

STUART'S RIDE



Passing through the Lines



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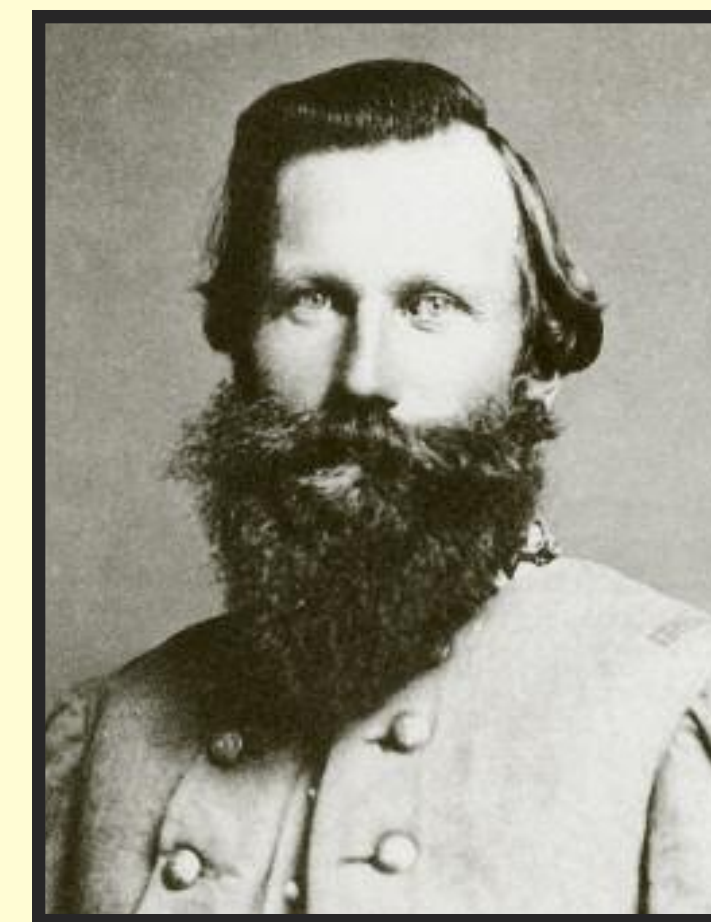
1862 PENINSULA CAMPAIGN

In May 1862, Union Gen. George B. McClellan led the Army of the Potomac up the Peninsula to the gates of Richmond. Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee assumed command of the Army of Northern Virginia in June and began planning a counterattack. On June 12, Gen. J.E.B. Stuart led 1,200 cavalymen on a daring 3-day reconnaissance and discovered that the Union right flank was unsecured. Stuart's "Ride around McClellan" gave Lee the vital information he needed to launch the offensive known as the Seven Days' Battles on June 26.

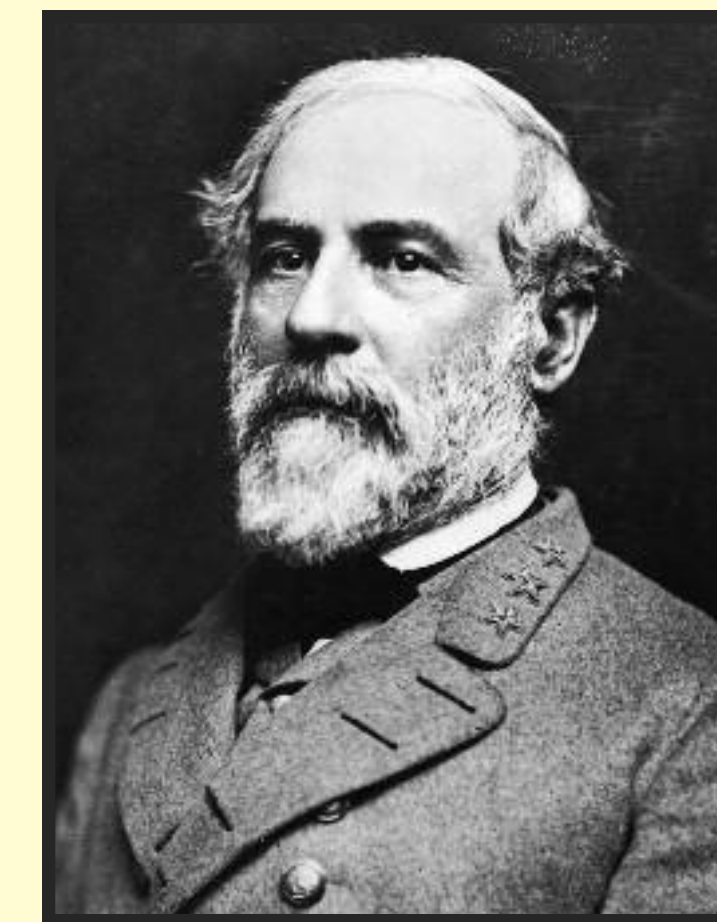
The fortifications directly in front of you are part of the outer defensive line that protected the Confederate capital of Richmond. At 5 A.M. on June 12, 1862, Confederate Gen. J.E.B. Stuart and 1,200 cavalymen, including several who knew the local roads, left their camps on the Mordecai and Young farms just behind you and passed through the line here. The newly appointed Confederate commander, Gen. Robert E. Lee, had ordered Stuart's cavalry to probe the Federal army for weaknesses and to locate the positions of the Union flanks. Riding north on the Brook Turnpike (to your right), the column passed through the outer defenses at this point to begin what became Stuart's

famed ride that circled Union Gen. George B. McClellan's army.

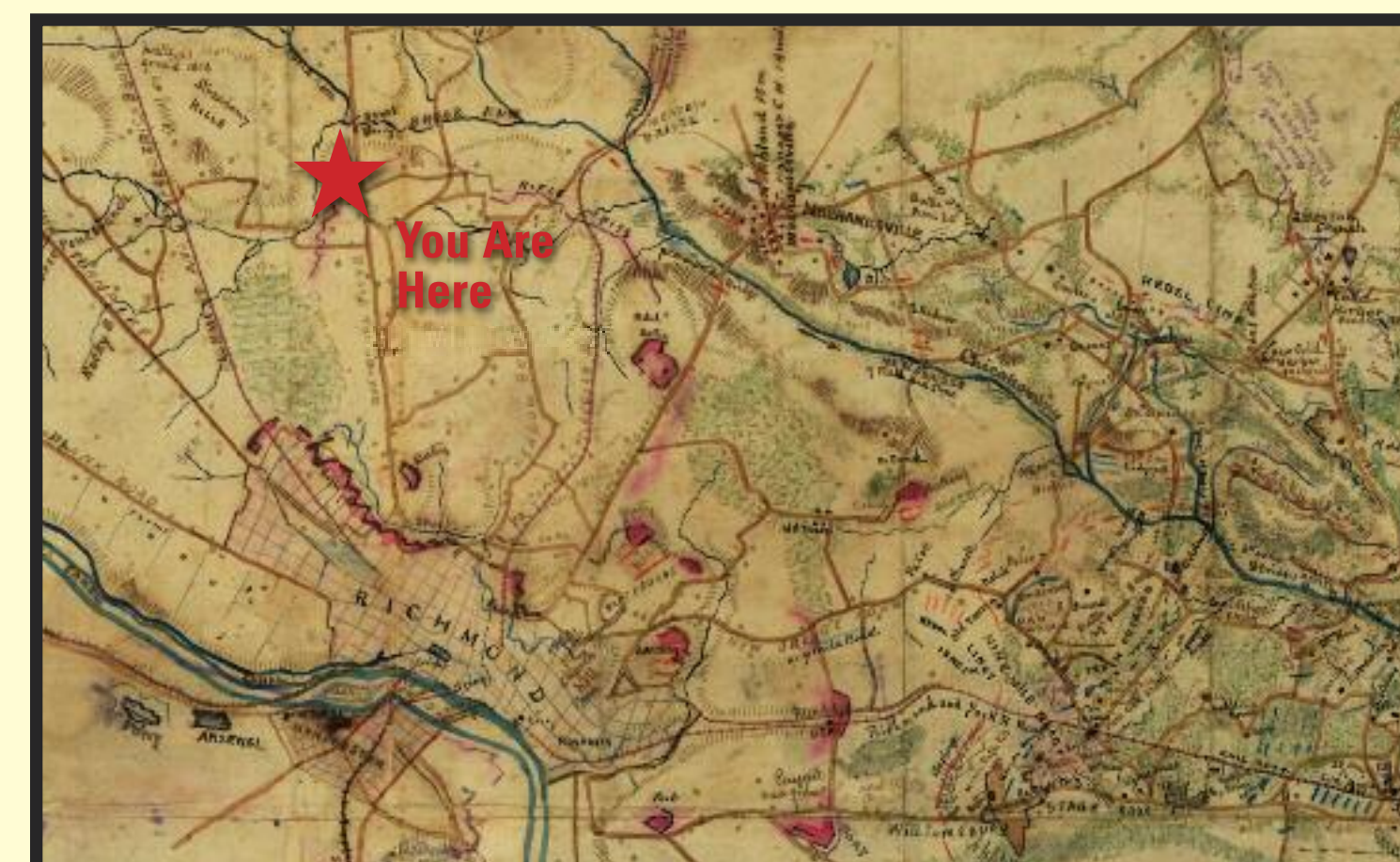
In the spring of 1862, before Lee's counterattack, Confederate engineer Maj. Walter H. Stevens strengthened Richmond's fortifications, largely with slave labor. Lee utilized the terrain and the strong earthworks to reduce the number of soldiers needed to protect the city at any given location and to free more men for combat. The lines were attacked and abandoned to the Federal army three times during the war.



Gen. J.E.B. Stuart
Courtesy Library of Congress

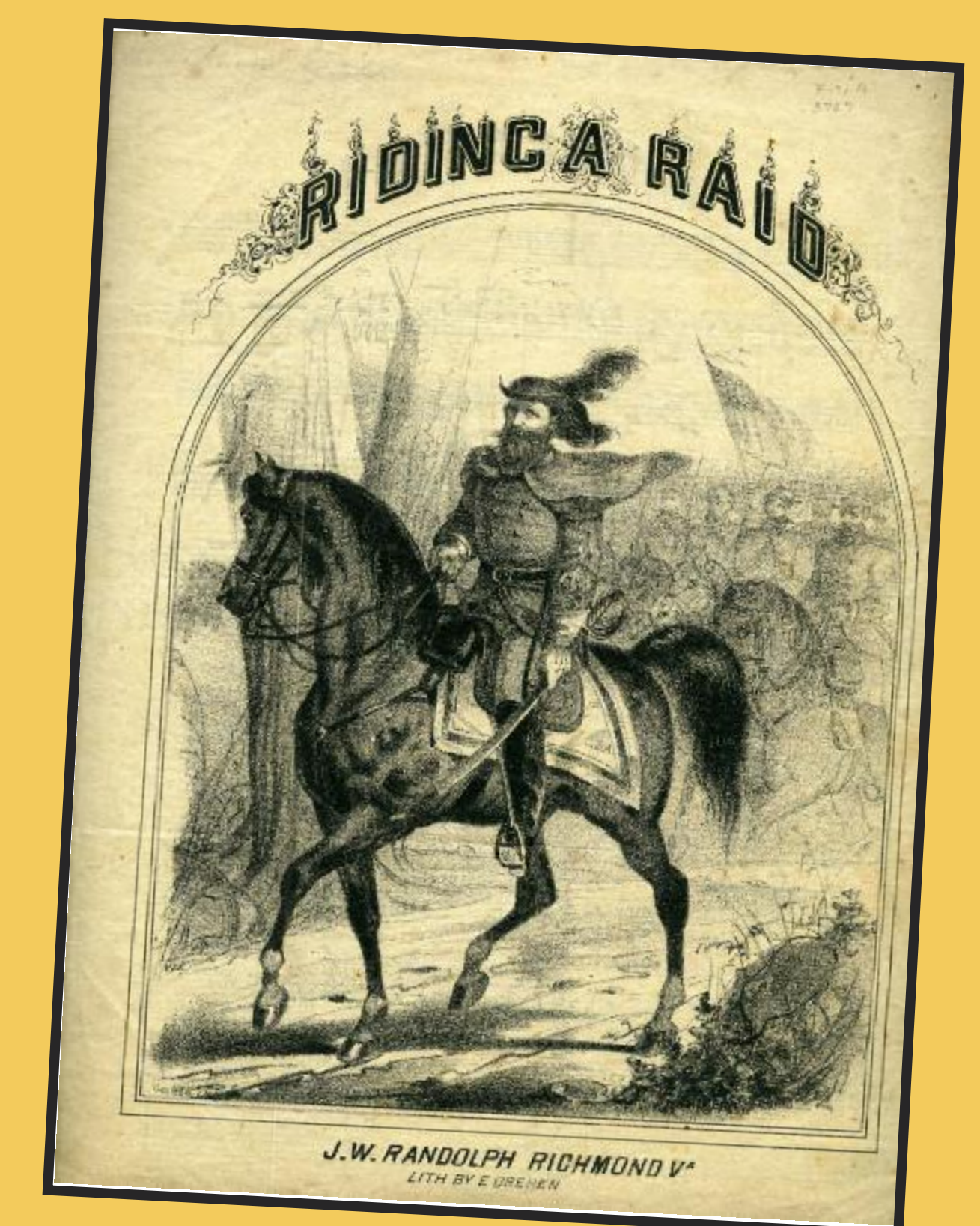


Gen. Robert E. Lee
Courtesy Library of Congress



Richmond defenses, 1862, showing Brook Road fortification – Courtesy Library of Congress

Stuart's love of music was legendary. Musicians often accompanied Stuart both on the march and in camp. Reportedly, on June 12, 1862, infantrymen watching Stuart's riders leave these outer defenses asked how long they would be gone. Quoting a popular song of the time, "Kathleen Mavourneen," Stuart responded, "It may be for years, and it may be forever." The rest of the column soon joined in. Songs written to glorify the exploits of Stuart's 1862 raids soon appeared, including "Jine the Cavalry" and "Riding a Raid." Richmond artist Ernest Crehen and publisher J. W. Randolph created the lithograph cover for the sheet music for the latter song.



Courtesy Museum of the Confederacy

