 plus tax, with a rate cut-off date of January 15, 2025. When you call the hotel, be sure to tell them you are booking your room with the group “Blue and Gray Education” to get the special rate. The hotel does not have an airport shuttle.

Transportation

The servicing airport is Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport (MSY), 39 miles from the hotel. There is also a regional airport, Gulfport-Biloxi Regional Airport, located 40 miles from the hotel.

Recommended Reading

You will receive maps and materials that will meet your onsite requirements. The following books are suggested to enhance your readiness for the program.

Bearss, Edwin C. (1962). “The Battle of Baton Rouge, Louisiana History: *The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association*. 3 (2): 112. ISSN 0024-6816. (Access to this article available online at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4230653>).

Dufour, Charles L., *The Night the War Was Lost: The extraordinary events which led up to Farragut's sweep of the Mississippi and capture of New Orleans*, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, NJ: 1960.

Edmonds, David C., *The Guns of Port Hudson, Volume One, The Red River Campaign (February-May 1863)*, The Acadiana Press, Lafayette, LA: 1983.

Edmonds, David C., *The Guns of Port Hudson, Volume Two, The Investment, Siege and Reduction*, The Acadiana Press, Lafayette, LA: 1984.

Hearn, Chester G., *The Capture of New Orleans 1862*, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge: 1995.

Hewitt, Lawrence Lee, *Port Hudson, Confederate Bastion on the Mississippi*, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, LA: 1987.

Parrish, Tom Z., *The Saga of the Confederate Ram Arkansas, The Mississippi Valley Campaign, 1862*, Hill College Press, Hillsboro, TX: 1987.

Richey, Thomas, *The Battle of Baton Rouge*, second ed., Thomas Richey Publishing, Baton Rouge, LA: 2012.

Spedale, William A., *The Battle of Baton Rouge 1862*, Land and Land Publishing Division, Baton Rouge, LA: 1985.

Spedale, William A., *Where Bugles Called and Rifles Gleamed*, Land and Land Publishing Division, Baton Rouge, LA: 1986.

Registration:

This program includes the services of your historian, a tour director, three lunches, maps, appropriate transportation for the tour, and light refreshments and snacks.

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Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Registration includes three lunches, all paid admissions, maps, the academic program, support of a professional historian and a tour director, and transportation by passenger bus or van. We will also provide snacks and bottled water.

_____ Current BGES member \$875

_____ Non-BGES member \$925

_____ 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 membership donation of \$ _____ (must be \$75 or more, which is tax-deductible; see blueandgrayeducation.org for levels).

_____ I am sending a deposit of \$150 per person and/or memberships. Total enclosed is \$ _____. I will pay the balance due before the event.

_____ Check enclosed

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

Exp: _____ CVV: _____

Signature: _____

Mail to BGES Seminars, P.O. Box 1176, Chatham, VA 24531; or fax credit card registrations to 434-432-0596. You may also register online at www.blueandgrayeducation.org.