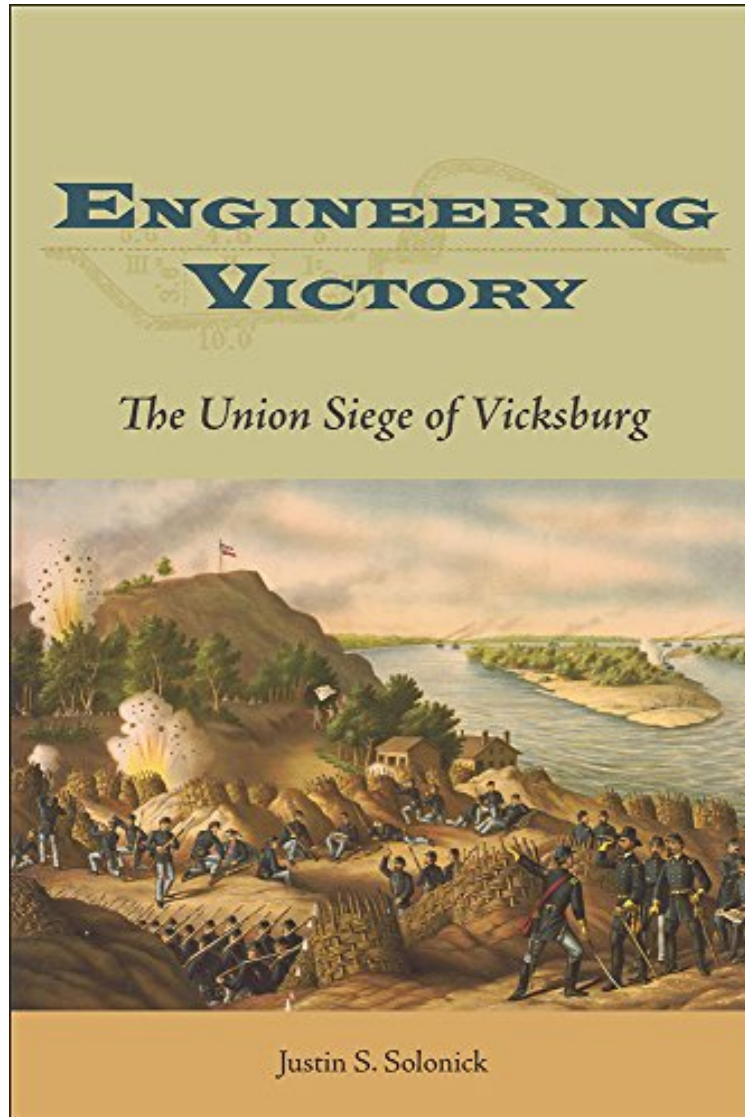


# Engineering Victory: The Union Siege of Vicksburg

*Justin S. Solonick*

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**Justin S. Solonick : Engineering Victory: The Union Siege of Vicksburg** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Engineering Victory: The Union Siege of Vicksburg:

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Great information about a part of the Siege that has ...By Wallace E. MorrisGreat information about a part of the Siege that has not been written before. When I was in college back in 80's I did a term paper in a geography class about how the landscape at Vicksburg was changed because of the Engineers. This book had some new information which I did not have access to back then. Really brought back memories of my research years ago.14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Using the Ground!By

Timothy E. Massey I have found as one who walks the ground, the best Generals were in many cases the Engineers, because they knew the importance of the ground and what would give them an advantage. They had a vision of how troops would move and flow, so they threw up earthworks accordingly. Grant gets a lot of credit as a siege General, but he was also one who used the ground to his advantage. His forces “dug” the Confederates out of Vicksburg instead of the old “starving them out” adage. Grant was not “big” on engineers so he adapted to the many Midwestern miners to dig trenches and tunnels to reach and push back the cornered Confederates. It would be many years after the war, before even West Point fully realized the important roll of the engineers in battle. This is an excellent work that brings forth the roll of those designed the plan for literally digging their way to victory at Vicksburg! I highly recommend this book for anyone interested in Vicksburg, and wanting a better understanding of how commanders and engineers used the ground to their advantage. 2 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By happyperky CHRISTMAS PRESENT

On May 25, 1863, after driving the Confederate army into defensive lines surrounding Vicksburg, Mississippi, Union major general Ulysses S. Grant and his Army of the Tennessee laid siege to the fortress city. With no reinforcements and dwindling supplies, the Army of Vicksburg finally surrendered on July 4, yielding command of the Mississippi River to Union forces and effectively severing the Confederacy. In this illuminating volume, Justin S. Solonick offers the first detailed study of how Grant's midwesterners serving in the Army of the Tennessee engineered the siege of Vicksburg, placing the event within the broader context of U.S. and European military history and nineteenth-century applied science in trench warfare and field fortifications. In doing so, he shatters the Lost Cause myth that Vicksburg's Confederate garrison surrendered due to lack of provisions. Instead of being starved out, Solonick explains, the Confederates were dug out. After opening with a sophisticated examination of nineteenth-century military engineering and the history of siege craft, Solonick discusses the stages of the Vicksburg siege and the implements and tactics Grant's soldiers used to achieve victory. As Solonick shows, though Grant lacked sufficient professional engineers to organize a traditional siege—an offensive tactic characterized by cutting the enemy's communication lines and digging forward-moving approach trenches—the few engineers available, when possible, gave Union troops a crash course in military engineering. Ingenious midwestern soldiers, in turn, creatively applied engineering maxims to the situation at Vicksburg, demonstrating a remarkable ability to adapt in the face of adversity. When instruction and oversight were not possible, the common soldiers improvised. Solonick concludes with a description of the surrender of Vicksburg, an analysis of the siege's effect on the outcome of the Civil War, and a discussion of its significance in western military history. Solonick's study of the Vicksburg siege focuses on how the American Civil War was a transitional one with its own distinct nature, not the last Napoleonic war or the herald of modern warfare. At Vicksburg, he reveals, a melding of traditional siege craft with the soldiers' own inventiveness resulted in Union victory during the largest, most successful siege in American history.

"Engineering Victory is a truly original study that offers unprecedented insight into the mechanics of the Vicksburg siege from the Union perspective. It also serves as a powerful reminder that ultimate victory was not just a question of starvation but also one of skillful execution of the siege tactics of the period. Justin Solonick's impressive work is richly deserving of a place of high honor in the Vicksburg Campaign literature canon."—Civil War Books and Authors "By showing why Vicksburg fell when it did, Justin S. Solonick's book sheds new light on one of the most important campaigns of the Civil War. By exploring how Grant's army achieved that success, it illuminates the nature of Civil War armies and on the society that raised them."—Steven E. Woodworth, author of *Nothing but Victory: The Army of the Tennessee, 1861–1865* "If Vicksburg was the front door to the Confederacy, it was engineering that proved to be the key to opening the door. Thus argues Solonick, as he proceeds to methodically and convincingly make his case. Lacking professional engineers, U. S. Grant's Army of the Tennessee often relied upon western ingenuity for mining and trenching. Their efforts, not fully appreciated by West Point theorists even after the war, won the day. Must reading not only for western theater enthusiasts but also for those who wish to grasp how the war evolved."—Larry J. Daniel, author of *Days of Glory: The Army of the Cumberland, 1861–1865* "Justin Solonick has produced an important and necessary study of siege operations at Vicksburg, setting the story within the context of European siege craft and pointing to new directions in the history of Civil War military operations. This book is a breath of fresh air."—Earl J. Hess, author of *Kennesaw Mountain: Sherman, Johnston, and the Atlanta Campaign* "The author covers the spectrum of siege as practiced at Vicksburg, from establishment of the line of circumvallation to the saps, approaches, and parallels that led to the final phase of the siege. He also discusses the mining intended to destroy the earth and log bastions that guarded the city and blocked unfettered navigation of the Mississippi River. Solonick gives readers an excellent and comprehensive understanding of the complexities of the siege operations that sealed the doom of Vicksburg and with it the Confederacy. . . this book is a truly significant contribution to our understanding of the Vicksburg campaign. Engineering Victory is an outstanding work that fills one of the few, yet major, voids in the literature on the Vicksburg campaign and taps into scores of soldier memoirs, diaries, and letters that add much human interest to this study. Engineering Victory is an essentially important work that will enhance the most complete

collection of Vicksburg titles." —Terrence J Winschel, author of *Triumph Defeat: The Vicksburg Campaign*, volumes 1 and 2 "Solonick's book provides a thorough and engaging study of the Union army's siege operations against the pivotal river city of Vicksburg, Mississippi. Readers will walk away from the volume with a great deal of respect for the hardworking engineers of the Army or the Tennessee who faced various obstacles and challenges. Rather than just surrounding Vicksburg and waiting for its defenders to capitulate, Grant's men transformed themselves from a marching army into a besieging one."—Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai, Angelo State University "There is a lot to like about this book. Solonick demonstrates skill as both a researcher and a writer. He has scoured archives from New York to North Carolina...On the whole, *Engineering Victory* is a fine examination of the siege tactics used by the Federals at Vicksburg. It presents the complex story of Grant's efforts to topple the "Gibraltar of the West" in a clear and coherent manner."—Mark Barloon, *The Annals of Iowa*