



**Fort Butler, 1863
Donaldsonville, Louisiana**

As with so many other of the lesser publicized engagements of that war, the epic battle at Fort Butler was long overshadowed by more spectacular events occurring at the same time. Located at the confluence of Bayou La Fourche and the Mississippi River at Donaldsonville, Louisiana--between New Orleans and Baton Rouge--the fort soon became the scene of a hotly contested battle when its garrison, comprised of some 300 Federal troops, among whom were members of the newly organized African-American regiments, was besieged the night of June 28, 1863, by some 800 howling Confederate troops from Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, led by Gen. Thomas Green, 5th Texas Cavalry, CSA.

The book begins by recounting the indiscriminate ambushing of Union shipping on the Mississippi River in the Donaldsonville area by Confederate masked batteries along the levee, which resulted in the retaliatory shelling of Donaldsonville by Union Admiral Farragut's gunboats. The narrative then follows the subsequent invasion of Federal troops, their primary objective being the construction of star-shaped Ft. Butler, to act as a deterrent force to thwart the Rebel sniping on their vessels, to restore and secure the Mississippi River to safe passage once again, and to serve as a base of operations for the impending LaFourche Campaign. The narrative covers the construction of the earthen-brick fortress and follows the chain of events leading up to and during the attack, concluding with an in depth assessment and evaluation of the attack. As with the legendary Charge of the Lightbrigade, "someone had blundered" on the side of the Confederate high command. However, the tenacity, bravery, and heroism exhibited by both armies in the conflict are legacies that can be appreciated by all Americans.

The book concludes with recent archaeological excavations of the old fort, revealing the long-hidden foundations as well as artifacts recovered. Accompanied with period photographs and sketches.

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