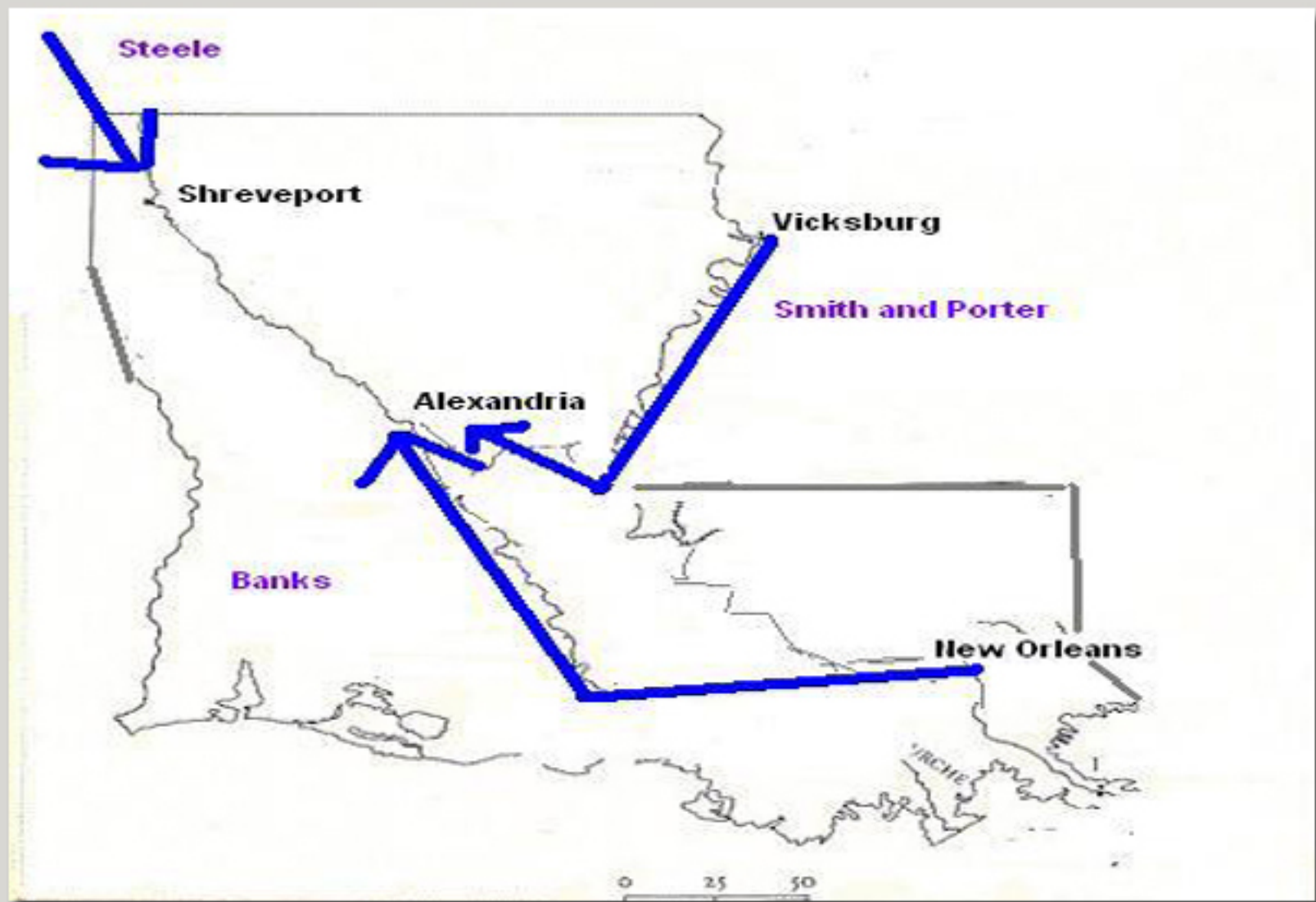


The Red River Campaign, 1864



The **Red River Campaign** or **Red River Expedition** comprised a series of battles fought along the Red River in Louisiana during the American Civil War from March 10 to May 22, 1864. The campaign was a Union initiative, fought between approximately 30,000 Union troops under the command of Maj. Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks, and Confederate troops under the command of Lt. Gen. Richard Taylor, whose strength varied from 6,000 to 15,000.

The campaign was primarily the plan of Union General-in-Chief Henry W. Halleck, and a diversion from Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's plan to surround the main Confederate armies by using Banks's Army of the Gulf to capture Mobile, Alabama. It was a dismal Union failure, characterized by poor planning and mismanagement, in which not a single objective was fully accomplished. Taylor successfully defended the Red River Valley with a smaller force. However, the decision of Taylor's immediate superior, General Edmund Kirby Smith to send half of Taylor's force north to Arkansas rather than south in pursuit of the retreating Banks after the Battle of Mansfield and the Battle of Pleasant Hill, led to bitter enmity between Taylor and Smith.