

STUART'S RIDE



Coffee at Rowland's



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1862 PENINSULA CAMPAIGN

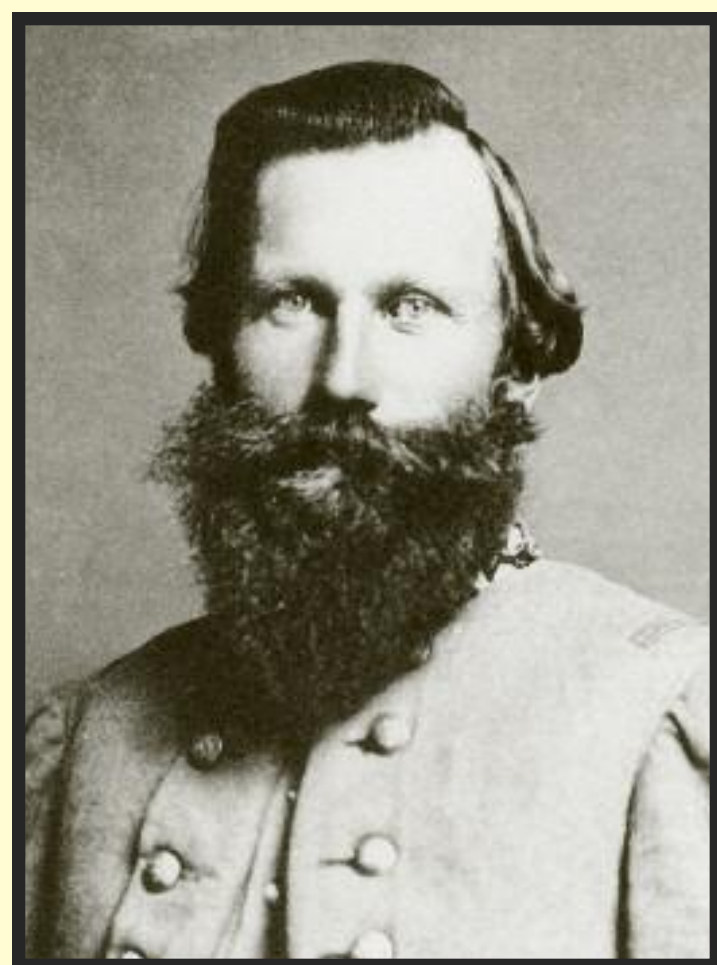
In May 1862, Union Gen. George B. McClellan led the Army of the Potomac up the Peninsula to the gates of Richmond. Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee assumed command of the Army of Northern Virginia in June and began planning a counterattack. On June 12, Gen. J.E.B. Stuart led 1,200 cavalymen on a daring 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.

In the early evening of June 14, 1862, Gen. J.E.B. Stuart and a small escort set out for Richmond from six miles east of here to report to Gen. Robert E. Lee at his Dabbs House headquarters. Stuart halted briefly here at Richard S. Rowland's house for a strong cup of coffee, having left his exhausted cavalymen at Buckland under the command of Col. Fitzhugh Lee (Gen. Lee's nephew), and then continued west. Eager to report and to get his story in the newspapers to bolster the Confederate capital's confidence, Stuart and his small party covered the last 30-mile leg of the ride before daylight, much of it across

ground still behind Union lines.

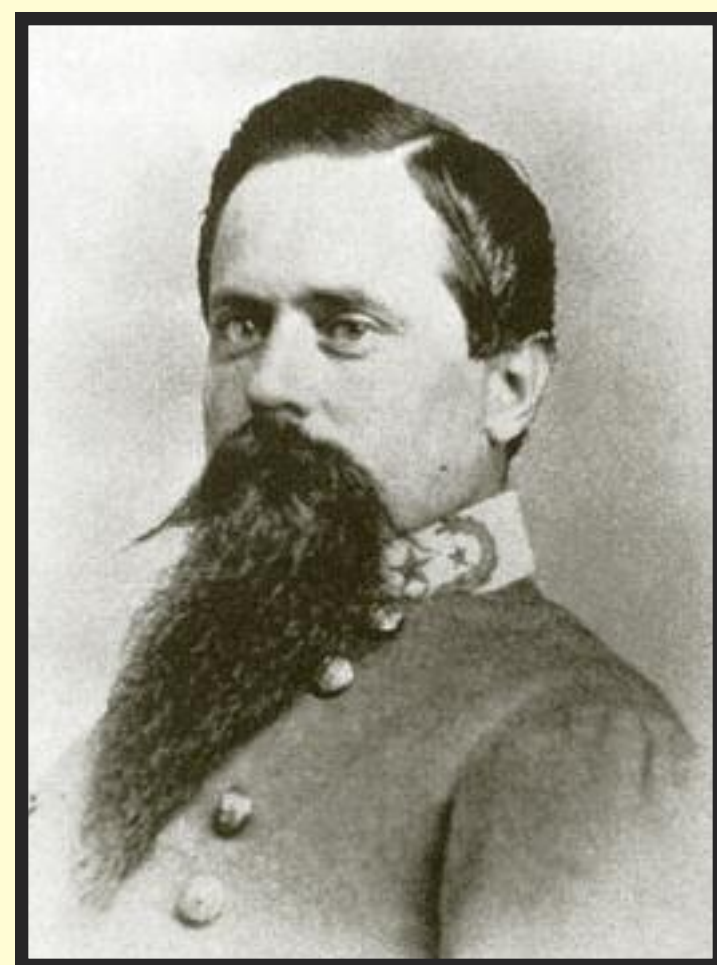
During Stuart's Ride, the Confederates captured 170 Federal prisoners, 200 wagons, and 300 horses and mules, and also burned two Federal warships. Stuart showed

Coffee, Richmonders' preferred beverage, was already becoming scarce by the time Stuart arrived at Rowland's house in June 1862. Four pounds cost \$.50 in 1860 and \$20 by 1863. By late in the war, coffee was virtually unobtainable at any price.



Gen. J.E.B. Stuart

Courtesy Library of Congress



Gen. Fitzhugh Lee

Courtesy Library of Congress



Richard S. Rowland House (new owner Mamie Drewry renamed it Edgewood in 1899) Courtesy Julian and Dot Boulware



Rowland's Mill operated through the 1930s - Courtesy Valentine Richmond History Center

"One night we heard the cavalry passing on the road up to Richmond. We heard at Mr. Rowland's next day it was General Stuart's men who had passed around McClellan's army. This was a singular situation for the Yankee army to be in. ... Stuart's raid around his [McClellan's] army should have taught him the danger of his position." — George Randolph Wood journal Courtesy Mariners' Museum

that the Federal cavalry, which failed to stop the raid, was unequal to the organization and training of Confederate cavalry at this stage in the war.

In little more than two weeks after Stuart's visit, 100,000 Union soldiers teemed over the ground from here to Harrison's Landing. Union Gen. George B. McClellan, who completed his "change of base" to the James River after the Battle of Malvern Hill on July 1, camped here with his army for the next six weeks.

