

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume LVII, Battlefield Tour Edition

Chicago, Illinois

May 1-4, 1997

47th Annual Battlefield Tour: The 1862 Peninsula Campaign

The Civil War Round Table has chosen the 1862 Peninsula Campaign for our 47th Annual Battlefield Tour. On the first day (Thursday) our buses will take us to Ft. Monroe where General McClellan landed 121,500 soldiers, 14,592 animals, 1224 wagons and ambulances, and 44 artillery batteries in less than three weeks. From there we will follow the campaign in chronological order up the Peninsula and through the Seven Days Battles around Richmond.

Our headquarters for the entire tour will be the Sheraton Inn Richmond Airport, which is located near the airport at 4700 Laburnum Avenue, Richmond, VA 23231 (Phone: 804-226-4300). Shuttle bus service will be provided by the hotel. When checking in, please identify yourself as a participant in the Civil War Round Table Tour and pick up your tour kit and badge in the lobby of the hotel.

Our chief guide again this year will be our good friend and life member of The Round Table, Mr. Edwin C. Bearss, Chief Historian Emeritus, National Park Service. Ed has lead our tours since 1961. Along with Mr. Bearss, we will be guided by Richmond Park historians Mike Andrus and Dave Ruth, who will speak at our regular April meeting in Chicago. We will travel in air conditioned, wide-windowed tour buses, equipped with loud speakers, toilets, and the usual assortment of liquid refreshments.

1862 Peninsula Campaign and the Seven Days

by Terry Carr

Editor's note: the following article originally appeared in the 25th Annual Tour Newsletter (1975)

DURING mid March, 1862, the Army of the Potomac, 75,000 strong, led by General George B. McClellan moved down Chesapeake Bay to Hampton Roads and Fort Monroe. McClellan's plan called for a swift movement up the Peninsula forcing the Confederate army, commanded by General Joseph E. Johnston, back toward Richmond. Once the Federals reached the defenses around Richmond they could lay siege to the city, thereby forcing its eventual surrender. Fortunately for the South, McClellan was under the impression that his troops were greatly outnumbered by General Johnston's army. As a result the Federals moved cautiously, spending an entire month in preparing for the capture of Yorktown.

COST OF THE TOUR

\$395 per person, double occupancy
\$525 single occupancy

Non-members must add \$25 per person to the above prices. Please indicate on your registration form the person with whom you wish to room.

Shuttle bus transportation from Richmond International Airport will be provided by the hotel.

Tour includes: Accommodations at the Sheraton Inn Richmond Airport, 4700 Laburnum Ave., Richmond, VA. Phone: 804-226-4300, from Wednesday night through Sunday noon; lunches and dinners, daily bus transportation, refreshments on the buses, experienced guides, all admission fees, tour kits, badges, group service gratuities, and evening programs. Breakfasts are not included. Cash bar at the evening Command Posts.

Much of McClellan's actions were indirectly caused by the movements of Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley. Lincoln feared that Jackson was planning to capture Washington, so he prevented the troops commanded by General McDowell from joining McClellan in his Peninsula Campaign. Due to the absence of these troops, McClellan ceased to be aggressive, thus giving the Confederates time to reinforce their army.

After the fall of Yorktown the Union army moved slowly up the Peninsula, utilizing the White House on the Pamunkey River as its base of supplies. The Pamunkey became the Union right flank and the Chickahominy the left flank. General Johnston retreated toward Richmond until he finally decided to contest McClellan's advances on May 31st at Seven Pines. The battle was hard fought but resulted in a draw. More important than the outcome was the wounding of General Johnston, which caused General Robert E. Lee to be given command of the Confederate Army. This event proved to be the turning point for the South. Lee immediately began making plans to relieve Richmond from possible siege by McClellan. The Confederates had to assume the offensive to gain this objective, and this is exactly what Lee proposed to do.

(continued on page 2)

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



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The Capitol at Richmond

On June 12th, General Lee sent J.E.B. Stuart with 1200 cavalymen to determine the Union positions. Stuart's famous ride around McClellan's army gave Lee the information he needed. The Federal right, Fitz-John Porter's 4th Corps, was positioned behind Beaver Dam Creek, north of the Chickahominy River, and McClellan's other three corps were on the south side of the Chickahominy. The Union right was therefore isolated and gave Lee his opportunity to strike. McClellan at this point had approximately 105,000 men and Lee, with the addition of Jackson's Valley troops, had 80,000 to 85,000. Lee proposed to leave 25,000 men to defend the Richmond lines and take the rest to attack McClellan's exposed right flank. The battles which resulted from this strategy became known as the Seven Days.

Lee's plan was for Stonewall Jackson, coming from the Valley, to move southeast several miles north of the Chickahominy, following a route which would put him behind Porter's lines. Jackson was to make contact with A.P. Hill.

The latter would then move to the north side of the Chickahominy a mile north of Mechanicsville, turn right to force the Union troops out of Mechanicsville and drive toward the main Union line behind Beaver Dam Creek. Once A.P. Hill cleared Mechanicsville, D.H. Hill and Longstreet would cross the river, join the attack, and drive down the north bank, cutting McClellan off from his base of supplies at White House.

The morning of June 26th was the appointed time for the attack. By 3:00 p.m. Jackson had still not made contact with A.P. Hill. Hill decided to move on without Jackson, thus starting the offensive in motion. D.H. Hill and Longstreet moved across the river according to plan. However, A.P. Hill's assault was a complete failure as, without Jackson's troops attacking Porter from the rear, there was no hope of success against the strong Union position behind Beaver Dam Creek.

During the night of the 26th Porter learned that Stonewall Jackson had finally arrived on the Union right. Porter therefore retreated eastwardly past Gaines' Mill and took a position behind Boatswain's Swamp. Late on the afternoon of the 27th, with Jackson finally in position, the assault against Porter's new line was irresistible and the Federal defense collapsed. The broken Union divisions moved across to the south side of the river, with Slocum's troops acting as rear guard. Darkness brought the fighting to a close.

The next day, McClellan decided to move his base of supplies to Harrison's Landing on the James River. The only action on the 28th was the maneuvering by Magruder's 25,000 men who were defending the Richmond lines. General Lee, assuming McClellan would defend his White House base rather than abandon it, temporarily lost contact with him. The Confederates finally encountered the retreating Union army at Savage Station on the 29th and clashes occurred that day, and again at Glendale on the 30th. Both battles were vicious but because of the poor performance by the Confederate commanders, the Southerners could not achieve victory. By July 1st the Federals had established a strong line on Malvern Hill, which featured an excellent position for the use of artillery. The ensuing Confederate assaults were repulsed with great loss. The northerners then moved to

Harrison's Landing and were safe from further attack because of the Union gun boats on the James. The campaign of the Seven Days brought to an end the Union offensive against Richmond and with General Robert E. Lee as the new leader of the Confederate forces in Virginia, the war would last another two and one half years.

Yorktown and Williamsburg

The Peninsula, embraced by the York and James Rivers, is a major approach to the capital of the Confederacy. Although Lincoln favored an attack on Richmond over land, he was persuaded by McClellan to use the Peninsula approach. McClellan placed his 12 divisions on ships and the first troops arrived at Ft. Monroe in March, 1862.

The Confederates, under General John Magruder, had built a line of entrenchments, spanning the Peninsula from Yorktown across to the mouth of the Warwick River, on the James. In places, the line made use of existing Revolutionary War embankments. Magruder knew the terrain and utilized it to his advantage. He had only 11,000 men to hold his entire 12 mile line. Robert E. Lee, then serving as military advisor to President Davis, initially desired to reinforce the line. General Joe Johnston wanted to abandon it and concentrate the troops in a closer defense of Richmond. President Davis became the arbitrator and backed Lee. The line was strengthened to 36,000 men with Johnston in command of the entire line. Magruder was assigned the right, Longstreet the center and D. H. Hill the left at Yorktown.

McClellan made a reconnaissance of the Yorktown line and deemed a siege preferable to direct penetration. General Fitz-John Porter was designated to be in charge of the siege operations. The rainy weather turned small streams into major barriers, but the Union troops made small advances and the minor forays gave the Union troops experience and broke the siege monotony.

Scheduling a full-scale attack for May 6, McClellan planned his major effort in the area between Yorktown and the headwaters of the Warwick River. The plan called for the Union gunboats to assist by giving supporting fire from the York River. However, around midnight of May 3, the heavy guns of the South were spiked and left behind by the withdrawing Confederates. On the morning of May 4, Yorktown was available for Union occupation.

A mile east of Williamsburg, Magruder had previously prepared another line with its main position at Fort Magruder. Johnston chose to delay the Union pursuit there.

From the afternoon of May 4, until early the next day, the two sides met in the Battle of Williamsburg, which resulted in 1,600 Confederate and 2,300 Union casualties. On the following day Johnston declined to resume the action and marched to Richmond. The Siege of Yorktown and the fight at Williamsburg undoubtedly delayed the assault on Richmond and gave the Confederates the needed time to assemble and organize the forces that were to repulse McClellan from the gates of the city.

Fort Monroe

The history of Ft. Monroe began in 1607 when the English explored the area and found a channel that put

(continued on page 4)

TOUR SCHEDULE

Variations in the schedule are sometimes necessary. Should this occur, announcements will be made as soon as possible.

Thursday May 1, 1997

Breakfast on your own each day of tour.

- 8:00 Board buses
- 9:30 Ft. Monroe, Caseate Museum and grounds
- 11:15 Lunch at Chamberlin Hotel
- 12:30 Hampton Roads Overlook
- 1:30 CW sites - Yorktown and Newport News Park
- 3:45 CW sites - Williamsburg area
- 5:30 Return to Hotel
- 6:45 Command Post
- 7:30 Dinner and program

Friday May 2, 1997

- 8:00 Board Busses
- 8:15 Fair Oaks/Seven Pines
- 9:30 Dabb's House (Lee's HQ)
- 10:45 Beaver Dam Creek
- 11:45 Lunch
- 12:45 Gaines' Mill (Watt House)
- 2:45 Museum and White House of the Confederacy
- 5:30 Return to Hotel
- 6:45 Command Post
- 7:30 Dinner and Program

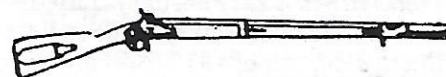
Saturday May 3, 1997

- 8:00 Board buses
- 8:30 Savage Station
- 9:30 White Oak Swamp
- 10:30 Glendale (Fraser's Farm)
- 11:30 Lunch
- 12:45 Malvern Hill
- 2:45 Harrison's Landing (Berkeley Plantation)
- 5:00 Return to hotel
- 6:00 Command Post
- 7:00 Board buses for Fun Night aboard *Annabel Lee*

Sunday May 4, 1997

- 8:00 Board buses
- 8:45 Tredegar Iron Works
- 10:00 Drewry's Bluff (Ft. Darling)
- 11:30 Return to hotel. Tour concludes with buffet lunch.

Check out time has been extended to 1:00 p.m. Please check out before then.



Armchair Generalship

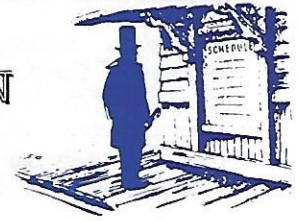
Compiled by Marshall D. Krolick



The literature of these campaigns is so vast that any bibliography must be very selective. Emphasis has been placed on more recent books and those more readily available, as well as on the "classics" of the subject.

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BULLETIN BOARD



ON THE TOUR: Please be prompt in boarding the buses at the appropriate times each morning to allow maximum time for touring. A bus marshal will be on each bus to help you. If you plan a side excursion, or for any other reason will not be on the bus, you must notify your bus marshal so that buses are not detained waiting for you.

(continued from page 3)

them in "good Comfort." In 1609 a fort was begun and named Ft. Algernourne. The earthen fort was changed over the next 119 years, but in 1749 a hurricane destroyed the fort and it was abandoned. The War of 1812 made the U.S. realize the need for an adequate coastal defense. General Simon Bernard, aide to Napoleon, designed the fort that was to be named after our 5th President, James Monroe. The construction took place over a 15 year period (1819-1834). Ft. Monroe was one of the few forts in Southern territory not captured by the Confederates during the Civil War, and served as a base of operations for the Union Army and Navy.

The Tredegar Iron Works

The Tredegar Iron Works was founded in 1838 by Colonel Joseph Reid Anderson, one of Richmond's most notable industrialists. By combining Black Heath Richmond coal with Cloverdale Virginian Iron, Anderson produced a superior metal for guns.

After a canon blew up on board the battleship *Princeton*, killing the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Navy, Congress raised the standards for guns to a level that few foundries could meet. Tredegar guns tested higher than any others in America and casting canon became its primary industry.

Two years before the Civil War, Anderson merged Tredegar with the Armory Iron Works owned by his father-in-law. Thus, the Tredegar Iron Works became the largest foundry in the South and the third largest in the nation. At one time during the Civil War, Tredegar produced 90% of the canon used by the Confederacy. The C.S.S. *Virginia*, two other ironclads, and a submarine also were fitted and armed at Tredegar. At one time, the foundry employed over 2,000 persons.

Today, three buildings survive: the small office building, the three-story pattern shop, and the cannon foundry. In 1957 the complex was purchased by the Albemarle Paper Company (now Ethyl Corporation) and in 1976 restoration of the gun foundry was completed. The complex is not open to the public. It is used for special occasions by Ethyl Corporation. We are pleased and grateful to the Ethyl Corporation for letting us include The Tredegar Iron Works on our tour.

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