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**A Research Design for Cultural Resources Investigations in the Vicinity of Fort Jackson,
Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana**

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**Fort Jackson during the Civil War Pages 48-74
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New Orleans, situated near the mouth of the Mississippi River, was the South's largest city, the seat of commerce for the western states, and the Confederacy's leading industrial center. Therefore, the defense of the city was necessary for the survival of the rebellion. Military strategists on both sides realized that the capture of New Orleans would be required to gain control of the Mississippi and, subsequently divide the Confederacy.

Fort Jackson and St. Philip were regarded as the primary defensive fortifications guarding New Orleans. The other water approaches to the city, protected by Forts Pike, Livingston, and Macomb, were generally too shallow for large naval craft to navigate. If the Union Navy was to launch an assault against New Orleans from the Gulf of Mexico, it would first have to pass Forts Jackson and St. Philip.

Under the direction of Louisiana Governor Thomas O. Moore, both Forts Jackson and St. Philip were seized by state troops on 10 January 1861, some 16 days prior to Louisiana's

secession from the Union. Forces under the command of Major Paul E. Theard met no resistance at Fort Jackson where Ordnance Sergeant H. Smith surrendered to Theard's superior forces. St. Philip, at that time, was not garrisoned. Within five days, a small detachment of Louisiana militia relieved Theard's troops and occupied both forts. Brigadier-General J. K. Duncan, a West Point graduate, subsequently assumed command of Forts Jackson and St. Philip and immediately began initiating repairs and training the garrisons (Greene 1982; Landry 1938:24-25).

By December, the artillery at Fort Jackson had been slightly strengthened by Duncan's efforts to include 69 pieces of ordnance: ten 24-pounder howitzers, two 48-pounders, two, 9-in mortars, one 10-in mortar, one 10-in columbiad, three 8-in columbiads, twenty-six 24-pounders, and six 42-pounders. St. Philip had 45 pieces consisting of three field pieces, one 10-in mortar, one 8-in mortar, four 8-in columbiads, twenty-two 24-pounders, nine 32-pounders, and six 42-pounders (Landry 1938:26-27). Despite the armament maintained at the forts, both Duncan and Brigadier General Mansfield Lovell, who had been assigned the task of the defense of New Orleans and the lower coast, agreed that the addition of heavy guns and an obstruction in the river would be required to stop the passage of a steam-powered fleet. Under the direction of Confederate General P. T. Beauregard, Lovell constructed a raft barrier in the river between the two forts. By February, a large amount of drift had accumulated along the obstruction, and the strong current of the Mississippi caused the barrier to break. The chain was repaired but broke again during a severe storm. Repairs were made a second time using hulks of old ships anchored in the river and connected together with large cables. Attempts by Lovell to obtain huge chains to strengthen the barrier were unsuccessful (Green 1982: 147-148; Landry 1938:28-30).

Lovell tried desperately to obtain heavy guns from Richmond and Pensacola. However, most of the Confederate military strategists believed an attack on New Orleans would come from upriver and that heavy guns should be placed there, not on the lower river. Three 10-in columbiads and five mortars were finally sent to Forts Jackson and St. Philip, as well as twelve 24-pounders (Stewart 1904:253-254). Early in 1862, Duncan completed the exterior water battery immediately below Fort Jackson, which mounted one 10-in seacoast mortar, two 32-pounder rifled guns, one 10-in columbiad, and two 8-in columbiads. The total armament of Fort Jackson included seventy-four pieces: fourteen 24-pounder smoothbores mounted in the casemates; ten 24-pounder flanking howitzers; one 6-pounder fieldpiece; one 12-pounder in the parade; one 8-in howitzer; one 7 3/8-in howitzer; eleven 24-pounders; fifteen 32-pounders, six 42-pounders; two 10-in columbiads; three 8-in columbiads; two 8-in mortars; and one 7-in rifled gun mounted en barbette on the ramparts, in addition to the guns in the exterior water battery (Green 1982:143). St. Philip on the east bank of the river mounted fifty-two artillery pieces of

types similar to those found in Fort Jackson with the notable exception of one 13-in seacoast mortar (Green 1982:143-144).

As early as the fall of 1861 Union military leaders were developing a plan to capture New Orleans by an assault launched from the Gulf of Mexico. The plan, developed by Commander David D. Porter of the mortar flotilla of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron, called for the reduction of Forts Jackson and St. Philip by bombardment, the passage of the forts, and the subsequent capture of New Orleans. Porter's plan was approved by President Lincoln and Union military leaders on 15 November 1861, and on 9 January 1862 Commander David G. Farragut was commissioned as flag officer.