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I originally wrote this paper for my final research project in HIST 207: Spatial History and Historical GIS. My research delved into the economic history of Vicksburg, Mississippi, before and after the Siege of Vicksburg in the Civil War using ArcGIS. I primarily utilized the GIS/Data Center to map the socioeconomic distribution in Vicksburg before the 1863 siege, in the twenty-first century, and to plot the neighborhoods hit hardest by the forty-seven-day siege. Although I was looking at macro data for the city and Civil War as whole, I also needed minute data—such as identifying parcel plotlines in the pre-Civil War era. My sources addressed the history and geography of Vicksburg, personal historical narratives from the siege, Civil War artillery and campaign records, and modern-day property data.

When I began my project, I expected to find property tax records from 1850-1860. The method for recording plot boundaries in the Mississippi online archive records did not align with accessible contemporary data. Instead, I relied upon 1860 building distributions, analyses of pre-Civil War development in Vicksburg and first-hand accounts of the siege (primarily Gordon Cotton’s *Yankee Bullets, Rebel Rations* and A. A. Hoehling’s *Vicksburg: 47 Days of Siege*, both found in Fondren’s collection). In the GIS center, I traced the 1860 building footprints and corroborated the data with narratives of wealth and development to create an analysis of economic distribution.

Most scholarship and primary source narratives describe the destruction of the Siege of Vicksburg, but I could not find any sources that displayed the dispersion of bombardment across the city. With the help of the GIS center, I utilized the viewshed analysis tool on ArcGIS to display the regions of the city that Union lines to the east and gunboats in the Mississippi River could hit. (The city’s topographic situation made it difficult for a single direct Union assault.) Because the Union could lob mortars over the bluffs along the river, I also used ArcGIS to place a buffer around the regions identified by the viewshed analysis (these combined formed the “areas most susceptible” to damage by Union artillery). Again, I cross-checked my GIS map with the historical primary-source narratives in the Fondren collection.

In the final stage of my research, I analyzed the overlap of Vicksburg economic distribution in 1860 with modern-day data. In the GIS center, I mapped the distribution of modern Vicksburg churches and property value appreciation. When I compared these maps with my Civil War data, I found that some of the present roads and neighborhood boundaries correspond with troop lines in 1863. With the maps I created in the GIS center, I was able form new spatial analysis of the correspondence between pre-Civil War socioeconomic conditions and neighborhoods hit hardest by the Union bombardment.

The GIS/Data center and Fondren’s collection of Vicksburg military records and primary source were the principal resources I used. However, I especially appreciate the willingness of library staff, in particular the visitor to our class, to help locate and identify final sources. I had to adjust most of my initially planned methods and sources to reflect the data available, which made the advice and assistance of library and Data Center staff especially helpful.
Abstract:

Two decisive battles came at the turning point of the American Civil War in July 1863: the Battle of Gettysburg and the Battle of Vicksburg. While Gettysburg followed the traditional mode of a short engagement between the colliding Confederate and Union armies, Vicksburg represented a military, economic, and strategic stronghold. With the topographic situation of the city, Union Major General Ulysses S. Grant initiated a prolonged siege of Vicksburg. The devastation—emotional and physical—left a lasting scar on the city, and Vicksburg did not celebrate the Fourth of July for another eighty-one years. Although Reconstruction officially ended with the Compromise of 1877, this paper examines key questions about the lasting effects of the Civil War in Vicksburg, Mississippi. This study used Historical GIS and spatial analysis to test the persistence of the siege and bombardment on urban landscape. This investigation tests the hypothesis that regions harder hit by Grant’s artillery have a lower socioeconomic level in 2017. The findings reveal a degree of correlation between the extent of shelling and the modern economic level of Vicksburg’s neighborhoods.