

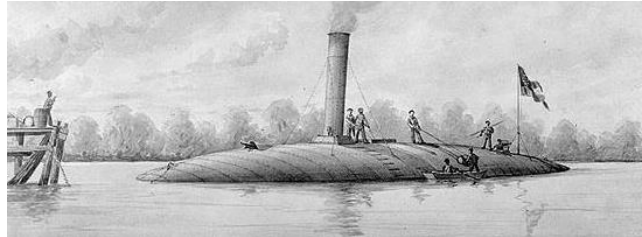


## Preparing to Defend Their City



## Steaming to Attack

- 75 miles to the south of New Orleans was a bend in the Mississippi River, where the Confederates had constructed two forts. The forts, with 1,000 soldiers, were considered invulnerable.
- Fort Jackson was on the west bank, and had 59 cannons, a dozen short-barrelled howitzers to throw shells up at a high angle, and three mortars which sent shells even higher.
- Fort St. Philip, on the east bank and a bit further north, had 44 cannon, three howitzers and seven mortars.
- The Confederates had also placed obstructions in the river, and had assembled a number of shops to aid in the defence.
- A River Defence Fleet of six "cotton-clad" ramming boats used cotton bales as part of their protection.
- The Confederate Navy had another six ships, which included iron-clads such as the *CSS Manassas*.



*CSS Manassas*, the cigar-shaped Confederate "hellish machine". She repeatedly charged union ships despite murderous cannon-fire from the whole fleet; the shells bounced off her hull. She was finally driven aground, and her crew escaped before she exploded.



Fort Jackson, a brick and masonry fort constructed in 1822.

## THE CONFEDERACY'S BIGGEST CITADEL FALLS APRIL 25-MAY 1, 1862



Maj. Gen Mansfield Lovell  
Commander, New Orleans



Admiral David G. Farragut  
West Gulf Blockading Squadron

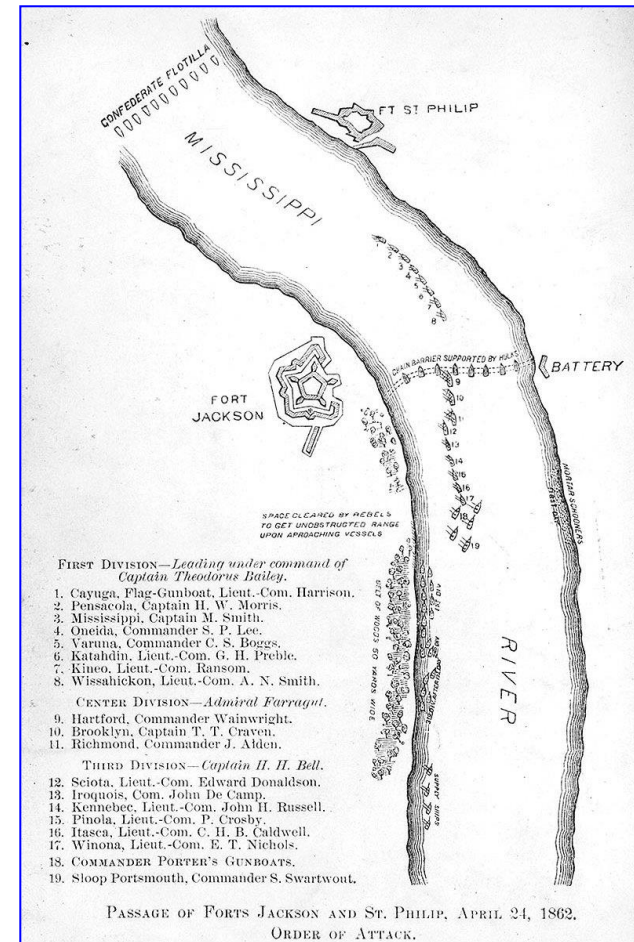
**Confederate Army**  
Strength: 5,000  
Casualties: unknown

**Union Army**  
Strength: 9,000 army  
Casualties: 186



- When the civil war began, **Union Gen. Winfield Scott's** 'Anaconda Plan' established two steps that would form the most effective way to defeat the South: use a blockade to strangle trade, and use fleets to control the Mississippi and cut the Confederacy in two.
- There were many other reasons for the North to want to take New Orleans: Louisiana was a conduit for the flow of munitions and food from Texas and Mexico to the eastern Confederacy.
- New Orleans pumped arms, food, clothing and manufactured goods like tin-ware to the Confederacy during the first year of the war.
- Consequently it was no surprise to the Confederate garrison that in mid-April, a Federal fleet appeared at the mouth of the Mississippi.

- Union Admiral Farragut placed 24 war-ships at the mouth of the Mississippi, attempting to fool the Confederates into thinking he was only creating a blockade.
- He gathered 17 warships for the attack on New Orleans, and by mid-April his fleet had dropped anchor downstream from the forts.
- The fleet contained mortar boats under Farragut's step-brother Admiral David Porter, who was sure he could destroy the forts in two days.
- For a week he lobbed an average of 100 shells an hour into the forts, day and night.
- Despite the bombardment, he was unable to silence the guns of the forts, though Fort Jackson was seriously damaged.
- Farragut stopped the bombardment and made plans to slip his fleet by the forts in the dark, and then move on to New Orleans.



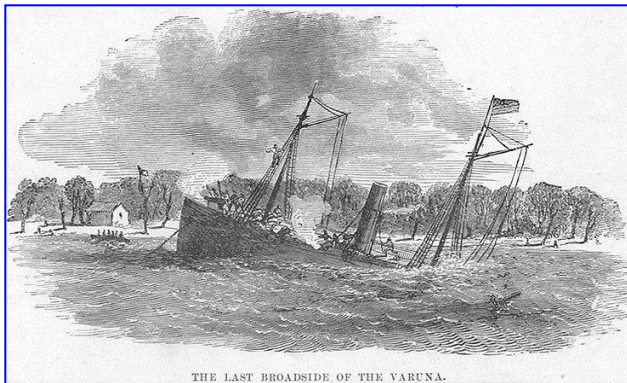
## April 24: Running the Gauntlet

- After a daring raid to cut a chain blocking the river, at 2:00 a.m. on the morning of April 24<sup>th</sup>, Farragut ordered the fleet to move.
- The first division of eight ships slipped past the forts without being seen.
- The rising moon, however, then illuminated the river enough to alert the Confederate defenders. The next two divisions of ships took heavy fire.
- Steaming full speed ahead, the ships charged past the forts.
- Guns blazed in the dark. The *USS Varuna* was rammed and sunk by the *Stonewall Jackson*, one ship was disabled and two had to turn back.
- Fire rafts were launched against the Federal fleet, but drifted by.
- The human cost of the "gauntlet" was 37 Union sailors killed and 149 wounded, and 13 Confederate ships sunk with 782 casualties.

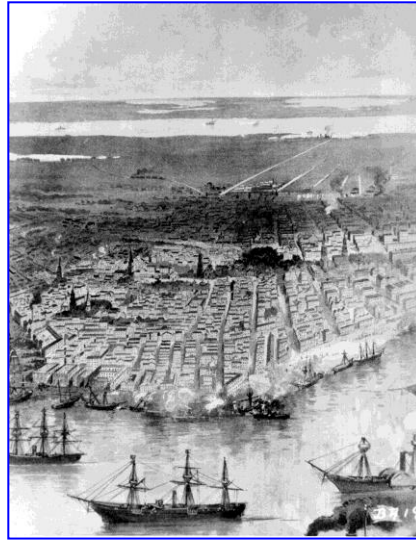


(above) Destruction of the Confederate steamers by the Union fleet.

(below) The *USS Varuna* goes down firing.



## April 25: The Devil Comes to Dixie



The Federal fleet anchors at New Orleans

- With the two forts by-passed, the city of New Orleans had no defences when the Union fleet arrived. The city surrendered immediately.
- On May 1<sup>st</sup>, Maj. Gen. Butler's 15,000 soldiers began landing at New Orleans to occupy the city.
- Attempting to incite paroled Confederates to rise up against the Union troops, southern women spit on the Union soldiers and one dumped a chamber pot on Farragut's head.
- Butler subjected the city's inhabitants to a martial law, and ordered that any woman who insulted the Union would be treated as a common prostitute. The order incensed the South and roused disdain in the nations or Europe, and led to decades of bitterness in New Orleans.



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## CONSEQUENCES

- The morning after New Orleans fell, the soldiers in the two forts mutinied and the forts surrendered.
- The fall of New Orleans was a decisive event, driving the first wedge in the "hinge" of the Confederacy.
- The campaign demonstrated the prowess of the Northern military capability.
- It gave pause to England and other European states, which were pro-South in their sympathies and which were leaning towards recognition of the Confederacy.
- It also demonstrated that the South was so weak that it could not mount a serious campaign to recover its premier city.



(above) The capture of the South's greatest city unlocked the lower Mississippi

(below) The Union's General Grant would eventually come down from the north to link up with the New Orleans forces.

