

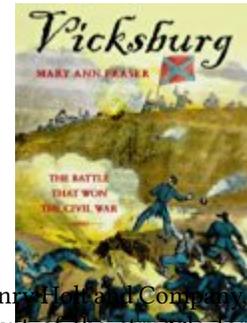
H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Mary Ann Fraser. *Vicksburg: The Battle That Won the Civil War*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1999. 104 pp. \$16.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8050-6106-2.

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At the outbreak of the American Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln assembled his civil and military leaders to discuss strategy for opening the Mississippi River to commerce and for ending what he termed a “rebellion” in the Southern states. Seated around a large table, examining a map of the nation, Lincoln made a wide sweeping gesture with his hand then placed his finger on the map and said: “Vicksburg is the key. The war can never be brought to a close until that key is in our pocket.” More and more historians have come to accept the validity of Lincoln’s statement and believe that the Civil War was won in the West. In response to the growing interest generated by the combined army/navy operations for control of the Mississippi River, their research and writing have resulted in a flurry of publications on the Vicksburg campaign in recent years, including an array of works for children such as *Cobblestone*.

Award-winning author Mary Ann Fraser, whose *In Search of the Grand Canyon* was awarded a School Library Journal “Best Book Award,” joins the ranks of those attempting to unravel the complexity of the operations for Vicksburg. Fraser, who has written and illustrated more than forty books for children, including several

other highly praised books for Henry Holt and Company, has produced a marvelous account of the struggle for Vicksburg. Appealing to students on the Third- through Sixth-Grade reading level, she provides young readers with a cogent and fast-paced narrative that is clear, well-written, and easy to digest. *Vicksburg* is a moving account of this decisive campaign that weaves the experiences of citizens and soldiers alike into a gripping narrative that is a delight to read.

Assisting the readers to gain a better understanding of the events and people involved in the struggle for control of the Confederate Gibraltar, the work is beautifully illustrated with forty contemporary drawings, five maps, and a dozen photographs. An added bonus is a glossary of terms to aid young readers and the bibliography provides sources for additional reading.

Fraser’s work will compliment any child’s library and help instill a thirst for history in young readers.

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