

History of John B Voyles

Relationship:

John B. Voyles & Mary Ann Moore

James Anderson Voyles & Mary E. Locke

Early B Voyles & Annie Lois Malsby

Woodrow B Voyles & Leah Fern Peterson & Woody's siblings

John B. Voiles or Voyles was born in around 1824 to Amos Voyles and Mary W. [last name uncertain], possibly in Anderson, South Carolina, where he lived in 1850. John married Mary Ann Moore before 1847. It is not clear whether his middle name was Baylor or Bailus. The 1860 census shows the name Balus and does not include the name John.

According to the records in Family Search, they had five children in Anderson, South Carolina: William Jesse (1847), James Anderson (1850), William (1852), Cynthia (1854), and Thomas (abt. 1856). If those records are accurate, the family moved to Georgia before 1857, since the next child, John B, was born in Georgia in January 1857. But those records are questionable because they show another child, Jesse Clyde, born in April 1857. The final child, Mary, was born in about 1859. At the latest, the family had moved to Georgia by 1860.

A second inconsistency with the children is that William Jesse was born in 1847 but does not appear as a child in the 1850 census. Only James A. Voyles is shown as a child in that census. The 1860 census in Georgia, however, shows William as the oldest child. The census was taken on 4 October 1850; James A. was born on 27 July 1850 and is shown at the age of 1. Finally, no child named John B is listed in the 1860 census in Georgia.

The 1850 census shows that John B. was a farmer. The notation in the 1860 census also appears to show that he was a farmer. Why the move from South Carolina to Georgia? Records pertaining directly to John B do not explain the move. My guess is that a study has been performed that would explain their migration westward during that time period in history, but that will be an item for future research. The likely reason was loss of fertility in soil in South Carolina and a search for more fertile soil in Georgia. That was a common motive for western movement during that period generally.

The next available record from the life of John B. is his service record. He enlisted in Company A, Georgia 22nd Infantry Regiment (the "Regiment") on or around August 13, 1861 for the duration of the war at Camp McDonald, also known as Big Shanty, in Cobb County, Georgia with J.A.R. Hanks, Assistant Quartermaster of the Regiment. Geographically, this makes sense because the Voyles lived in Milton County, which was formed out of Cobb and other adjacent counties in 1857. Milton County merged with Fulton County in 1931 and no longer exists. For locational reference, Atlanta is in Fulton County.

The book *Historical Sketch and Roster of the Georgia 22nd Infantry*, by John C. Rigdon, Eastern Digital Resources, 2003 ("Sketch"), provides many details about the Regiment and gives striking insights

into the life of John B and other soldiers during their service in the Confederate army. In particular, the book includes a memoir by William Brock Judkins (beginning on page 79) who served in Company G of the Regiment. Companies A and G would have had many common experiences, and John B would have shared in them. Where quoted, I have not corrected the grammar, spelling, or punctuation. But first, a summary of the Regiments overall actions in the war.

The National Park Service website, in its description of Confederate Georgia Troops, describes the Georgia 22nd Infantry Regiment as follows:

22nd Infantry Regiment was formed at Big Shanty, Georgia, in September, 1861, with men from Schley, Glascock, Bartow, Lincoln, Washington, Dawson, and Henry counties. Sent to Virginia the unit first served in the Department of the Peninsula, then was assigned to General A.R. Wright's and Sorrel's Brigade, Army of Northern Virginia. It participated in the difficult campaigns of the army from the Seven Days' Battles to Cold Harbor, endured the hardships of the Petersburg trenches south of the James River, and saw action around Appomattox. It lost 10 killed and 77 wounded at Oak Grove, had 6 killed, 32 wounded, and 18 missing at Malvern Hill, and 13 killed and 50 wounded at Second Manassas. Of the 400 engaged at Gettysburg, more than forty percent were disabled, then it sustained 25 casualties en route from Pennsylvania and 50 at Manassas Gap. On April 9, 1865, it surrendered with 9 officers and 197 men. The field officers were Colonels George H. Jones, Robert H. Jones, and Joseph Wasden; Lieutenant Colonels B.C. McCurry and J.W. Pritchett; and Major Lawrence D. Lallerstedt.¹

The Regiment remained at Big Shanty until sometime in November 1861, at which time it moved out to Virginia going first to Henrico County, which now forms the northern and western suburbs of Richmond. (Sketch, pp. 57, 86).² Judkins described the journey as follows:

We left Big Shanty about the 1st of November. The Capt. gave very stringent orders about what we should do on the way to Richmond. We had no canteens to carry water. His orders were that if any man left the [train] cars for any purpose that a ball and chain would be put on his legs, but there were no chains, and we got off whenever we got ready and the train stopped. Another order was if any man got out of rations on the way that no one should give him anything to eat the rest of the way; we all had plenty.... We stopped in Atlanta part of one day, and went where we pleased in the city. We left Atlanta in the evening, and traveled all night.... (Sketch, p. 86-87)

Judkins then described the train connections through North Carolina en route to Richmond, including a stop in Weldon, N.C. They arrived in Weldon at "about 12 noon, there they closed all the bar- rooms and eating houses against us, and doors of every sort; we could get nothing to eat or drink, and no place to stay. They would not furnish cars for us to get away from there." (Sketch, pp. 87-88) Judkins continued:

¹ <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-battle-units-detail.htm?battleUnitCode=CGA0022RI>

² For the children in my family, we lived in Chesterfield County, south of the James River from Richmond, from 1988 to late 1992. We spent much time in Henrico County with James, Samuel and Michael when they were little boys.

Col. Jones and everybody else got mad. Col. Jones told the people who controlled the cars that if they did not furnish him cars to get away from there that he would turn his regiment loose on the place and tear it up. They were not long in getting cars ready for us to get away from there to go to Petersburg....We left Weldon in the evening in some old box cars and flats; stopping in Petersburg next morning, staid there but a little while and left the same day for Richmond. We marched out to the Fair grounds outside the city north, we soon got our tents that we used at Big Shanty, Ga., and put them up, and made ourselves as comfortable as we could. The weather was getting cold. We had to have our fires out in the camp street to do our cooking, the wind would blow pretty hard, and we had nothing to burn but dry pine wood, so we dug pits in the ground about a foot deep about three feet wide and five feet long, and had to cook our grub in the pits to keep the wind from blowing our fire away. When it rained we could not cook anything, as the pits would fill with water, but they gave us, part of the time, baker's bread when we could not cook, instead of flour, but we had to cook our beef as best we could, always boiling it in camp kettles made of sheet- iron; they would hold about four gallons. They had some paroled yankee prisoners who did the baking of the bread. Some of the men had a fuss and tried to fight with each other with their big knives, they were all ordered taken away from them, but they did not get them all as some of us hid our knives. We were only at Richmond a short while, some two or three weeks, and were then ordered to Norfolk, Va. About Dec. 1st, went there by railroad, arriving there in the night, we were placed in the Norfolk armory building, and were put under guard on account of some of the men in the regiment getting drunk and cutting up. Col. Jones was very strict, too strict for his own good, for he made many enemies among his men. (Sketch, pp. 88-89)

The Regiment remained in Norfolk for only one day and night and was then transferred to the Portsmouth side of the western Branch of the Elizabeth River. (Sketch, pp. 57, 89) Judkins described Norfolk and Portsmouth as "two pretty little cities. The navy yard was walled with a brick wall, and artillery was placed all around it. We got hard-tack there to eat, that was wormy, they said it was 80 years old." (Sketch, p. 90) Hardtack was more typically associated with the Union army. The Yankees had abandoned the navy yard and apparently left hardtack behind. Hardtack was a cracker made from flour, salt, and water. The soldiers' fare generally had to be simple because people of that era did not have the same capabilities for food preservation that we enjoy today. The Civil War Preservation Trust describes hardtack this way:

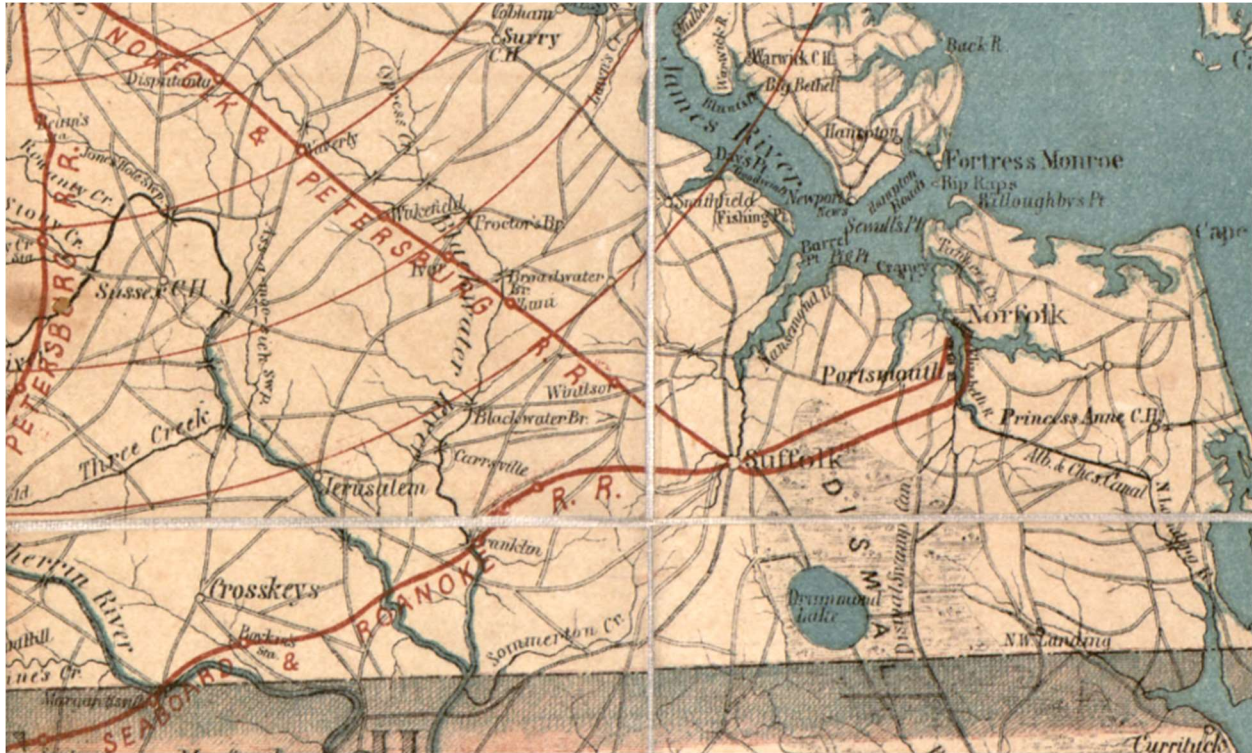
Hardtack was the Union soldiers' main source of food because it was cheap to make, easy to transport, and lasted a long time. Today, we still have hardtack that was made during the Civil War! It was extremely hard because it was baked in northern factories and stored in warehouses before it was finally shipped to soldiers on the battlefields. It was so hard many soldiers broke their teeth trying to eat it! Some of the nicknames soldiers had for hardtack were teeth-dullers, sheet-iron crackers, flour tile, ship's biscuit and hard bread. They also called it worm castles because there were often weevils and maggots in the crackers. To eat this hard bread, soldiers often broke it up with a rock or rifle butt and softened it by putting it in their coffee or heating it in grease. They had a favorite dish called Skillygallee, which was fried pork fat with crumbled hardtack.³

³ <http://www.civilwar.org/education/pdfs/civil-war-curriculum-food.pdf>

The Confederacy suffered from a shortage of flour, so a common fare among Confederate soldiers was Johnnie Cakes and Cush, which was beef and cornmeal fried in bacon grease.⁴

Judkins recalled that the Regiment moved from Portsmouth “some three miles for the city into an old field grown up in pine trees and saplings, right at the head of the Dismal Swamp; it was rather a very muddy place.” This was apparently the location of Camp Blanchard. “The winter was very mild—had but one little snow.” (Sketch, pp. 90, 92)

Map of Tidewater Area of Virginia



Norfolk and Portsmouth are on the lower portion of this map. In late 1861 and early 1862, the two cities were under Confederate control. Union General McClellan began the Peninsula Campaign from Fort Monroe to the north of Norfolk and Portsmouth.

The Union abandoned the Norfolk Navy Yard to the Confederacy after Virginia seceded and demanded all federal property be turned over. The Union burned the yard and burned and scuttled the iron clad *USS Merrimac*. The Union navy took refuge at Fort Monroe at the mouth of Hampton Roads. Fort Monroe was also the launching point of Union General George McClellan’s Peninsula Campaign. During the spring of 1862, Confederate shipbuilders were able to rebuild the iron clad, which they renamed the *CSS Virginia*. In March 1862, the *CSS Virginia* and the *USS Monitor* engaged the battle of Hampton Roads, which resulted in a stalemate because of the thick iron on each ship. Judkins witnessed the battle; we can only speculate as to whether John B was present as well. It is unlikely that John B witnessed the subsequent engagement of the two ships, which occurred during a visit by President

⁴ *Id.*

Abraham Lincoln to Fort Monroe in May 1862. The Union brought the *USS Monitor* back into action in an attempt to take Norfolk by sea. The attempt was repulsed primarily due to the action by the *CSS Virginia*. Two days later, however, the Union was able to take Norfolk by land forces. By that time, the Regiment had departed for Suffolk County, Virginia. (Sketch, pp. 57, 97)

In what was probably late April 1862, the Regiment was ordered to march to Suffolk. The distance from Portsmouth is about 18 miles. Judkins described the first portion of the march as follows: "Knowing nothing about marching, we started like we were to get there now and by night. We were scattered for ten miles, never kept any order at all of march, but we got to Suffolk that evening and night." (Sketch, pp. 97-98) Judkin's account of that march doesn't quite make sense because his company (not the whole Regiment, and not John B) had been previously dispatched south and presumably marched. But we will take it at face value: a poorly executed one day march.

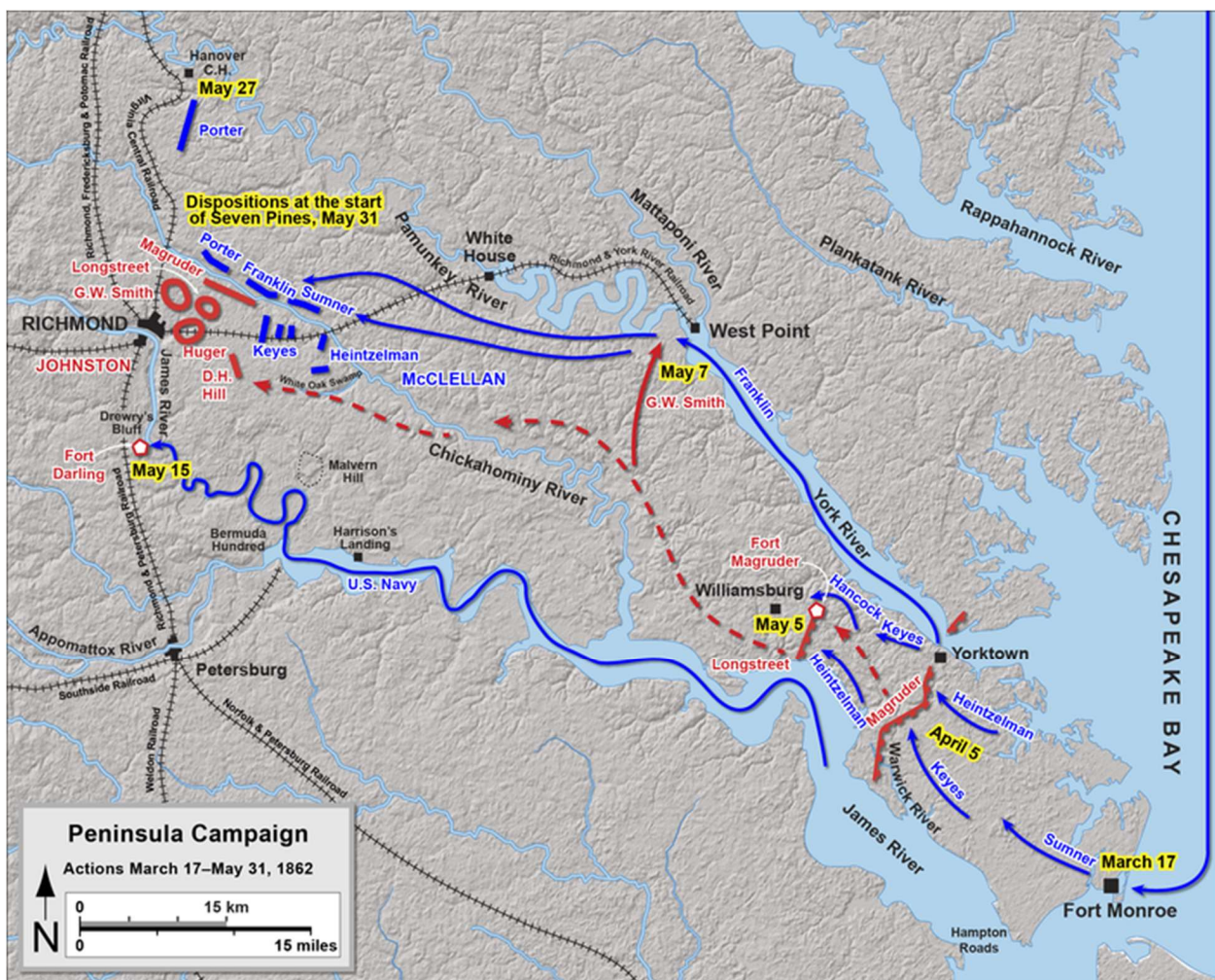
He continued: "We only remained in Suffolk a day or two, and started for St. Petersburg; had better order on that march." The distance of this march was approximately 60 miles, perhaps more depending upon the route. "Part of the way was on a plank road, call the Jerusalem plank road" (present day US Route 301). "Our feet got very sore. It rained nearly all of the time, and the road got very muddy. We had to sleep on the ground, which when pretty hard with us, having just left good Winter quarters. Our beds were made of pine tops and leaves. Got to Peters- burg about the 10th of May, and remained there only a short while, perhaps a week or ten days, and then marched on to Richmond, Va.," which would have been another 25 miles. In Richmond, the Regiment was "stationed at Capitol square one day and night, which was the 30th of May...." (Sketch, p. 98)

An extended series of battles began on May 31, 1862, beginning at Seven Pines. Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston hoped to overwhelm two Federal Corps he believed were isolated south of the Chickahominy River. Judkins reported that the Regiment was

ordered out to the Chickahominy swamp (about 7 miles) or Seven Pines battlefield, but arrived too late to be in the engagement of the 31st of May (which was Saturday) by the negligence of Major Gen. Huger; he proved a traitor; he held back his division (to which we belonged) without orders. We lay in the woods from about 4 o'clock in the afternoon until Saturday morning, and then we marched over to the battlefield expecting an engagement. It rained all Saturday night Sunday and Sunday night, but we did not get into any fight that day. We marched into the swamp that night, and tried to form a hollow square, but got tangled up in the bamboo brairs, bushes, grapevines and mud-holes, of which there was but one, and that was everywhere. We lost our bearings, and the next morning we found our picket line on the wrong side of the camp (the night was very dark) with our backs to the enemy, and our pickets between us and Richmond. But we soon got right and when daylight came, and moved back and went into camp, behind breastworks in a very wet and muddy place, without any tents. Seven Pines was the first place where we saw the first dead men killed in battle. We had very bad water to drink there; we would dig a hold [sic] in the ground about two feet deep, and the water would run in very muddy, or a blue color, and the flies which were very plentiful from filth and dead animals on the battle- field, would settle on the banks of the water holes and suck until they burst open and fall in the water. We had to drink it for we could get no better. I sweetened all I drank with syrup, and then only drank a little once a day. We had to use pine bough for our bedding to keep our blankets out of the mud and water, under any kind of shelter we could get; some used blankets, some fly tents, and some pine boughs for shelter. It rained a great deal while we were

there, which made it more disagreeable, and rations were poorly cooked and scarce. We wished for some of the good rations we had left at camp Blanchard near Portsmouth, Va., for we left about 150 pounds of bacon, and a lot of smoked beef, two or three barrels of flour, and other good things that we could not carry. What we got in the swamp was cooked back at the wagon camp.... We got a little flour bread so hard and tough that we could scarcely eat it, and some fried bacon. It was hard living; bread without shortening or soda, made up with a little bacon grease and cold water. Some of the boys took their round hoecake of bread, and set them up on the breastworks, saying they were so hard that they would turn minnie balls. (Sketch pp. 98-100)

The Battle of Seven Pines

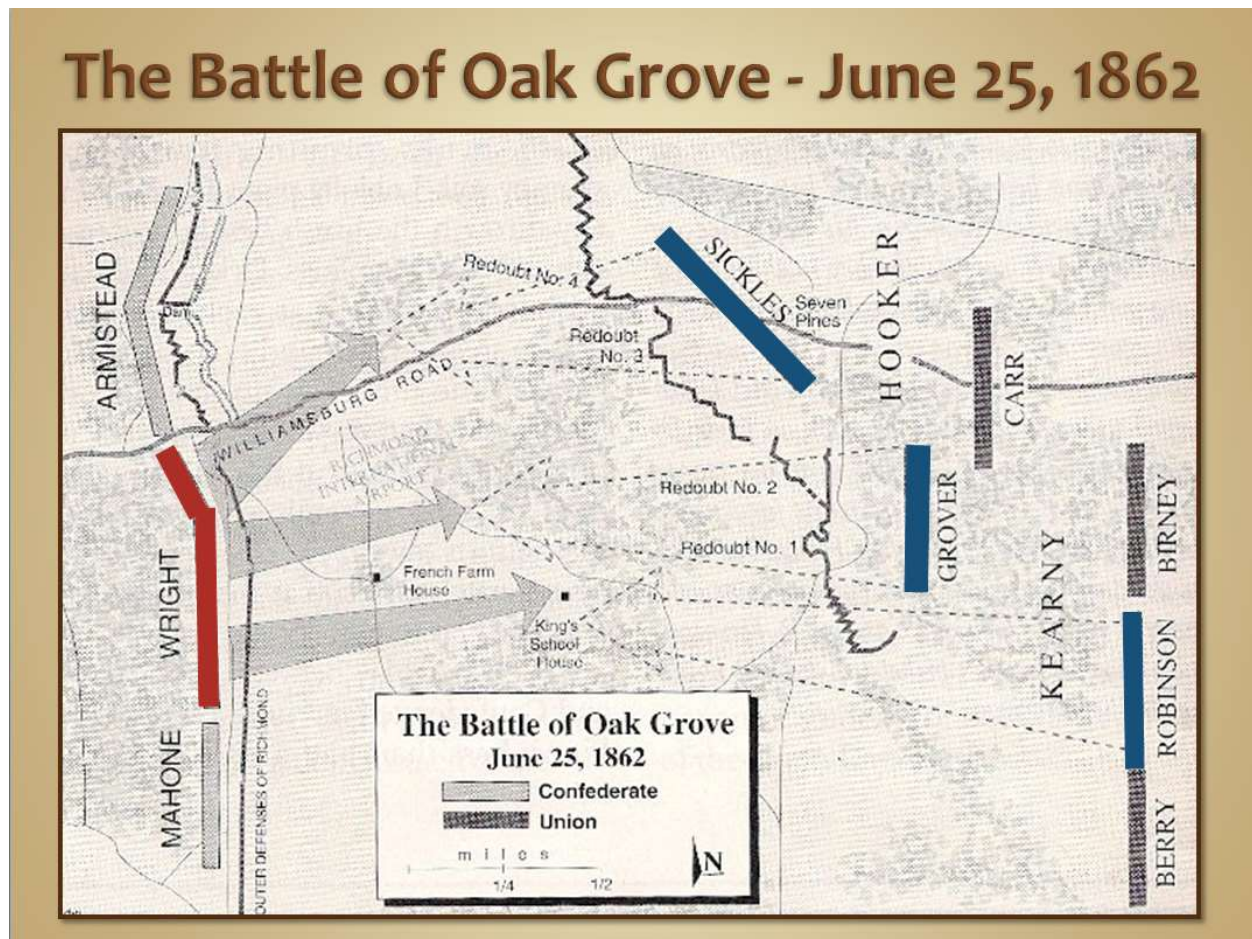


The Battle of Seven Pines was fought on May 31st and June 1st, 1862. The Georgia 22 Infantry Regiment was close but not engaged and lived with the aftermath. This was the closest General George McClellan's Army of the Potomac got to Richmond. The Army of Potomac would be forced to retreat back down the Peninsula at the conclusion of the Seven Days Battle, which commenced on June 25, 1862 not far from Seven Pines. John B would have been in General Huger's line in the map, but of course we know that the Regiment did not engage either day.

Map by Hal Jespersen, www.cwmaps.com, CC BY 3.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=17710500>

The Confederates under General Johnston were successful on the first day in driving back the Federal troops and inflicting heavy casualties. On the second day, June 1, the Confederates renewed their assault, but the Union had reinforced, and the battle was essentially a draw. It was the largest battle in the Eastern Theatre of the war up to that time, second only to Shiloh in total casualties. General Johnston was wounded in action on May 31, which led to the appointment of Robert E. Lee over what eventually became known as the Army of Northern Virginia.

The Battle of Oak Grove



The Georgia 22nd Infantry Regiment was part of Wright's Brigade during this battle. The counterattack by Wright's four regiments stopped the Union's attempt to get close enough to Richmond to use siege guns and bring the war to an early conclusion.

The Regiment was next engaged the Seven Days Battle, beginning on June 25, 1862. The battle was the culmination of Union General George McClellan's Peninsula Campaign. General Lee drove McClellan's Army of the Potomac away from Richmond and back down the Peninsula in retreat. The

Regiment was engaged on several occasions during the Seven Days Battle. The first was during the Battle of Oak Grove on June 25 in Henrico County. McClellan intended to bring his siege guns within the range of Richmond. The Union army attacked at the head of White Oak Swamp but were repulsed by the Confederate troops. Confederate General Huger launched a counter attack with Wright's Brigade, to which the Regiment was attached. Judkins described the action:

On the 25th of June 1862, the Yankees made an advance on us on the old 7 Pines battlefield. We were ordered out at double quick to meet them; we advanced about five hundred yards, met them and fought for about two hours, when the 1st Louisiana regiment charged their position on the left flank and routed them out. The Louisiana regiment lost a good many men in the charge, for the yankees were in a ditch. Our whole brigade of four regiments, the First Louisiana, 3rd, 4th, and 22nd Georgia, about 3000 men fought a whole yankee corps of about thirty thousand, said to be the best body of men they had. We repulsed them with heavy loss, there being about one thousand two hundred dead Yankees fell in front of the 4th Georgia. (Sketch pp. 100-101)

A contributing factor to the Confederate success was that some of the Georgians (I have not figured out which ones) were wearing colorful "Zouave" uniforms, modeled after those worn the by the French colonial army, particularly Algerian recruits. The Union believed that it alone had such uniforms and therefore hesitated to shoot, giving Wright's brigade a momentary but significant advantage until the Zouaves opened fire and the Union realized they were Confederates. Judkins correctly described the battle as a success for the Confederates, although his account overstated the casualties. Combined casualties for both sides amounted to around 1000. Through all its efforts, the Union gained only 600 yards, not enough to derail Lee from his planned attack to the north and west the next day at Beaver Dam Creek north of the Chickahominy River near Mechanicsville. That battle, on June 26th, was the beginning of the Union's retreat down the Peninsula.

The Regiment was not engaged on the June 26 at Beaver Dam Creek. Rather, it remained near Seven Pines and "made a charge the next day, and re-took our old picket line. No one was hurt, although some volleys were fired at us." The minor skirmishing continued on June 28. "We re-took the original picket line, doing a good deal of skirmishing. We were in danger, as someone on the picket line would fire at something and then the yankee lines and our own near lines would both fire before the advance pickets could get in, which was against the rules." (Sketch, p. 101)

The Regiment kept rear guard for Lee's army until July 1 at Malvern Hill. McClellan's Army of the Potomac was retreating to Harrison's Landing on the James River. McClellan was able to obtain the high ground at Malvern Hill and end Lee's attempts to cut off the Union retreat. The superior and well-placed Union artillery was the deciding force of the battle. Errors by the Confederate commanders resulted in infantry charges by several regiments across several hundred open yards without cover by Confederate artillery, resulting in severe casualties. Judkins related:

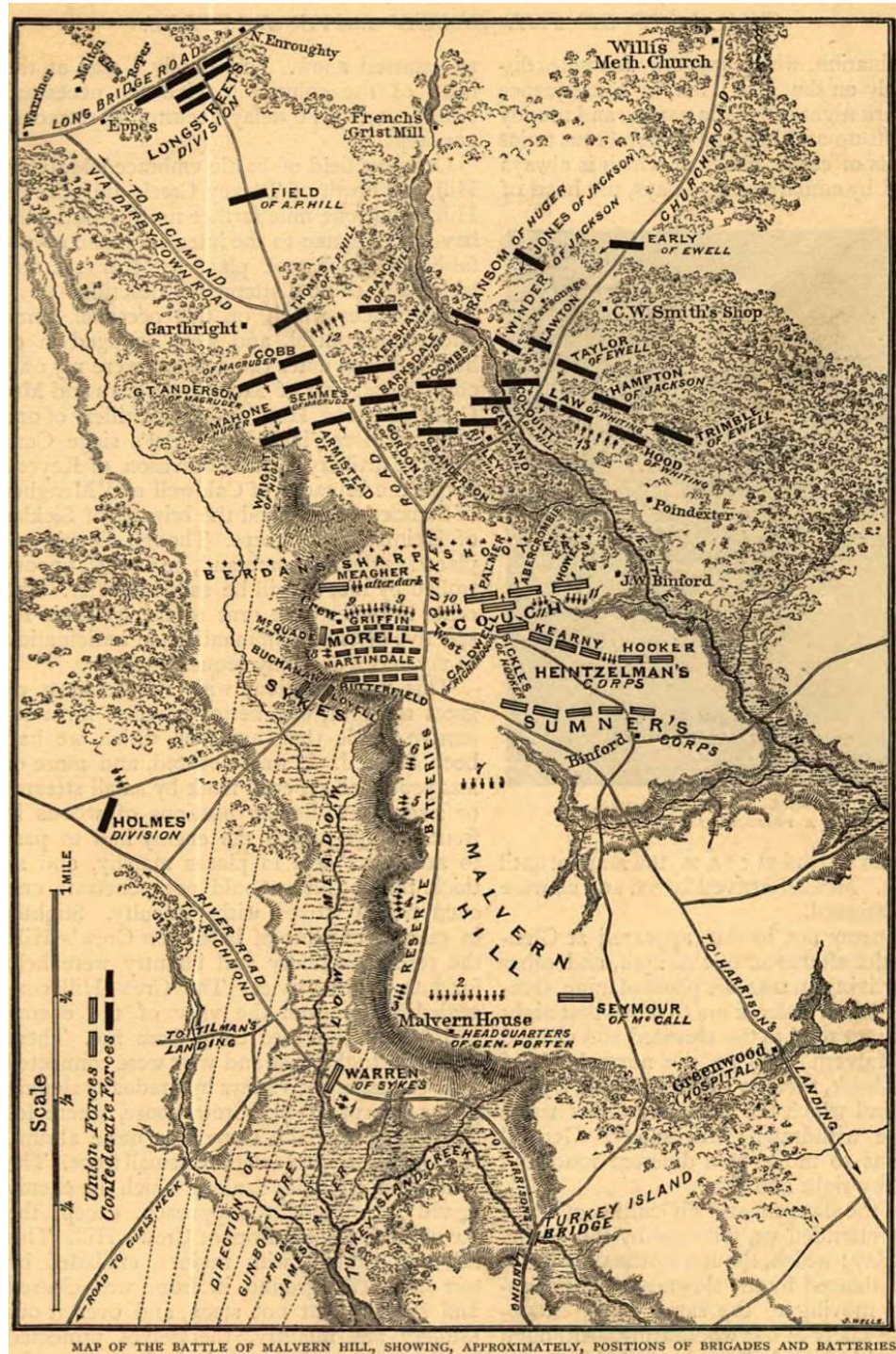
On the 1st day of July, about 8 O'clock P.M., We made a charge to try and take a battery on Malvern Hill; it was some 800 yards from where we were, but we could do nothing with it; the company and regiment going about 400 yards under a tremendous artillery fire, and had to fall back to the starting point in the hollow, We did not lose any men out of the company, but several were killed and wounded in other companies of the regiment. The enemy had a very strong position on the hill, with forty cannon, and one gatling gun. No army could have taken their position by charging, for their batteries were upon a high hill, and we were on a hill in front

of them, but not as high as the one they were on, with a hollow and a plain between us. They had three lines of infantry in that hollow or plain, so we would have had to drive their infantry, gone down a hill, across the plain, and up a hill to where their batteries were, and would have been subject to an infantry fire and shells from their guns. The shells were bursting in the hollow, the rear of us or where we started from, they went over us into the hill behind us. The roar of the bursting shells was deafening, and they were cutting off the tops of trees and limbs. It was a foolish thing to make the charge at all; our company did not make but one charge, but there were a great many men killed and wounded of the regiment and other regiments. We got into no more engagements in that campaign. (Sketch, pp. 103-104)

General Wright rallied the brigade, especially the 3rd Georgia, and started into another charge, saying that the battery must be taken, but it was never taken. (Sketch, pp. 105-106)

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The Battle of Malvern Hill



General Wright's Brigade, along with the Regiment and John B was located in the front of the Confederate lines next to General Armistead's Brigade on the far left in the map.

Although Malvern Hill was a defeat for the Confederates, particularly in terms of the number of casualties, the overall Seven Days Battle was seen as a major success by General Lee, since his Army of Northern Virginia had blunted and forced back McClellan's Peninsula Campaign. Lee was heralded as a great general; McClellan was criticized as an ineffective general, usually absent from the battlefield.

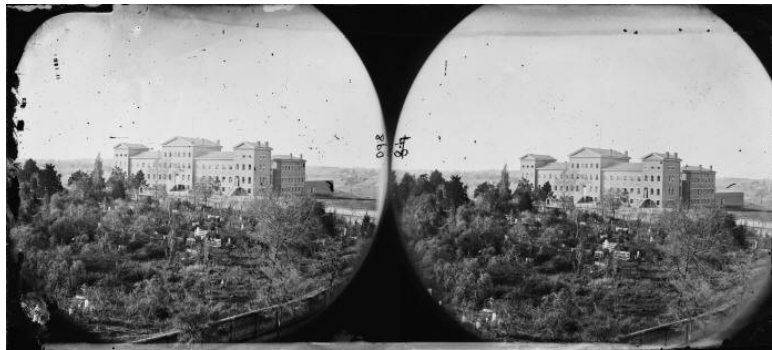
We do not currently have the means to know what role John B. played in the Battle of Oak Grove or the Battle of Malvern Hill. The record shows that he was last paid on either April or June 30, 1862, so we know he it was likely that he present the day before Malvern Hill and therefore was likely to have fought in that battle. Sometime in July, he left the Regiment. While the Regiment would go on to fight in many engagements, including Second Manassas, Gettysburg, and Petersburg, and would eventually surrender with the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Courthouse, the war ended for John B sometime in July. His last pay record for July 1862 reports that he was absent, having been "Sent to General Hospital Richmond while on march."

There is information in his service record that he died while crossing the Potomac on June 24, 1863, which means he would have gone on to fight in other battles. That record does not appear to be accurate because the affidavit of his widow dated July 17, 1863 in support of her claim for pay and other benefits says he died at home in Milton County Georgia on July 3, 1863. She would have known.

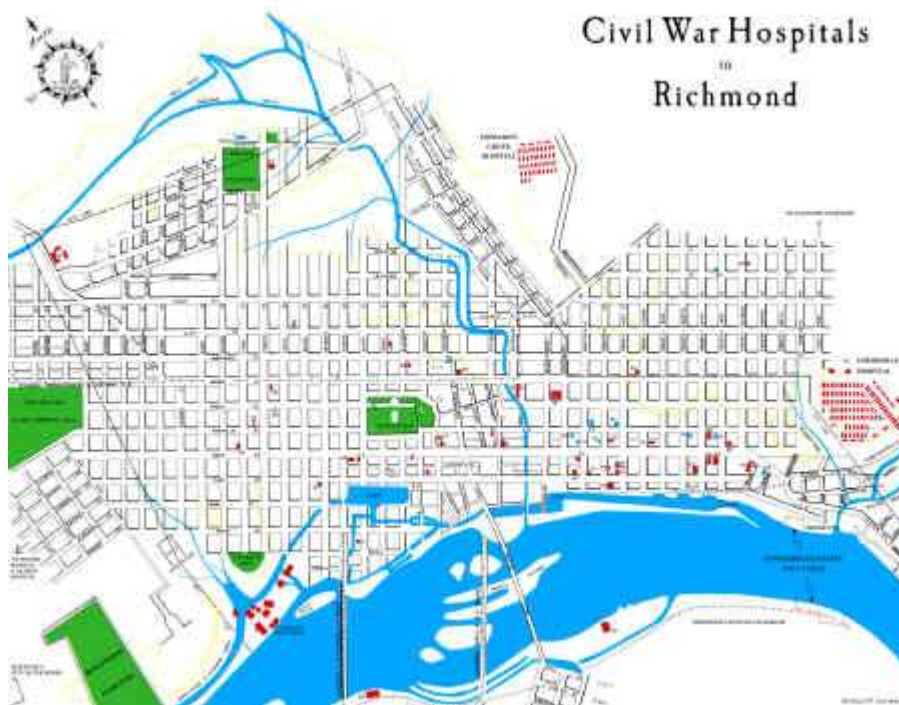
The Confederates set up several "general hospitals" in Richmond, but only one that was known as "The General Hospital." This is probably the hospital to which John B was sent because it was not until August 1862 that the Confederates re-designated all existing hospitals into General Hospitals with numbers. There were, however, three "Georgia" hospitals within the city of Richmond, and he could have gone to one of those or any number others. If he was taken to The General Hospital, here is its basic description:

The General Hospital, City Home Hospital, Alms House Hospital. Built shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War by the City of Richmond as a poor house. Rented by the City Council to the Confederate authorities in June 1861 as a military hospital. Continued in use as such until December 1864 when it was reclaimed by the City for rental to the Virginia Military Institute as their temporary location. Suffered heavy exterior damage when the nearby powder magazine was exploded on evacuation night. Taken over by Federal authorities and again used by them as a poor house. Returned to the City in December 1865. It was used for many years as the City Alms House. Still in use and owned by the City of Richmond. Earliest use by the Confederacy was for wounded Union prisoners. Soon became the first of the large General Hospitals. Capacity about 500 patients. Dr. Charles Bell Gibson, surgeon-in-charge. Location: northside of Hospital Street, between 2nd and 4th Streets, opposite Shockoe Cemetery. (from Confederate Military Hospitals in Richmond by Robert W. Wait, Jr., Official Publication #22 Richmond Civil War Centennial committee, Richmond, Virginia 1964.)

Richmond General Hospital



Civil War Hospitals in Richmond



Richmond had approximately 54 wartime hospitals represented by the red and blue squares on the map above. The General Hospital is the tiny blue square on the upper left portion of the map, just above the green square, which is Shockoe Cemetery.⁵

⁵ All of the information regarding the hospitals to this point is from *Civil War Richmond* at <http://www.mdgorman.com/index.html>

The conditions in Civil War hospitals improved over time, but medical practices remained quite medieval. Amputation was the typical method for dealing with wounds to limbs and were accomplished without sanitary instruments. Illnesses included typhoid fever, dysentery, pneumonia, mumps, measles, tuberculosis and other maladies that often in our time can be prevented by vaccination or cured through modern antibiotics. Camps were frequently putrid and unsanitary, and men arrived there already suffering from fierce fighting and a poor diet.⁶

The military records do not indicate why John B was sent to the hospital in June or July 1862; it does not specify whether he was wounded or ill. However, we know from his widow's affidavit that he died of "disease." We do not know how long John B was in the hospital in Richmond. All we really know is that at some point he was well enough, or alternatively insisted upon, returning to his home in Milton County, Georgia, where he died on July 3, 1863.

On November 14, 1863, the Confederate army approved payment to his widow Mary \$109.65 commutation for clothing and a \$50.00 bounty.

As with any history of this nature, so many interesting questions remain, and suggestions and additional research are welcome.

⁶ Dixon, Byina, *Civil War Medicine*, http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/civil-war-medicine/civil-war-medicine.html?gclid=CjwKEAjwiru9BRDwyKmR08L3iS0SJABN8T4vcTbbhfi3Xx_sC5HEALaBOaUWl7E7ZkjGn187f3MWuRoCt6Tw_wcB?referrer=https://www.google.com/, 2013.