

MULBERRY ISLAND AND THE CIVIL WAR

April 1861 - May 1862

by

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Fort Eustis, Virginia
March 1968

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For assistance provided in the preparation of this paper, I am indebted to the staffs of the Virginia State Library, Earl Gregg Swem Library of the College of William and Mary, Fort Eustis Library, Colonial National Park, Mariners Museum and Virginia Historical Society.

Individuals who have been particularly helpful in providing advice or materials include Mr. Fritz Haselberger, Williamsburg; Mr. W. Thomas Smith, Bon Air; Mr. Charles A. Levey, Richmond; and Mr. George DeShazor and Mrs. Alma Miner, Newport News, Virginia.

FOREWORD

In isolating and studying one facet of an operation, such as, in this case, the part played by Mulberry Island in the Peninsular Campaign, there is the inherent danger of emphasizing facts pertinent to that single subject to the neglect of material which does not immediately bear upon the subject but is important to the overall operation. While the author has no intention of exaggerating the importance of the Mulberry Island fortifications, as a result of circumstances explained in this paper, the right flank of the first line of defense on the Peninsula has been largely ignored in histories of the Peninsular Campaign. It is hoped that the information presented here will shed some light on the prelude of that campaign as acted out in the lower Peninsula.

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I. INTRODUCTION:

Mulberry Island, Virginia, is today a part of the U. S. Army Transportation Center and Fort Eustis. In actuality it is not an island; it is a small peninsula, bounded by the Warwick and James Rivers, that is part of what is commonly referred to as the Lower Peninsula formed by the York and James Rivers. Here, in the Cradle of the Republic, the economy was based upon the products of the land and the waters surrounding it. The nation grew up here and then grew away as the lands became depleted. The call and promise of greater things to the West gradually lured the population away, and long before the clatter and rumble of civil strife sounded across the Old Dominion, the days of the large plantation were passing. The chatter of the field hand was replaced with that of the squirrel as fallow field turned to silent scrub and honeysuckle.

The ever important factor of geography which had so influenced the Peninsula's history from the beginning of time was once again to guide its destiny. After two forces in common glory and divided purpose collided at Sumter, war councils in Richmond and Washington increasingly studied their maps of the Peninsula.

The overall strategy of the civil conflict is outside the scope of this paper; however, it became apparent that the primary objective of the Federal forces was the capture of the Confederate capital--Richmond. The promise of quick victory only 100 tantalizing miles from Washington was an undeniable lure. The two obvious approaches to Richmond were quickly recognized

by both the attackers and the defenders. The first was a strong frontal attack over land involving massive forces and logistical support. This approach was less attractive after Bull Run than was the second alternative. An army could be landed at Federally-held Fort Monroe in Hampton and then marched up the Peninsula to Richmond, only 80 miles distant. With superior naval forces the Federals would also pose a tremendous threat by controlling the tidal rivers leading from the Chesapeake Bay like water highways into the heart of the State. The James River, in particular, was most valuable because it could carry the enemy to the very wharves of the capital city and could easily provide logistical support for troops advancing along its banks up the Peninsula.

The second alternative was the more appealing, and so geography and destiny cast the elements of war into the Peninsular Campaign. With the Federal forces already lodged firmly at the tip of the Peninsula, the eyes of the Confederate defenders could not fail to focus upon a strategic piece of real estate--Mulberry Island. Soon the quiet of its marshy woodland would be shattered with the sing of timber axes and the rattle of entrenching tools.

II. PRELUDE (23 APRIL - 21 AUGUST 1861):

Knowing full well the likelihood of an attempt upon the Peninsula and the probability of its success as well as the great importance of protecting the capital, one of General Robert E. Lee's first acts upon being appointed commander of the Virginia forces on 23 April 1861 was to direct Colonel Andrew Talcott of the Engineers to "proceed up James River to the vicinity of Burwells Bay,¹ and select the most suitable point, which in

your judgment, should be fortified in order to prevent the ascent of the river by the enemy."²

Colonel (soon General) John Bankhead Magruder³ resigned his commission in the U. S. Army on 20 April and went to Richmond where he was commissioned Colonel of Virginia Volunteers and then sent on 21 May to take command of operations on the Peninsula with headquarters at Yorktown.⁴ Magruder, sometimes called "Prince John," was well known for his dramatic flair and ability in amateur theatricals, a talent which was to be very useful in the spring of 1862. He set at once to his task of building defenses and began an almost unceasing paper bombardment of headquarters at Richmond, requesting more men and guns.

Later Magruder was to write of the difficulties of the first days of his new command:

When I took command there were no works on the James River below Jamestown, no fortifications at Williamsburg, Yorktown, or Gloucester Point, with the exception of one gun at Yorktown and perhaps two at Gloucester Point. I had to defend a Peninsula 90 miles in length and some 10 miles in width, inclosed between two navigable rivers, terminated by fortresses impregnable as long as the enemy commanded the waters. My force was less than 3,000 men, the enemy never less than 12,000 and sometimes as high as 25,000 and always within a day's march of us. I had neither adjutant, quartermaster, commissary, nor any staff officer whatever, and an army unfamiliar with the simplest military duties.

I devoted a day or two to necessary arrangements for subsisting the army, and, calling on the sheriff of the county as a guide, made a tour on horseback of the lower part of the Peninsula, in order to get some knowledge of the country. Seeing at a glance that three broad rivers could not be defended without fortifications, and that these never could be built if the enemy knew our weakness and want of preparation, I determined to display a portion of my small force in his immediate presence, and forthwith selected Bethel as a place at which a small force could best give him battle should he advance.

Returning to Yorktown, I called upon Mr. R. D. Lee, who had mills on that stream, to show me the line of Warwick River, which rises near Yorktown, flows across the county, and enters James River a little below Mulberry Point, where there is now /1 Feb 1862/ a fort. Having made this exploration, I determined to adopt this line to Mulberry Point as the true line of defense whenever its right flank, of James River, could be protected by water batteries.⁵

Virginia passed the Ordinance of Secession on 23 May 1861 and on 27 May a Union force of 2,000 men from Fort Monroe occupied Newport News and established Camp Butler. On the same day the Warwick Beauregards, a local volunteer company, was mustered into service by Colonel Benjamin S. Ewell, president of the College of William and Mary.

(Ninety residents of Warwick County, many from Mulberry Island, joined the Warwick Beauregards, which later became Company H of the Thirty-Second Virginia Infantry Regiment. Originally the company was commanded by Dr. H. H. Curtis of End View, who died in 1881 and is buried on Mulberry Island. The unit participated in the first skirmish of the war, Big Bethel, on 10 June 1861, fought at Lee's Mill in the opening engagement of the Peninsular Campaign the next spring, and then left Warwick County with the retreating army. During its 4-year service the company participated in 14 battles and engagements, including Williamsburg, Seven Pines, Malvern Hill, Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, and Cold Harbor, and was present at the surrender at Appomattox Courthouse, 9 April 1865. In addition to the 90 men who served with this unit, 41 other Warwick men served in other Confederate military organizations.)⁶

Early in June, in preparation for the transfer of the Virginia forces to the Confederacy, Lee visited the Peninsula and wrote his wife on 9 June

that he had just returned to Richmond "from a visit to the batteries and troops on James and York Rivers, etc., where I was some days."⁷

By 9 July 1861, probably as a result of the survey made by Colonel Talcott as requested by General Lee, consideration was being given to the construction of a water-battery on Mulberry Island. General Magruder, now the victor of Big Bethel, then wrote Richmond of his difficulties in fortifying Gloucester, Yorktown, and Williamsburg.

The work contemplated on Mulberry Island, if that point is geographically situated as represented, could be of greatest importance in defending this place Williamsburg and Richmond. If the enemy was forced by such a work to march up the Peninsula, there are several lines which would at once be fortified where he would meet with very rough treatment or be repulsed. I think he would be entirely defeated. At present, and without this work, these lines can easily be turned and landing made above them on James River. If it be decided to fortify at Mulberry Island, no time should be lost, and I would like to be informed of it, in order that I might give my attention to the lines spoken of.⁸

What Magruder was saying here, of course, is that it would be useless to prepare defensive earthworks across the Peninsula unless the James River was closed to the Federals since they could simply sail up the river and land behind them. The implication is also made that the water-battery on Mulberry Island would not be built by Magruder's forces but that the defensive lines for the Peninsula would be.

The next day General Lee appointed Captain George N. Hollins, Confederate Navy, to be in charge of the naval defenses of the James River with the mission of supervising the general naval defenses of the river and serving the water-batteries. (From the beginning the water-batteries were designed for the defense of the rivers. They were to be fortified

with naval guns and commanded by naval officers; the army was to provide the troops necessary to protect the batteries.⁹⁾ Hollins was directed "to push forward the armaments as fast as practicable, and to continue the examination of the river from Day's Point to Mulberry Point, with a view of ascertaining the best method of commanding its navigation."¹⁰ He was to report upon the advantages of establishing batteries at Mulberry Point and at the point across the river, Harden's Bluff, and of closing the Swash Channel by sinking loaded rafts or boats in it. If he thought batteries should be erected at these two points, he was to give his opinion on the "propriety" of moving the guns then mounted at Fort Powhatan, 20 miles below City Point (now Hopewell) to the proposed works.¹¹

(The Swash Channel referred to is the secondary channel in the James which runs parallel to Mulberry Island, while the main channel follows the southern bend in the river called Burwells Bay. As discussed below, throughout the year the need for blocking the Swash Channel was a frequent topic of correspondence, for, with it obstructed, shipping would have to use the main channel and then be forced under the heavy guns of Harden's Bluff on the south side of the river.)

On 16 July 1861 in response to a letter written by Magruder concerning the Peninsula's defenses, Lee wrote, ". . . the construction of the battery at Day's Point [on the south side of the river opposite Land's End] and the projected batteries at Mulberry Point, and the one opposite [Harden's Bluff] will . . . diminish the danger of an attempt upon Williamsburg."¹²

Four days later Magruder learned that the decision had been made to erect works of defense on Mulberry Island. He then wrote at length to headquarters in Richmond concerning the need for more guns and pointed out, quite correctly, the danger that the work at Mulberry Island could be taken by a land attack.

. . . I beg leave to remark that whilst I was extremely glad to hear that works are to be erected on Mulberry Island and opposite, as they will be obstacles to the enemy in any attempt to ascend the river, yet that any work erected on this side of the river could be carried by the enemy, either by storm or by siege on the land side, and then that their ships could pass up, Mulberry Island (so-called) is not an island, but a peninsula, and therefore any work on it, however strong, can be taken The work at Mulberry Island is very important and ought at once to be built, as well as the one opposite, but that one on the Island (Mulberry) can always be taken, as I said before. The spot /the tip of Mulberry Island Point/ where the work is to be erected--and that is the proper spot--is cut off from the mainland by an impassable marsh, but this marsh is very near where the work is to be, and the ground on the land side of the marsh commands the work. From this side at a distance of half a mile the enemy could erect batteries of heavy guns and perhaps make our work untenable; at all events much time would be required to make it secure against a land attack, 13

III. AFTER BULL RUN (22 JULY - 26 AUGUST 1861):

The battle of First Manassas (Bull Run) took place on 21 July in the northern part of the State and ended in a complete rout for the Federal forces. At this point, both sides realized that the war would be a real one. From the time of this engagement, the largest part of the Confederate Army in Virginia remained in the north under Johnston, facing McClellan and McDowell, waiting for the Union Army to make the next move. At the same time, it was realized that if the Federal forces advanced up the Peninsula, Magruder would have to delay them until Johnston's Army of

Northern Virginia could be moved from Centreville to reinforce him. Thus, Magruder's task was to construct defensive positions on the Peninsula in anticipation of such an attack and the need for delaying action.

The weeks following Manassas brought stepped-up activity on the Peninsula. By 14 August 1861 work had begun on the first fortification on Mulberry Island which was to be a water-battery and, as such, was to be commanded by naval officers. Magruder, still worried about the battery being taken from the land side, requested the sinking of 30 canal boats loaded with sand or stone across the mouth of the Warwick River between Young's Farm (Denbigh) point and Land's End at the tip of Mulberry Island. In stating his case, Magruder insisted that in one hour the enemy could land 20,000 men at the mouth of the Warwick River and take the fortification going up on Mulberry Island Point in the rear. He felt that if boats were sunk at the mouth of the Warwick River, where the channel was 400 feet wide, it would help secure the new work.¹⁴

The first fortification started on the Island, then, was the small water-battery located on the tip of Mulberry Island Point near the farm owned by the Crafford family. In the official records it is always designated as the Mulberry Island Point Battery or the Mulberry Point Battery. This work was to mount heavy artillery such as columbiads and was designed by the Engineers and built under their supervision. However, James P. Hopkins of Mulberry Island seems to have been the supervisor of the construction labor, for the roster of the Warwick Beauregards mentioned earlier states that he was the "superintendent of the building" of the Mulberry Island Point Battery. In his personal journal, W. C. Miner,

also a resident of Mulberry Island and a member of the Warwick Beauregards, states that he had agreed to pay Mr. Hopkins \$200 for the year 1861, but,

. . . the war coming on he joined the Warwick Company sometime before the 27 May. On that day the Company was organized. Before the organization his time was much taken up with drills, etc. He was detailed . . . to superintend the working on the batteries. His time was so much from the duties I agreed to pay him for and . . . being a man of strict attention to his work he was not willing that I should pay him for unavoidable neglect of duty.¹⁵

Sometime in early August, Colonel James Gregory Hodges arrived with his Fourteenth Virginia Infantry Regiment at Mulberry Island Point to defend the fortification being built there. (Colonel Hodges, a physician who had served as Mayor of Portsmouth, Virginia, was elected commander of a volunteer unit raised there and then reassigned to the Fourteenth Virginia. The regiment had been stationed at Jamestown on 31 May 1861 and then ordered to New Market (near Newport News) by Magruder on 1 August. On 7 August 1861, the unit was directed to set fire to Hampton which it did "with great reluctance." The Fourteenth was then sent to Mulberry Island. Hodges commanded the regiment until his death in Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg on 3 July 1863.¹⁶)

The Swash Channel near Mulberry Island continued to present a problem, and on 26 August Lieutenant Catesby ap. R. Jones (later to command the Merrimac in its famous engagement with the Monitor as discussed below) was directed to take six canal boats filled with granite and sand then at Mulberry Island and sink them in the Swash Channel "at or near the point where the others were sunk, but which failed to accomplish the obstruction of the channel as intended."¹⁷ (See figure 1.)

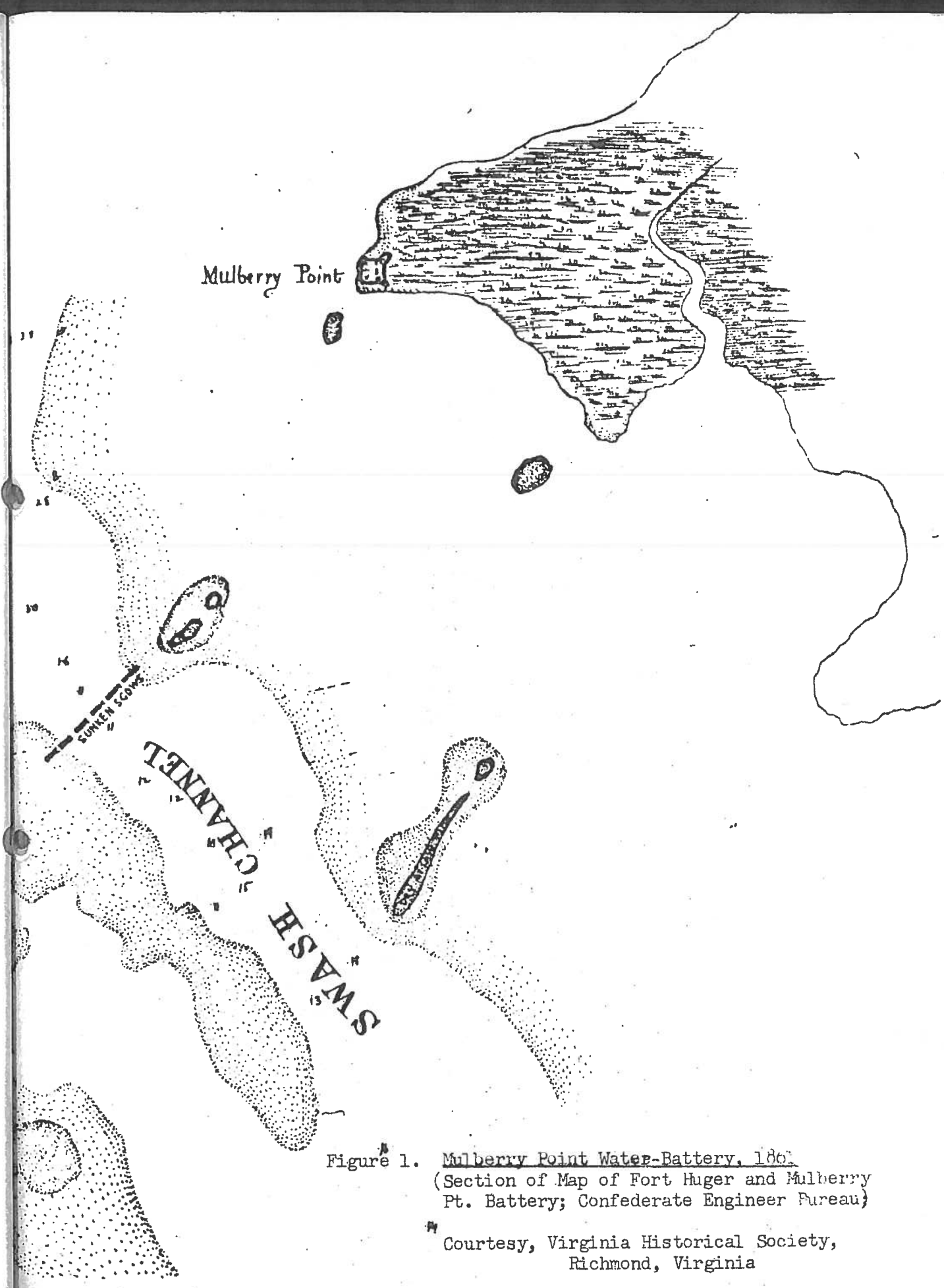


Figure 1. Mulberry Point Water-Battery, 1861
(Section of Map of Fort Huger and Mulberry
Pt. Battery; Confederate Engineer Bureau)

Courtesy, Virginia Historical Society,
Richmond, Virginia

IV. A FALSE ALARM (27 AUGUST - 2 OCTOBER 1861):

On 27 August Magruder, apparently expecting a feint by Federal forces from Newport News or Fort Monroe, directed Colonel Hodges to move his regiment from Mulberry Island Point to Mrs. Curtis' at Land's End at the tip of Mulberry Island and to erect a fortification (the second to be built on Mulberry Island) to command the channel of the Warwick and the landing there. Difficulties of the fledgling army are clearly illustrated in Hodges' orders. He was told:

The artillery start from here [Yorktown] this morning. Should you need more transportation, please inform me how much is the least you can do with. If you are not able to move the whole of your command with what is sent, make two trips. The General desires that you will throw up works at once to command the channel and the landing. You will urge it forward. You are directed in case the enemy pass you either by Warwick Courthouse or otherwise, to fall back to Mulberry Island, but if they approach up James River and attempt to pass up Warwick River, or to make a landing on this side, you will defend your position to the utmost. Four wagons will be sent loaded with provisions to Mrs. Curtis' farm this morning and six empty wagons to transport your command. You will please report what provisions you have on hand, and whether they can be sent by water to you; also report whether you have sufficient spades to make the work.¹⁸

At the same time the commanders of the river defenses were notified "to hold the batteries in readiness for instant action."¹⁹

Lack of guns was another continuing problem and Magruder's Army of the Peninsula was constantly begging and in some cases borrowing armament for the new fortifications. For instance, in September, Magruder learned of two 32-pounder guns at Mulberry Point and was told by Captain William B. Fitzgerald, then in charge there, that he had taken them from the Teaser, a river tug of the Confederate Navy, in order to have something to fire

with while the work was being prepared for heavy guns. Magruder, rather arbitrarily, had the guns transferred to the new fortification at Land's End.²⁰ (These guns were probably naval 32-pounders, short lightweight pieces of relatively short range.)

On 5 September, while Hodges was still at Land's End, he received a message from Magruder in Williamsburg that there were several enemy gunboats and steamers at Newport News and in Hampton Roads, "probably with the intention of going up James River."²¹ Magruder gave Hodges a series of actions to take, depending upon what the enemy might do. If the enemy did try to go up the James River, Hodges was to "immediately take position with his whole force near the work at Mulberry Point, near Crawford's Crawford's House, to defend it and prevent a landing so far as it may be in your power."²² He was to leave a party of dragoons at Land's End to keep him informed of any troops landing on Warwick River while he was at Mulberry Island Point. If enemy troops landed on the Warwick River side of Mulberry Island, Hodges was to defend the causeway and other land approaches to the Mulberry Island Point Battery. On the other hand, if he were attacked by ships seeking to enter the Warwick River before he could move from Land's End, Hodges was to defend the position if the fortifications there were strong enough. If not, he was to

. . . pack what baggage you can in the wagons with you, unless they be required for the sick and wounded, strike your tents and pack them up in the woods, withdraw your force under cover of the trees and remain there until the enemy passes up the river. Then you will take position, as before ordered, on Crawford's Crawford's farm, and make arrangements to defend the causeway across the marsh and other approaches leading to that place.²³

On the same day Magruder wrote, more briefly, to Callendar St. George Noland, formerly commanding at Jamestown and by September in command of the battery at Mulberry Point, of the expected attack. Noland was told, "Everything must be got and kept in perfect readiness at Mulberry Point."²⁴

The expected attack did not take place.

Magruder notified headquarters in Richmond on 7 September that additional Union reinforcements had arrived in Newport News and that the enemy parties were coming farther up the Peninsula than usual. He outlined the precautions he had taken, including the placing of one regiment and a battalion of two companies at Mulberry Island Point covering the fortifications then being erected on the James River. These units were Colonel Hodges' Fourteenth Virginia Regiment and Major J. M. Patton's two infantry companies which had been stationed at Jamestown but were required at Mulberry Island Point as a covering force. (This was apparently an unorganized field command which included the Charles City Southern Guards (Company A), and the Greensville Guard (Company B). It was later reported as Major George M. Waddill's battalion and as the Fifth Battalion. When the battalion was disbanded, its members went to Company K, Fifty-Third Regiment.²⁵ It is probable that this is the battalion reported later as "Noland's Battalion.") At the same time, Magruder reported that earthworks had been erected at the mouth of the Warwick for heavy guns but that he had no guns of that description to place in them. He still hoped to be able to sink canal boats loaded with stone across the mouth of the Warwick,

but, he pointed out, that these would be "of no avail unless the embankments which I have caused to be thrown up on the shores there can be furnished with heavy guns."²⁶ Later that day Magruder learned that Jones had sunk the canal boats in the Swash Channel of the James as ordered, making at least the third time this had been done (fig. 1), and he directed him to sink the rest of them and any others sent down from Richmond across the mouth of the Warwick River "with the least possible delay."²⁷

As additional protection to the work going up on Mulberry Island Point, Magruder asked that Captain John R. Tucker, Confederate Navy, place his steamer of war, C.S.S. Patrick Henry, to assist in the defense.²⁸ The James River Squadron, under the command of Captain Tucker, was to work closely with the Army of the Peninsula, particularly with the units stationed at Mulberry Island Point and at Land's End, throughout the rest of 1861 and the spring of 1862. Eventually a telegraph wire was strung from Mulberry Island Point to Lee Hall, Yorktown, and Williamsburg, and commanders of the little vessels used the telegraph to report to Magruder.

On 9 September, still taking precautions against a possible enemy attack, Magruder wrote Lieutenant Colonel Henry Forno, Fifth Louisiana Infantry at Warwick Courthouse, that if the enemy should land on Mulberry Island Point, Forno should march his whole force down Mulberry Island road to take the enemy in the rear, "permitting him first to engage with Colonel Hodges before attacking him with all your force with the greatest vigor."²⁹

On 22 September 1861, apparently with the immediate threat of attack past, at Magruder's direction Hodges moved his regiment from the Mulberry Island Point Battery back to the Curtis farm at Land's End where he had been

stationed before. He was also ordered to move his two 42-pounder carronades to the mouth of the Warwick River to defend the entrance to the river and Mulberry Island.³⁰ (The 42-pounder carronade was a relatively light piece which fired a round ball 7 inches in diameter weighing approximately 42 pounds. It had a range of about 1,800 yards and a maximum accurate range of about 900 yards. Hodges' weapons were probably mounted on naval gun trucks.)

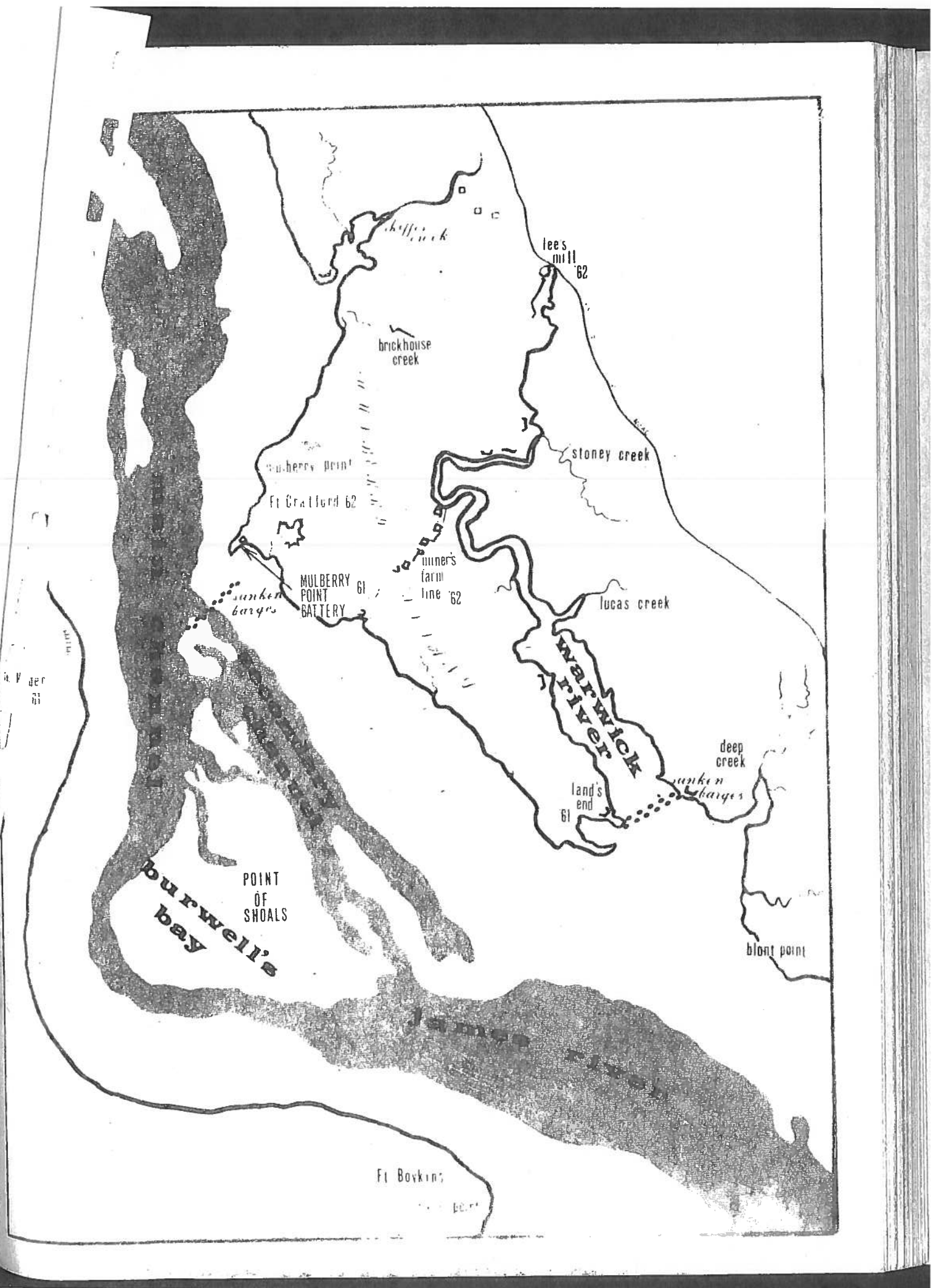
V. WINTER QUARTERS (3 OCTOBER 1861 - 7 JANUARY 1862):

Magruder reorganized his forces and posted them for the winter in the entrenchments across the Peninsula on 3 October. The Fourteenth Virginia Infantry Regiment under Colonel Hodges remained at Land's End and the two companies making up the infantry battalion discussed above remained to garrison the works at Mulberry Point. The troops were to be "huttet for the winter under the direction of the commanding officers of regiments and detachments; the work to be performed by details from each command."³¹

By 4 October, almost two months after Magruder's first request, Lieutenant Junius A. DeLagnel of the Navy was ordered from Jamestown Island to Mulberry Point to get canal boats and sink them at the mouth of the Warwick River.³² This had been accomplished by 17 October. (See figure 2.)

On 8 October in two dispatches to Richmond, Magruder requested seven artillery companies to man the batteries already constructed or being constructed; one of these companies would be stationed at Mulberry Point.³³

His second letter requested additional guns, stating,



chiff creek

lee's mill 62

brickhouse creek

stoney creek

mulberry point

Ft Cratford 62

miner's farm line 62

lucas creek

MULBERRY POINT BATTERY 61
sunken barges

warwick river

deep creek

land's end 61

sunken barges

burwell's bay

POINT OF SHOALS

blont point

Ft Boykins

It is a matter of great moment that the defenses at Harden's Bluff and Mulberry Point should be as strong as possible. The work at Mulberry Point can contain two more guns The river is better commanded at that point than at any other below Jamestown; and if it can be rendered safe there, troops as well as field guns could be used below.³⁴

It is not known what kind of guns or how many he then had at Mulberry Island Point, but judging from a Confederate map (figure 1), the water-battery contained four guns, with space for six, which is compatible with his statement that the battery could "contain two more guns."

On 17 October Magruder wrote the Secretary of War concerning Mulberry Island and the two guns from Teaser which he had moved from Mulberry Island Point to Land's End around the first of September. He explained at some length his plans and operations to that point:

The lowest fort on James River, on the left bank, is Mulberry Island Point; opposite is Harden's Bluff fort, both strong on the water fronts. By a glance at the map it will be seen that if the enemy can land at the mouth of Warwick River, he can march to Mulberry Island Point and take the fort there in rear. The troops on my line from the mouth of Deep Creek, which is the same as that of Warwick River, to Harwood's Mill, at the head of Poquoson River, cannot go to the succor of Mulberry Island Point without making a march of some 20 miles around the head of Warwick River; besides, the right flank of my own line is below Warwick River. That flank must be secured and the fort at Mulberry Island Point, both in full sight of the enemy at Newport News, now at least 8,000 strong. I have therefore caused one regiment (500 strong) to take post at Land's End, on the right, at the mouth of Warwick River, and have thrown up an intrenchment there, but these guns of the Teaser are necessary for the armament of this intrenchment. I have caused rifle-pits to be made to protect the men, and sunk canal boats across the mouth of the river.³⁵

He added that Lieutenant Robert D. Minor of the Navy had offered to exchange a heavy 32-pounder for the two light 32-pounders and Magruder felt such an exchange would be beneficial. This was reasonable since the heavy

32-pounder could take a heavier charge than the light 32-pounder and had a range of approximately 2,000 yards. Such a gun would be ideal for Land's End but unsatisfactory for a small vessel such as the Teaser. Magruder suggested that the Teaser be sent to Mulberry Island Point with the heavy gun and land it there; he would leave orders with Colonel Hodges (commanding the troops at Land's End) to send for it and put it up and then send the two light guns over to the fort at Mulberry Island Point for the Teaser to pick up.³⁶

In October 1861, the Mulberry Island Point battery, practically at sea level, was almost entirely destroyed by a hurricane, with most of the damage probably being caused by the high tides which frequently accompany such a storm. Reporting on this latest calamity, Magruder wrote,

The work is in sight of the enemy. Negroes have deserted from it and informed the enemy of the situation. They will attack it, I presume, as soon as they can make preparations, and, if they carry it, as they probably will, in its present state, a great disaster may happen.³⁷

By the end of November, Magruder, in addition to his problems caused by the hurricane and shortages of units and guns, was having difficulties caused by the loss of his engineers and former naval officers who had been unable to obtain commissions in the Confederate States Army. He cited the case of Captain Callendar St. George Holand, formerly of the U. S. Navy, the commander of the water-battery at Mulberry Island who had resigned as he could not obtain the rank of major in the provisional or volunteer service and who "would have been ranked by two captains who had been under him, and, who, from the nature of the service, cannot know the

duties with which Captain Noland is familiar.³⁸ Magruder asked that Captain Noland be given the rank of major and that all of the engineers employed on the Peninsula be commissioned. These included "M. Derrick, engineer, now at Mulberry Island Point."³⁹

Throughout December the C.S.S. Patrick Henry and the C.S.S. Jamestown remained in the river between the Mulberry Point and the Harden's Bluff batteries. On 4 January 1862 Magruder requested that the Teaser join the other vessels at that location.⁴⁰

In December 1861 there were 3 officers and 82 men present at Mulberry Island Point. In addition, the Fourteenth and detachments of the Third Company of the Richmond Howitzer Battalion were camped for the winter at Land's End. From a diary of a member of that organization, it can be seen that life for the artillery was not intolerable in that winter of 1861:

. . . Our Third and Fourth Detachments are camped for the winter at Land's End, under the command of Lieutenant John M. West, and supported by the Fourteenth Virginia Infantry, Colonel Hodges commanding. The third gun is stationed immediately on the James River where the Warwick empties into it, and the fourth gun one-and-a-half miles up the Warwick River, supported by Company "K," Fourteenth Virginia, Captain Claiborne of Halifax County, Va., commanding. We have comfortable log cabins, built by our own men, with glass windows, plank floors, kitchen attached, etc., and our cuisine bears favorable comparison with home fare. Time does not hang very heavily on my hands, for I am now drilling a company of infantry from Halifax County, Captain Edward Young's, in artillery tactics, previous to their making a change into that branch of the service. Then we get up an occasional game of ball, or chess, or an old hare hunt, or send reformed Bob to the York River after oysters, we preferring the flavor of York River oysters to those of Warwick River.

Fortunately we have managed to scrape up quite a goodly number of books, and being in close communication with Richmond we hear from friends daily.

Soon the spring campaign will open, and then farewell to the quiet pleasures of "Rebel Hall," farewell to the old messmates, for many changes will take place upon the reorganization of our

army during the spring. No more winters during the war will be spent as comfortably and carelessly as this. Soon it will be a struggle for life, and God only knows how it will all end.

My health has but little improved, but I had rather die in the army than live out.⁴¹

VI. THE TEMPO INCREASES (8 JANUARY - 7 MARCH 1862):

On 8 January the enemy sounded the Swash Channel off Mulberry Island and again Magruder thought an attempt might be able to land between Land's End and Mulberry Island and carry the little water-battery from the rear. However, Mr. Noland, who apparently had been persuaded to remain at his post in spite of the problems of rank, was still in command at Mulberry Island Point and Magruder felt that with the assistance of the vessels of the James River Squadron and with the fort under Noland's command, such an attack would be unsuccessful.⁴² Magruder asked again that Mr. Noland be commissioned, but this time he suggested that he be made a lieutenant colonel instead of a major as he had previously recommended. By 16 January Noland received his commission as a lieutenant colonel.

Magruder also reported in January that 30 Negroes were working at Mulberry Island; 200 were needed.⁴³

On 19 January 1862, Colonel Hill Carter, commanding at Jamestown, protested to Magruder a proposal to move his guns to Mulberry Island.

. . . In my humble judgment it would be bad policy to abandon the defenses at Jamestown and concentrate upon the one point at Mulberry Island, although if there be not guns enough for all the batteries, I admit the policy of giving preference to Mulberry Point and Harden's Bluff If Jamestown is to be abandoned, I can only hope that Yorktown and Mulberry Island will be made impregnable, else the Peninsula will be in danger, and perhaps Virginia overrun.⁴⁴

On 31 January, the fourth false alarm since the fortifications were erected, Magruder telegraphed his forces that a fleet of 63 Federal vessels

had been seen off Fort Monroe, including 8 gunboats and 2 sloops of war with 22 guns each. He ordered, "Have everything put on the alert. Put on the alert the officers in charge [at] Land's End, Mulberry Point, and ships of war in James River, and Hardy's [Harden's] Bluff.⁴⁵ If vessels were seen coming up the James River, a gun was to be fired from Land's End and repeated 5 minutes afterwards.⁴⁶

The next day Magruder reported to Richmond that the lower defenses on the James were exceedingly weak and ought to be strengthened without delay. He suggested building another battery at Mulberry Point and said that the Mulberry Island Point Battery "should be made impregnable on the land side which could be done easily,"⁴⁷ certainly a change of opinion from the previous summer. However, this recommendation was accepted and work began on a large covering work on high ground about a half mile from the water battery. This fortification was built around the Crafford farm house mentioned earlier and its purpose was to protect the water-battery from a land attack. It was usually referred to in the official records as the "covering work at Mulberry Island" and sometimes as Mulberry Island Fort. After the war it came to be known locally as Fort Crafford, for the family on whose land it was built.

An abstract return for February shows 2 officers and 76 men present at Mulberry Point and 36 officers and 555 men at Land's End with 4 pieces of artillery, presumably that of the Richmond Howitzers.⁴⁸

When Commander Tucker, captain of the C.S.S. Patrick Henry was asked in February about the possibility and practicability of obstructing the James River to close it to enemy vessels, he pointed out several places

where this could be done. However, he reported, "The depth of water near Mulberry Island precludes the possibility of piling; the water will not permit it."⁴⁹

By late February another area of Mulberry Island had been fortified in addition to the water-battery on the Point, the entrenchments at Land's End, the one-gun battery on the Warwick River, and the covering work begun at Crafford's Farm. The new line was the area known locally as Miner's Farm (owned by W. C. Miner mentioned earlier) and included a series of fortifications running from the Warwick River across Mulberry Island to the James River approximately a mile below the Mulberry Island Point Battery and a half-mile below Crafford's Farm. (See figure 2.)

(Actually, the new work then going up to protect the water-battery was part of this line but was deliberately separated from the Miner's Farm line so that troops stationed on the line could withdraw to the large fortification to withstand a siege, if necessary.)

The detachments of the Richmond Howitzers and the entire Fourteenth Virginia Infantry Regiment fell back to the left flank of Mulberry Island, or 5 miles above Land's End to the Miner's Farm line late in February.

The diarist recorded,

Mulberry Island is the nearest water-battery on the north side of James River to Newport News, and mounts seven or eight heavy guns. It is supported by the Day's Point battery on the south side of the James, mounting seventeen guns. Magruder, as soon as we reached this place, sent us six hundred negroes to throw up heavy fortifications. Our position here is quite a strong one; on our left flank is the Warwick River, on our right is a deep marsh and the heavy battery at Mulberry Island; on our front is a broad, open field, our guns commanding it. Reinforced by the Fifth Louisiana Infantry.⁵⁰

On 4 March 1862, Magruder was ordered to send 5,000 troops to Suffolk to aid in the defense of Norfolk, as headquarters in Richmond, not knowing whether the expected attack would be upon Centreville in the north or the Peninsula or Norfolk, tried to prepare for all three eventualities. Among the troops withdrawn from the Peninsula was the Fourteenth Virginia Regiment on Mulberry Island. Hodges was directed to take with him his tents, 5 days' rations, as few cooking utensils as possible, his ammunition, and 20 spades and axes, "turning over the remains of the same, beside whatever picks and shovels he may have, to the acting quartermaster of the Fifth Louisiana Volunteers."⁵¹ Magruder protested this order to the War Department, pointing out that this left only a small garrison at Yorktown and "the covering work [at Crafford's Farm] at Mulberry Island with one regiment to defend it."⁵² (Presumably this regiment was the Fifth Louisiana.)

The company in charge of the four pieces of light artillery, that is, Captain Young's unit which had been changed from an infantry company to an artillery battery, was to stay on Mulberry Island,⁵³ but the Third Company of Howitzers (Captain Moseley's unit) was also sent to Suffolk, along with the Fourteenth Virginia.⁵⁴

VII. THE IRON CLADS (8 MARCH - 24 MARCH 1862):

On 8 March three vessels of the little James River Squadron participated in the attack of the iron-clad, C.S.S. Virginia (Merrimac) against the Federal vessels in Hampton Roads and the officers and crews of the three vessels were commended with a "Resolution of Thanks" by the Congress of the Confederate States of America.⁵⁵ In his report, Tucker, now a commander, wrote,

. . . Lieutenant-Colonel Callendar St. George Noland, commanding the post at Mulberry Island, on hearing of the deficiency in the complement of the Patrick Henry, promptly offered the service of 10 of his men as volunteers for the occasion, one of whom, George E. Webb, of the Greenville Guards, Commander Tucker regrets to say, was killed.⁵⁶

When the Virginia came out of her berth in Norfolk the next day, she met the Federal iron-clad, the Monitor, in the now famous engagement in Hampton Roads. The threat of the enemy iron-clad vessels and the possibilities of those of the Confederacy began to take on great importance in the defense of the Peninsula. On 11 March 1862, Alfred L. Rives, Acting Chief of the Engineer Bureau, wrote to Lieutenant Henry I. Douglas, engineer-in-charge, Yorktown, on the lessons learned as a result of the Monitor-Merrimac exchange.

. . . The recent conflict at Newport News shows conclusively that water-batteries, especially those near deep water, cannot injure materially properly constructed iron-clad vessels, nor contend with them The only point on the Peninsula where I think casemates of value is Mulberry Island Point. The enemy cannot approach that point nearer than about half a mile, and properly constructed casemates may resist their fire at that distance.⁵⁷

The next day Rives reported to the Secretary of War on the five water-batteries on the James River. The Mulberry Island Point Battery consisted of five 42-pounder cannon en barbette with 14 casemates "building rapidly" and a large covering work nearly completed. The covering work was being "rapidly and intelligently improved with bomb-proofs, etc." by Captain John J. Clarke of the Provisional Engineer Corps.⁵⁸ Thus, the water-battery on the Point was being "rebuilt" and work was progressing on the larger fortification on the land side to protect it.

(By en barbette, Rives meant that each of the five guns in the fortification was placed on a platform or mound of earth from which the gun

could be fired over the parapet. The casemates would be vaults or chambers in the thickness of the rampart with embrasures or openings through which the guns would be fired. Naturally, guns mounted in casemates would not be as vulnerable as those en barbette.)

Concern for the iron-clads continued to be of major importance. In the middle of March, General Lee, now returned from duty in South Carolina, wrote Magruder about his plans for the defense of the Peninsula:

. . . As far as I can judge at this distance the plan of constructing a defensive line between Yorktown and Mulberry Island by damming and defending the Warwick River promises the happiest results. I would therefore recommend to you, should you concur in this opinion, to apply as great a force on the work as possible. With your left resting on the batteries on York River and your right defended by the batteries on James River, with the aid of the Virginia and other steamers, I think you may defy the advance of the enemy up the Peninsula, supported as this line would be by your second system of defenses.⁵⁹

On 20 March 1862 in a report on the defenses of Richmond to the House of Representatives, President Jefferson Davis discussed the Harden's Bluff and Mulberry Island batteries:

. . . The next position above, defended by the works at Hardy's Harden's Bluff and Mulberry Island, possesses great importance from being the right flank of General Magruder's chosen defensive line on the Peninsula, and the lowest point which gives the hope of a successful protection of the river against the wooden fleets of the enemy. Iron-clad vessels, of which we have not had sufficient experience to form a correct judgment, can pass their works as the channel is too wide and deep for obstructions, unless wrought-iron bolts, now being prepared for trial against the Ericsson battery Monitor and others of the same class, prove more effective than can be reasonably hoped for; but still the transports necessary for a formidable expedition ought to be kept back by the batteries so long as they are held; and it is thought that they should not be silenced by a few iron-clad vessels operating with a small number of guns at long range, especially as the battery at Hardy's Bluff has considerable elevation. Both works are strong against a land attack. The guns at Jamestown Island will probably be removed in the position just referred to, as soon as it is fully prepared for them.⁶⁰

On the same day Rives wrote Lieutenant Douglas at Yorktown about a plan to build an entrenched camp. "I propose to place the work under Captain Clarke, as well as the defenses of the Warwick River below Lee's Hill," Rives wrote. "From Mulberry Island, his present location, he can easily direct these works."⁶¹ The exact location of this camp, if built, is not known.

III. THE CAMPAIGN BEGINS (24 MARCH - 4 APRIL 1862):

On 24 March the Union Army began landing troops in large numbers at Fort Monroe, and by 26 March it had become apparent that the attempt on the Peninsula which the Confederates had been anticipating for almost a year was about to become a reality. Lee again wrote Magruder, endorsing his action in defending the Yorktown-Mulberry Island Point line:

. . . As far as I am able to judge, your strongest line of defense is that between Yorktown and Mulberry Point, which I believe has been adopted by you, and I think can best be held as long as your flanks are not turned by passage of the enemy up either river. If you abandon that line I know no better position you could assume on the Peninsula.⁶²

The next day Rives, in a letter to Captain Clarke, the engineer in charge at Mulberry Island Point, confirmed General Lee's concern for the fortifications at Mulberry Point:

It seems almost needless to urge upon you the vigorous prosecution of the works at Mulberry Point, but I do so at the suggestion of General Lee, who thinks it a matter of paramount importance. I received to-day a telegram from General Magruder to the effect that he had directed you to place the 42 and 68 pounders in barbette in the work surrounding Crafford's house. In this, from the lights before me, I should think the general probably right. The work on the point can then be prosecuted untrammelled by guns in position.

I send you to-day 1,000 sand bags, and you will receive with this letter the first installment of bolts for the case-mate battery. I have been trying in vain, so far, to procure wrought-iron protection for the embrasures, but think that I

have succeeded to-day in making a plan and procuring flat-bar railroad iron from the Richmond and Danville Railroad Company which will be perfectly satisfactory. A tracing will be sent to you to-morrow. I shall write a note this evening to Colonel Gorgas, requesting him to send you immediately a 6.4-inch rifle gun, 64-pounder, columbiad pattern, with barbette carriage pintle-block, which is here on hand complete. One casemate carriage will be finished this week and five the next, if promises may be relied on.

General Lee is particularly desirous that all your unmounted guns should be mounted immediately, and in the present state of affairs I do not think you can do better than to mount them all in the covering works around Crafford's house. Of that, however, you will probably be the best judge.⁶³

Thus, the heavy guns in the water-battery were to be removed to the larger covering work at Crafford's Farm while the water-battery was being "renovated" to face the iron-clads.

A day later, 28 March, Magruder wrote all troops under his command, "The enemy is at length advancing. We shall fight him on the line of the Warwick River."⁶⁴

McClellan arrived at Fort Monroe on 2 April, and, as he reported later, "The information then in our possession was vague and untrustworthy."⁶⁵ His maps showed the Warwick River flowing parallel to the Newport News-Williamsburg road (now Route 60), "making the so-called Mulberry Island a real island; and we had no information as to the true course of the Warwick across the Peninsula nor of the formidable line of works which it covered."⁶⁶

The James River batteries and the little fleet with the important assistance of the Virginia (Merrimac) were being effective, for McClellan also learned that the "James River was declared by the naval authorities closed to the operations of their vessels by the combined influence of the

enemy's batteries on its banks and the Confederate Steamers Merrimac Virginia, Yorktown Patrick Henry, Jamestown, and Teaser."67

As activity intensified on both sides, Rives informed General Lee that he now had one 8-inch and one 10-inch columbiad ready and wanted to know if they should be sent to Harden's Bluff or Mulberry Island Point or reserved for a position farther up the river.⁶⁸ The next day General Lee told the Ordnance Department in Richmond that he wanted to have "five 8-inch columbiads retained for the battery at Mulberry Island, for which casemate carriages are being provided."⁶⁹ He wrote, "These carriages were promised to be done sometime since. Can you not hasten their completion and send them down?"⁷⁰

On 3 April, Magruder was notified that commanders of the gunboats on the James were "to communicate with him, through the officer in charge at Mulberry Island, information of the enemy's movements in the river, to disperse and destroy their transport, and to cooperate with the batteries on the river generally in its defense."⁷¹

On 4 April, as the Federal forces finally advanced from Newport News and Hampton, Colonel Theodore G. Hunt, now the commanding officer of the Fifth Louisiana Infantry Regiment at Mulberry Point, was directed to occupy Miner's Farm with all his force, including Captain Edward R. Young's Halifax Light Artillery of 57 men. He was told that it was "highly important to hold these works as long as possible."⁷²

IX. STALEMATE ON THE WARWICK (5 APRIL - 17 APRIL 1862):

The Union Army reached the Warwick line and--to the great surprise of the Confederate Army--stopped. In his report, Brigadier General Erasmus

this river nearly to Mulberry Island Fort, were constructed to check any assault of the enemy upon our right flank coming up by way of Land's End. The Warwick River had also obstructions placed in it to prevent the approach of the enemy's gunboats up this river, and we were further protected by our gunboat Teazer, which was placed near the mouth of the Warwick. From the topography of the ground it was absolutely necessary to occupy the whole of this line in the then condition of our forces. Our forces were so few in numbers that it was essential to the safety of the command that the whole should be defended, as the breaking of our lines at any point would necessarily have been attended by the most disastrous results; the center broken or our flanks turned, compelling a precipitate retreat to Yorktown or Mulberry Island, to stand a siege of the enemy's land force, assisted by the whole naval force, with but little prospect of relief or re-enforcements when the enemy occupied the intermediate country Heavy guns were mounted at Gloucester Point, at Yorktown, at Redoubt No. 4, and at Mulberry Island Captain Young's battery and a portion of Major Roemer's battery occupied Miner's farm The defense was gallantly and most successfully made, and our pieces, all along the line from Miner's farm to Yorktown, were fired at the enemy When the line of defense was constructed Mulberry Island Fort was thrown out of the line of defense several miles to stand, if necessary, a siege. Captains Garrett's and Young's batteries were withdrawn to this fort thus isolated.⁷⁹

In describing the line running from Lee's Mill down the Warwick and then across Mulberry Island, the Federal Chief Engineer, overly impressed, wrote later, "These groups of field works were connected by rifle trenches or parapets for nearly the whole distance every kind of obstruction which the country affords, such as abatis, marsh, inundation, etc., was skillfully used. The line is certainly one of the most extensive known to modern times."⁸⁰

Union Brigadier General Peck, facing the Confederates on Mulberry Island across the Warwick River, made a reconnaissance of the Warwick down to the James. He found that "the enemy's vessels could control the navigation and reach our lines with heavy guns."⁸¹ He constructed two batteries and,

since their completion rebel craft have not ventured nearer than the James River. These, with four additional works near the edge of the river, have also forced the enemy's camps and picket lines a long distance back from the Warwick and materially interrupted his communications. This view is strengthened by the fact that within eight or ten days the enemy's heavier vessels have been seeking positions higher up on the river side of Mulberry Island, from which to reach my lines; 6-inch elongated shells have been thrown from them over the advance batteries.⁸²

In probably the most accurate assessment of the situation made by a Union General, Peck went on to suggest:

With a small number (say two) of 8-inch howitzers and two 8-inch mortars I could command most of Mulberry Island and reach their landings on the James River side Would not possession of the island enable the commanding general to control in a considerable degree the James River in case the Navy fails to do the work?⁸²

In a rather dry one-sentence endorsement, General Keyes, in forwarding the report on 1 May, said, "I think more heavy artillery necessary to make much impression on Mulberry Island than General Peck specifies."⁸⁴

It was in early April, then, that all the work of the past year spent in fortifying the Peninsula paid off. McClellan, overestimating the strength of the line and misled by false intelligence, halted before the Warwick line and began month-long preparations for the siege of Yorktown--probably the greatest blunder of his career. However, the Confederates were well aware of their weaknesses and continued to expect to be overrun at any minute. In fact, Magruder anticipated that the Federal troops would force his lines and expected disaster and directed Colonel Benjamin S. Ewell of the Thirty-Second Virginia Infantry on 7 April to "have piled on King's Mill Wharf up the river from Mulberry Island light-wood and other inflammable material to which you will set

fire as soon as you perceive that the enemy's boats have passed Harden's Bluff and Mulberry Point Batteries."⁸⁵

On 8 April, one of Peck's soldiers swam across the Warwick River to an island, crossed it, and found himself within 100 yards of Mulberry Island, where he saw Confederate pickets. He also saw a camp on the spit between the Warwick and James Rivers, undoubtedly the camp at Land's End, now deserted.³⁶

On the same day, Magruder requested field guns to defend the "new work" at Mulberry Point, just completed for land defenses, which was "very strong."⁸⁷ This, of course, refers to the fortification on Crafford's Farm.

It also mounts eight very heavy guns, and will probably be able to stand a seige of a month, but in consequence of the slowness of fire of the large guns there must be at least eight field pieces in the work. There are eight field pieces in the work below it across the little peninsula, which were intended for this larger work, on which my right flank rests. If this work is successfully stormed these eight field pieces will be lost, and the stronger work therefore without any means of defense. It is not necessary that these eight field pieces should be of long range; they should fire, however, shell and canister or grape, and should have a large quantity of ammunition.⁸⁸

He discussed the gunboats at Norfolk and requested they be ordered up the James River, pointing out, "by laying in the Swash Channel, which they can do with ease, (they) can certainly prevent McClellan from crossing the Warwick River below my works unless exposed to a most destructive fire."⁸⁹ He concluded, ". . . the Peninsula can be held as long as the works at Yorktown and Mulberry Island hold out."⁹⁰

On 9 April Keyes reported, "This morning a rebel gunboat came up into the mouth of the Warwick River, fired a shell, and turned back."⁹¹

On 11 April, Magruder reported about 1,000 men on Mulberry Island.⁹²

The next day he wrote the Secretary of War requesting that the Teaser be furnished with a rifled gun and stationed in the Swash Channel below Mulberry Island Point. If she were there, supported by two gunboats or river tugs with long-range guns stationed at intervals, their combined fire would sweep Mulberry Island and prevent the enemy from crossing the Warwick River. This could possibly strengthen Magruder's right flank and would do away with the necessity of the works at Miner's Farm.⁹³

This, of course, refers to the line of works across Mulberry Island and was the first time Magruder had made such a proposal.

On 12 April, General Joseph E. Johnston, who commanded the Army of Northern Virginia, was placed in charge of operations on the Peninsula as reinforcements from his command were sent to the Warwick line. However, he did not arrive until 17 April.

By 15 April, at Magruder's direction, the guns had been removed from the Miner's Farm line and the troops and the guns moved farther up the island, to a new line on "Brick House Creek."⁹⁴ (This probably refers to the creek which flowed across Mulberry Island and emptied into the James River near the house now known as the Matthew Jones House.) As mentioned earlier in Cabell's report, Young's battery and Garrett's battery were moved to the fortification at Mulberry Island Point.

On 14 April, a Union report testified to the scarcity of guns on Magruder's right flank, "the enemy threw ten or twelve shot and shells from a battery opposite the mouth of Stony Creek It seems that the enemy has a field gun with which he visits that fort occasionally."⁹⁵

On 16 April the Battle of Lee's Mill, actually only a sharp clash between the opposing forces, took place, and the Federal forces were repulsed. On that day Magruder again asked the Secretary of War for the James River Squadron. He wrote, "The Patrick Henry and Jamestown, as well as Teaser, are absolutely needed at Mulberry Island to render the work at that place secure."⁹⁶ He was quite certain that the enemy was "preparing to cross Warwick River below Miner's; in which case, without assistance of these vessels, we would be forced to abandon our works on Mulberry Island."⁹⁷

The following day he wrote again, this time asking that the two tugs at Norfolk--the Beaufort and the Raleigh--be sent immediately to Captain William A. Webb at Mulberry Point. He pointed out that they each carried a rifled 32-pounder and would be of "immense importance to prevent the enemy from crossing the Warwick and operating on James River."⁹⁸ He repeated his decision that the force at Mulberry Island Point "must be left to itself, the step being indispensable to the safety of the Army and would be entirely secure if the ships and gunboats mentioned occupied the positions indicated."⁹⁹ This move was necessary so that he could shorten his lines. "I have now determined," he wrote, "to leave the Fort to its fate, having every confidence in its strength, if these arrangements are made."¹⁰⁰

The Jamestown, the Teaser, and the Raleigh arrived as requested on 19 April.¹⁰¹ The Patrick Henry and the Beaufort followed on 21 April.¹⁰²

X. JOHNSTON ARRIVES AND RETREATS (18 APRIL - 4 MAY 1862):

On 18 April, in the reorganization required by Johnston's assumption of command and the preparations for the meeting with the Federal forces which was sure to come, Magruder was assigned to the command of the right of the line, beginning at Dam No. 1 and extending to the James River.¹⁰³

The extreme right of his line, embracing Mulberry Island, was under Brigadier General LaFayette McLaws.

Johnston wrote later:

I assumed my new command on the 17th. The arrival of Smith's and Longstreet's divisions increased the army on the Peninsula to about 53,000 men, including 3,000 sick. It was opposed to 133,000 Federal soldiers. Magruder's division formed the Confederate right wing, Longstreet's the center, D. H. Hill's the left, and Smith's the reserve. The field works at Gloucester Point and Yorktown, on the left flank, and Mulberry Point, on the right, were occupied by 8,000 men.¹⁰⁴

From the first Johnston did not approve of the plan to defend the Peninsula. At best, his efforts to carry out the directives of President Davis and the Secretary of War were only half-hearted, and in two weeks, in a move to be debated by military historians for the next century, he was to order a withdrawal from the entire line.

On 21 April Federal General Keyes, opposite Magruder's lines, reported that Negroes had told him that Mulberry Island had been evacuated. He went on to say that other appearances indicated that the force there had been recently reduced. The line abandoned was the Miner's Farm line, as discussed earlier, for the next day Magruder was writing to Johnston about the "incompleted defenses" of his line connecting Skiffes Creek with Lee's Mill. He reported,

. . . The woods obstruct the fire of our artillery which would probably, if a small belt of woods were removed, command the Mulberry Island road to a long distance, firing down Curtis' field. The possible occupation of Cosnahan's battery (our advanced work) by the enemy at an early day invests this matter with deepest interest.¹⁰⁵

However, the Mulberry Island Point Battery and its covering work had not been abandoned, and on 22 April General Lee directed that an 8-inch columbiad with casemate carriage now available be sent to Mulberry Point, presumably for the water-battery.¹⁰⁶

An abstract of a return for 23 April shows how rapidly the line was being reinforced, for Magruder on the right flank had over 19,000 men under his command, that is, from Dam No. 1 to the James River. He had three pieces of heavy artillery, probably at Mulberry Island Point, and 49 pieces of light artillery.¹⁰⁷

Magruder again wrote Johnston's headquarters on 24 April on the abandonment of the Mulberry Island line, but in this dispatch it would appear that the idea of letting the Mulberry Island Fort stand alone was not his, but Johnston's.

. . . My forces now occupy, in a strictly defensive attitude, the Warwick line, with the exception that that portion of the Warwick River intervening between Lee's Mill and Miner's Farm, which was originally within our lines, has been abandoned as against any serious demonstration of the enemy . . . (the commanding general) had dictated the abandonment of the lower portion of the line on Warwick River, influenced doubtless in this determination by a belief in the strength and formidable character of the works at Mulberry Island Point, sufficient in this belief with the aid of the Virginia, to maintain itself alone and unsupported except on the water side by our steamers against any efforts of the enemy.¹⁰⁸

The small James River fleet continued in its support of Mulberry Island. On 27 April, according to Union General Keyes, "Four of the

enemy's gunboats were reported in James River I saw three. They threw, say, twenty shells, the most of them at Peck's works, but without any damage to the troops."¹⁰⁹ These vessels were, of course, firing across Mulberry Island and the Warwick River.

By 30 April the forces covering the right of Lee's Mill was Brigadier General LaFayette McLaws' Brigade which included the following: Fifth Louisiana (744 officers and men); Tenth Louisiana (595); Fifteenth Virginia (476); Noland's Battalion (162); Garrett's Battery (50); and Young's Battery (57), for a total of 2,084 officers and men.¹¹⁰ Of these six units, the last three, Noland's, Garrett's, and Young's, with 269 men, were probably then stationed at the Mulberry Island Point Fort and the water-battery. Apparently the infantry regiments were on the line from Lee's Mill across the Brick House or Skiffes Creek line.

On Friday, 2 May, General Johnston wrote Captain Tucker, commanding the James River Squadron, "I have ordered the withdrawal of the troops from this line to take place, if practicable, tonight."¹¹¹ (The withdrawal of the main body of troops actually took place the next night, 3-4 May, but there is evidence that the units on Mulberry Island abandoned their fortification on the night of 2-3 May.) Johnston requested Tucker to aid in "saving the heavy guns and other valuable material in the batteries."¹¹²

On Sunday morning, 4 May, the Federal forces were finally ready to attack--but the Confederates had gone. That day Major General John E. Wool at Fort Monroe wrote McClellan at Yorktown that he was informed that the rebels had removed the heavy guns from Mulberry Island and from

Jamestown and had abandoned these points. "It would seem," he wrote, "that the bird has flown."¹¹³

XI. RECONNAISSANCE (5 MAY - 8 MAY 1862):

On 7 May, as the main force of the Union Army was following the Confederates up the Peninsula toward Richmond, reconnaissances were being made of the evacuated positions on the lower Peninsula. McClellan directed Colonel George A. H. Blake to

. . . send immediately a squadron of cavalry, under an efficient and prudent officer, to Mulberry Point, on the James River side, and such other points on Mulberry Island as were occupied by the enemy, to ascertain the nature of the works and operations of the enemy in that quarter. It will be ascertained if guns or other property were abandoned by the enemy. It is desired that you procure a guide in Yorktown to accompany the troops, if possible.

A map is sent you containing all the information in possession of the topographical bureau at these headquarters with regard to the region in question.

The duty involved will require circumspection on the part of the officer to guard against any surprise, and is to be executed with expedition and dispatch.

On his return the officer will make a detailed report of his expedition.¹¹⁴

The "efficient and prudent" officer selected was Major Robert Morris, Jr., of the Sixth Pennsylvania Cavalry. This regiment, called "Rush's Lancers," had been moved to Fort Monroe from Washington 3-5 May and then to Yorktown. Its first mission in the Peninsular Campaign was the reconnaissance to Mulberry Island.¹¹⁵

Major Morris reported on 8 May,

I have the honor to report the result of a reconnaissance, made last night and this morning in obedience to orders of May 7, received at 4 o'clock p.m. on the 8th /sic/.

In command of our squadron of the 6th Pennsylvania Cavalry, I left camp near Yorktown at 5 p.m. on the 7th, and reached the ground of an old camp, marked C on sketch No. 1, at 1 o'clock a.m. I found the map which was furnished me quite inaccurate after

leaving Lee's Mill. The country is heavily timbered and the roads almost impassable. I found three guns in the fort on Mulberry Point, all 7-inch bore, after pattern in the enclosed rough sketch (not found); the carriages burnt; also the carriages of four other guns destroyed in like manner. The magazines were three in number, two destroyed by fire, the third not yet finished. I also found some 200 7-inch cannon balls, a lot of spades, picks, wheelbarrows, and timber ready for use.

The small fort on the extreme point is not completed and is surrounded by swamps, the only approaches being by the river and beach. It contained nothing but cooking implements.

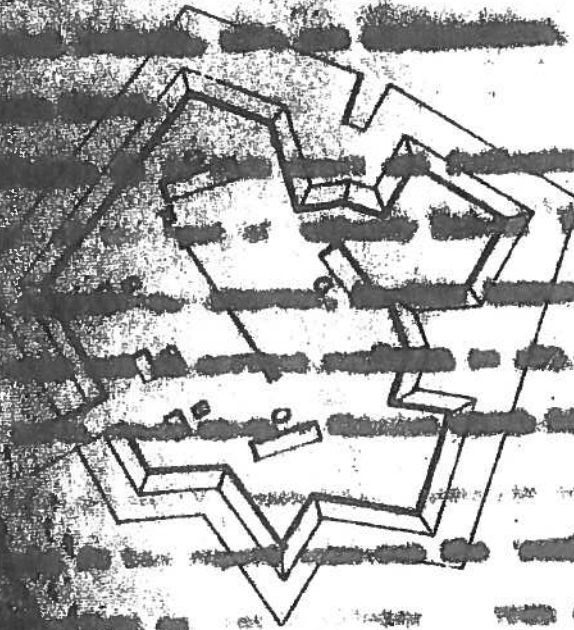
I am informed that the enemy advanced their works and camps on Friday last, and all the residents about this point had left. I discovered grain to the amount of 500 bags, also some cattle. Two gunboats with steam up remained on the opposite shore during the morning. As they displayed no flags, it is impossible to say which side they belong.

Major Morris submitted two sketches with his report. The first (figure 3) shows the large fortification (now called Fort Crafford) covering the Mulberry Island Point Battery, with gun emplacements, three magazines, and the Crafford Farm House.

The second sketch (figure 4) is less exact and indicates that a full reconnaissance was not made of the rest of Mulberry Island, for the other fortifications are merely suggested. However, he does locate Miner's Farm farther down the Island, only not in correct relation to the Warwick River and he also suggests the Brick House Creek - Skiffes Creek line built in April 1862.

A misleading statement in his report concerns the "small fort on the extreme point" which he described as "not completed." From the records, it is apparent that this was the water-battery which was the first fortification built on Mulberry Island. However, as discussed earlier, as a result of the introduction of the iron-clads, this battery was being

REPTONAL WARE
MILBERRY ISLAND, VA.



- A. [unclear] [unclear]
- BB [unclear] [unclear]
- CC [unclear] [unclear]
- D [unclear] [unclear]
- [unclear] [unclear]

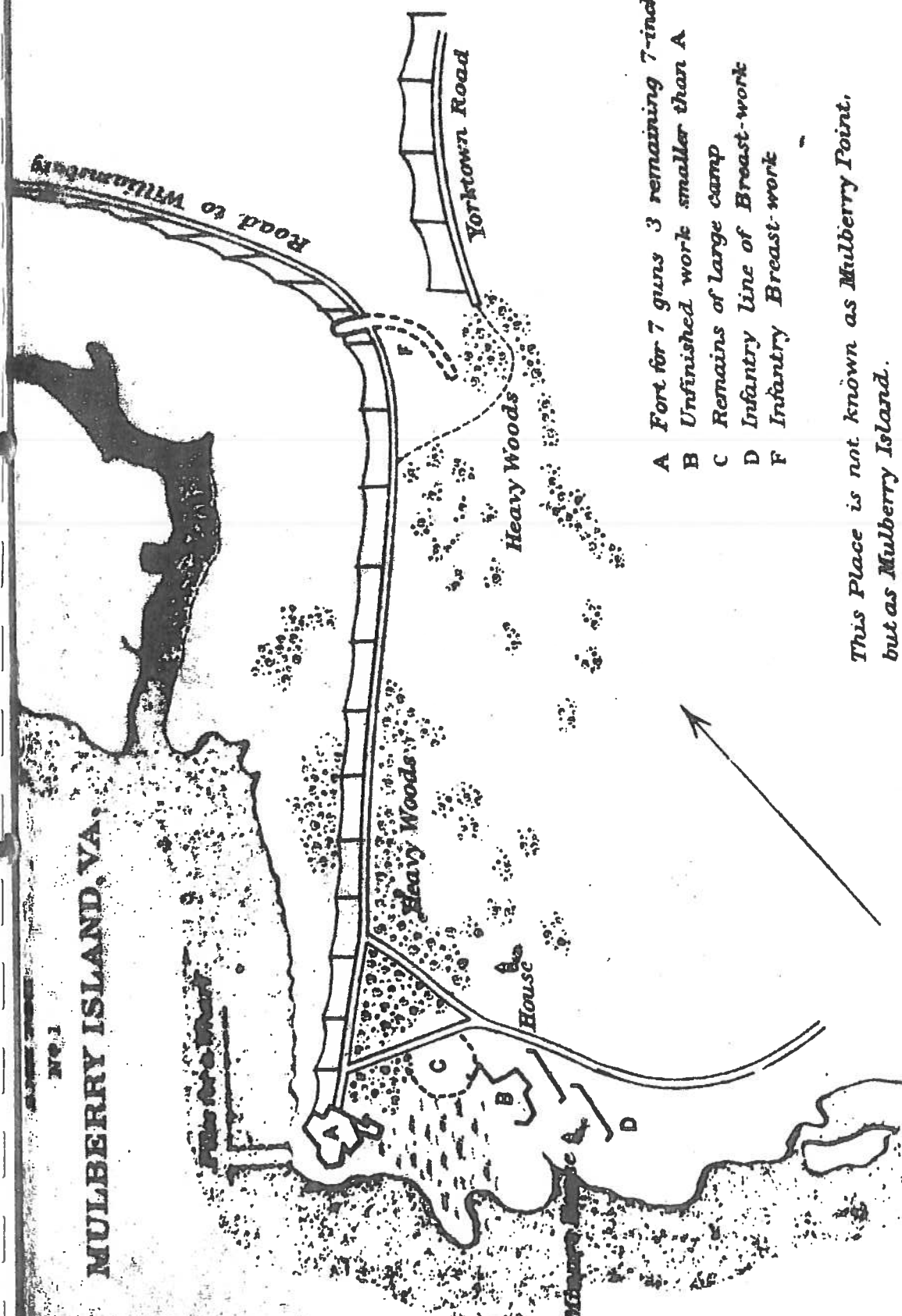
Accompanying report of Maj. Robt. Morris, Jr., Sixth Pennsylvania Cavalry
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... ..

MULBERRY ISLAND, VA.

Place for a Wharf



- A Fort for 7 guns 3 remaining 7-inch bore
- B Unfinished work smaller than A
- C Remains of large camp
- D Infantry line of Breast-work
- F Infantry Breast-work

This Place is not known as Mulberry Point,
but as Mulberry Island.

— Confederate Works

Accompanying report of Maj. Robt. Morris, Jr., Sixth Pennsylvania Cavalry

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Figure 4. Mulberry Island, Virginia - General Reconnaissance Map, May 1862

rebuilt with casemates, etc., thus giving the impression to the Union officer that it was unfinished, as indeed, at that time, it was.

An immediate question raised by his report concerns accounting for the guns. He stated that seven carriages were in the large fort but only three guns. On 8 May, Johnston reported asking Captain Tucker of the Navy to remove the guns at Mulberry Point and Jamestown.¹¹⁷ He reported

I directed Captain Tucker, commanding the little squadron there near the place, to send the guns and carriages from Mulberry Point to Richmond. I was told the guns are good, as well as the carriages. He was also desired to remove those at Jamestown. There is, however, reason to think that this service was not performed.¹¹⁸

It is difficult to determine how much and what kind of armament the two fortifications did have, not only because of the ways in which it was reported, but also because guns were in such short supply and moved so frequently. In addition, even though the record may state that orders were given to move a certain gun to a certain place, there is no surety that the order was carried out. However, the most reliable reports throughout March, April, and May include:

A. On 12 March Rives stated that there were five 42-pounders in the water-battery.

B. On 8 April Magruder reported "eight very heavy guns" in the covering work and eight field pieces in the water-battery.

C. In the return for 23 April Magruder had three heavy guns, which might or might not have been at Mulberry Island Point or at Crafford's.

D. On 8 May Major Morris reported finding three 7-inch guns at the larger fortification.

The 42-pounders Rives reported on 12 March, the three "heavy guns" reported on 23 April, and the 7-inch guns Morris reported on 8 May were probably the same guns since the 42-pounder fired a round ball 7 inches in diameter and was the standard seacoast gun of the period. It was a smoothbore gun with a maximum range of about 2,000 yards and an accurate range of about 1,100-1,200 yards. Guns of this type were usually cast iron and were about 10 feet long and weighed in the neighborhood of 4 tons. Certainly moving them was no easy task. It is possible that the carriages for the other four guns mounted only "Quaker" guns--that is, logs---or it is possible that the James River Squadron removed the tubes.

The 8-inch columbiad mentioned repeatedly as being sent to Mulberry Island Point was the heaviest piece of artillery in the pre-war period. It was built along the lines of the seacoast cannon but had a longer barrel and a maximum range of 4,800 yards, quite a difference when compared to the 42-pounder. However, considering Magruder's continuing emphasis on the need for the stationing of gunboats between Fort Huger on the south and Mulberry Island on the north of the river, it seems possible that the columbiads never reached Mulberry Island Point.

XII. SUMMARY:

The Mulberry Island fortifications served as the right anchor to the main defensive line across the Peninsula from the summer of 1861 until May 1862. Seven fortifications or groups of fortifications were erected.

A. Construction of the water-battery which was the first of the fortifications began in August 1861. After the engagement of the iron-clads in March 1862, plans were hastily drawn and work begun on strengthening

the little water-battery so that it could withstand a prolonged shelling from an iron-clad. The guns that had been in the battery, which mounted from four to six pieces, were moved into the covering work protecting it so that on a Federal reconnaissance made on 7 May it appeared incomplete.

B. The entrenchments at Land's End at the mouth of the Warwick were thrown up in late August and early September 1861 in an emergency situation and were subsequently improved. The Fourteenth Virginia was stationed there until February 1862. Much of this fortification has fallen victim to winds and tides, but some indications still remain.

C. Later in the fall of 1861 a smaller work for one gun was built a mile-and-a-half up the Warwick River. This emplacement has not been located.

D. During the winter of 1861-62, the line known as the Miner's Farm line was built across the middle of the Island. It was a series of small redoubts connected with infantry trenches running from the Warwick River across to the James below the present-day golf course. Seven of these entrenchments and small earthworks have been located.

E. The large covering work now known as Fort Crafford was probably started in February and completed by the first week of April. It was designed both to protect the water-battery from a land attack and to be part of the Miner's Farm line but set apart from it so that it could stand a siege if necessary. The earth embankments are still in place with the exception of two areas cut away for a road which now goes through the fort. The farm house was torn down in 1925 to provide bricks for the repair of the Wren Building of the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg. One

of the three magazines has been located. The pentagon-shaped fortification has an outer wall about 8 feet high, a dry moat, and an inner wall 18-20 feet high. It covers almost 8 acres, excluding outer wall and moat.

F. The fortifications running down the Warwick from Lee's Mill at present-day Route 60 to Miner's were probably built in the Spring of 1862. These were erected on the bluffs on the south side of the Warwick. Many of these are still in existence.

G. By the middle of April, the Land's End fortification and the Miner's Farm line had been completely abandoned in favor first of a line running across the Island from the Warwick River along the Brick House Creek and later to Skiffes Creek. Never extensive, only parts of them remain.

To date there is no evidence and no reason to believe that the guns at Mulberry Island Point Battery or the covering work "Fort Crafford" were ever fired at Federal forces, either on land or on sea. However, the light artillery located from Lee's Mill down to and including those at Miner's Farm did fire upon the Federals from time to time during the 5 April - 2 May period.

In addition to the earthworks erected on Mulberry Island, attempts were made to block the Swash Channel off Mulberry Island Point at least three times by sinking canal boats loaded with gravel and sand. Also, boats were sunk at least once across the mouth of the Warwick.

Although the Confederate leaders considered the Mulberry Island Point battery as well as other positions on the Island important to the defenses of the Peninsula, Johnston's subsequent retreat and abandonment of the line

precluded the possibility of the fortifications on Mulberry Island playing a significant role in battle. Nevertheless, the Peninsula line did accomplish its major purpose--it delayed McClellan until the Army of Northern Virginia could be moved to the Peninsula. The activities on the lower Peninsula from the summer of 1861 until May 1862 were the prelude to the first major campaign in the East.

As anticipated, the Union Army followed the withdrawing Confederates and sparred with them up the Peninsula until the two forces joined in several pitched battles around Richmond. Neither side was able to land a decisive blow, and McClellan withdrew, unpursued, to Harrison's Landing on the James where he embarked his forces for the anticlimatic return trip to Washington. Richmond did not fall that year, and the Grey Fox was free to move upon the land. It wasn't until almost three years later that fire lowered the tower of the Confederacy, and the last flickers of flame cast their long and lingering, but subduing shadows across the final and stilled fields at Appomattox.

The Peninsula and Mulberry Island, like all the geography and sons of the Confederacy, had played their part in the defense of the Capital. They lay for the remainder of the war under the control of the Federal forces until the final peace and the call of home moved the blue-clad soldiers northward. Before the last strains of a Republic's battle hymn faded away, the earth leaped up to reclaim itself. Quickly returned the marsh hen to the swamp grass, the deer to the wood, and the forest to the trenches, and the Island was swept with long and peaceful years of wind and tide.

Today it is the same on Mulberry Island.

FOOTNOTES

¹Burwells Bay refers to the bend in the James River between Mulberry Island on the north and Harden's (also called Hardy's) Bluff and Day's Point on the south. Harden's Bluff was to be fortified later and called Fort Huger; Fort Boykins was to be built at Day's Point.

²War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Vol. II, pp. 788-789, hereafter referred to as ORA.

³It is interesting to note that many of those involved in the defense of Mulberry Island which later was to become part of Fort Eustis had served with General Abraham Eustis (1786-1843) for whom it was to be named. Lee was under Eustis when he was a young engineer and Eustis was the commanding officer at Fort Monroe in 1831; Magruder, Johnston, and Longstreet had all served as artillery officers under Eustis in the "old Army," and Magruder's aide at Yorktown was Eustis' second cousin.

⁴ORA II, p. 865.

⁵ORA IX, p. 38.

⁶Official Roster dated 22 May 1909 deposited in the Clerk of Hastings and Circuit Courts, Newport News, Virginia.

⁷Clifford Dowdey, ed., The Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1961), p. 45.

⁸ORA II, pp. 970-971.

⁹War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1894-1922), Vol. 6, p. 703, hereafter referred to as ORN.

¹⁰ORA II, p. 972.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. 979.

¹³ORA LI, Part II, pp. 185-186.

¹⁴ORA II, p. 634.

¹⁵W. C. Miner, Journal, in possession of his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Alma Miner, Newport News, Virginia.

¹⁶James F. Crocker, Colonel James Gregory Hodges, His Life and Character (Portsmouth, Va., W. A. Fiske, 1909), pp. 9-11.

¹⁷ORN 6, p. 717.

¹⁸ORA LI, Part II, p. 256.

¹⁹ORN 6, p. 720.

²⁰ORA IV, p. 680.

²¹Ibid., pp. 640-641.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴ORN 6, p. 723.

²⁵Lee A. Wallace, Jr., A Guide to Virginia Military Organizations 1861-1865 (Richmond: Virginia Civil War Commission, 1964), pp. 113 and 179.

²⁶ORA IV, pp. 644-645.

²⁷ORN 6, p. 724.

²⁸ORA IV, loc. cit.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰ORA LI, Part II, p. 308.

³¹ORA IV, pp. 668-670.

³²Ibid., p. 670.

³³Ibid., p. 674.

³⁴Ibid., p. 676.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 680-681.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid., p. 702.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 702-703.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 717.

⁴¹William S. White, A Diary of the War (Richmond: Carlton McCarthy and Company, 1883), pp. 110-111.

⁴²ORA IX, p. 34; ORN 6, p. 753.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴ORA LI, Part II, pp. 445-446.

⁴⁵ORN 6, p. 759.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷ORA IX, pp. 38-40.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 49.

⁴⁹ORN 6, p. 775.

⁵⁰White, loc. cit.

⁵¹ORA IX, p. 51.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴ORN 7, pp. 555-556.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 57.

⁵⁶ORN 5, p. 48.

⁵⁷ORA LI, Part II, pp. 499-500.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 509-510; ORN 6, pp. 742-743.

⁵⁹ORA IX, p. 68.

⁶⁰ORA LI, Part II, pp. 507-508.

⁶¹ORA XI, Part III, p. 389.

⁶²Ibid., p. 399.

⁶³Ibid., p. 404.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 410.

⁶⁵ORA XI, Part I, p. 7.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 8.

⁶⁸ORA XI, Part III, p. 418.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 419.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 418.

⁷²Ibid., p. 422.

⁷³ORA XI, Part I, p. 358.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 359.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷ORA XI, Part III, pp. 70-71.

⁷⁸ORA XI, Part I, pp. 403-404.

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 411-415.

⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 16-17.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 307.

⁸²Ibid., pp. 307-308.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵ORA XI, Part III, p. 427.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 78.

⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 430-431.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 85.

- ⁹²Ibid., p. 436.
- ⁹³Ibid., p. 437.
- ⁹⁴Ibid., p. 443.
- ⁹⁵ORA XI, Part I, p. 361.
- ⁹⁶Ibid., p. 444.
- ⁹⁷Ibid.
- ⁹⁸Ibid., p. 446.
- ⁹⁹Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁰Ibid.
- ¹⁰¹ORA XI, Part III, pp. 449-450; ORN 7, pp. 765-766.
- ¹⁰²ORN 7, pp. 774-775.
- ¹⁰³ORA XI, Part III, p. 448.
- ¹⁰⁴Joseph E. Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1874), p. 117.
- ¹⁰⁵ORA XI, Part III, p. 455.
- ¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 457.
- ¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 460.
- ¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 462.
- ¹⁰⁹ORA XI, Part I, p. 389.
- ¹¹⁰ORA XI, Part III, p. 479.
- ¹¹¹Ibid., pp. 488-489.

112 Ibid.

113 ORA LI, Part I, p. 596.

114 ORA XI, Part III, p. 148.

115 Frederick H. Dyer, Compendium of the War of the Rebellion, Vol. 3, Regimental Histories (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1959), p. 1,560.

116 ORA XI, Part I, p. 633.

117 ORA XI, Part III, pp: 499-500.

118 Ibid., p. 503.

APPENDIX 1

UNITS KNOWN TO HAVE SERVED ON MULBERRY ISLAND 1861-1862*

INFANTRY:

1. Fourteenth Regiment Virginia Volunteers. The Fourteenth Regiment was organized 23 May 1861 and was accepted into Confederate States service on 1 July 1861. The regiment was reorganized in May 1862. It is known to have been on Mulberry Island from August 1861 until March 1862 when it was sent to Suffolk. Its first commanding officer was Colonel John Gregory Hodges who was killed 3 July 1863 in Pickett's charge at Gettysburg.

2. Major Patton's (Major Waddill's) (Noland's ?) Battalion. This was a two-company unorganized field command which included the Charles City Southern Guards (Company A) and the Greensville Guard (Company B). It was originally commanded by Major J. M. Patton and later by Major George M. Waddill. It was stationed at the Mulberry Island Point Battery from the summer of 1861 (probably August) until April or May of 1862 and is probably the battalion referred to in dispatches as "Noland's" since Lieutenant Colonel C. St. George Noland was the commanding officer of the battery throughout the period.

a. Charles City Southern Guards, Charles City County, formerly Captain George M. Waddill's Company, Virginia Infantry; enlisted and mustered on 9 May 1861; mustered as Company A, Waddill's Battalion which

*Based upon A Guide to Virginia Military Organizations 1861-1865, Lee A. Wallace, Jr., Richmond: Virginia Civil War Commission 1964.

appears to have been an unorganized field command of two companies, A and B, under the senior captain. Subsequently assigned to the Fifty-Third Regiment, Virginia Volunteers, Company K.

b. Greensville Guard, Greensville County, enlisted 4 May 1861 for one year; reported on 30 June 1861 roll as attached to a battalion under Major J. M. Patton, which appears to have been a temporary organization. Also reported as Company B, Waddill's Battalion; appears as Fifth Battalion on 30 April 1862 muster roll; A&IGO letters indicate this company was not assigned until after reorganization of the Fifth Battalion, 4 May 1862. When the battalion disbanded, members went to Company K, Fifty-Third Regiment.

3. Fifth Louisiana Infantry Regiment. Originally commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Henry Forno, later by Colonel Theodore G. Hunt, this unit was stationed at Warwick Courthouse by August 1861 and moved to Mulberry Island by February 1862.

ARTILLERY:

1. Major Roemer's Battery. The Wise Legion Artillery, Virginia Volunteers was a battalion organization of the artillery companies serving in Brigadier General Henry A. Wise's Brigade, organized 23 July 1861, composed of four companies, A to D. Company D, Captain Bernard Roemer's Company, enlisted 20 July 1861 for one year; mustered into service 3 August 1861; reorganized March or April 1862 as Captain William H. Turner's Company, Virginia Light Artillery. Part of this battery occupied the Miner's Farm line in early April 1862.

2. Captain Young's Battery. Halifax Light Artillery, Halifax County, formerly called Company G, Mount Vernon Guards, Fourteenth Regiment Virginia Infantry. Transferred to First Regiment Virginia Artillery as Company C on 1 May 1862. Its only commander was Captain Edward R. Young. This unit spent the winter at Land's End and was later on the Miner's Farm line and subsequently withdrawn to man the light artillery at Mulberry Island Point Battery.
3. Captain Garrett's Battery. Company G, Thirty-Second Regiment Virginia Infantry, became known as Lee Artillery (also Williamsburg Artillery), James City County. It was made up of Peninsula residents and was organized 13 May 1861, reorganized 10 May 1862. Assigned as Company E, later Company F, First Regiment Virginia Artillery. Captain William R. Garrett served as commanding officer until the reorganization in May 1862. This unit also served on the Miner's Farm line and was then withdrawn in April 1862 to the Mulberry Island Point Battery.
4. Richmond Howitzers. The company of Howitzers, which was formed to be attached to the First Regiment Virginia Volunteers, Richmond, Virginia, was organized 9 November 1859. On 12 April 1861 the company was mustered into State service and by 11 May was expanded into a battalion consisting of the First, Second, and Third Companies. These companies, however, were soon separated and served with other commands throughout the war. The First Company went to Manassas and was later sent to the Peninsula with the Army of Northern Virginia, the second was sent to Gloucester and later served on the Peninsula; the third was sent to Yorktown and then to Land's End in the fall of 1861. It was later stationed on the Miner's Farm line

and sent to Suffolk in March 1862. Its first captain, Robert C. Stanard, died on the Peninsula 28 October 1861; its second captain, Edgar F. Moseley, was killed at Petersburg in 1864. With the Warwick Beauregards, the Third Company of the Richmond Howitzer Battalion shared the distinction of participating in the first engagement of the war, Big Bethel, and fighting throughout the war to be present at the surrender at Appomattox.

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