

*A 2019 BGES Civil War Field University  
Program: The Peninsula Campaign  
March–May 1862*

Abraham Lincoln had reached the end of his wits. His new Commanding General, George McClellan, had been organizing for nearly six months and he showed no interest in moving against the enemy. In frustration, Lincoln instructed all of his armies to be in motion against the enemy by Washington’s birthday in late February. Even then, McClellan didn’t move. Saddled with illness, McClellan contemplated his options while Lincoln took the initiative from him by reorganizing his army into corps and stripping him of his Commanding General duties—limiting him to the command of the Army of the Potomac. McClellan presented and received permission to move his army to Urbana, Virginia, which he later modified to Fort Monroe. By late March 1862, McClellan had embarked his forces.

Once he arrived in Hampton, he discovered that Lincoln would withhold a number of his troops in order to assure the security of Washington, D.C. McClellan found the navy was going to be less than cooperative, and his glacial advance ground to a frictional halt.

We will follow that story from the arrival at Fort Monroe through the siege of Yorktown and Confederate Gen. Joseph E. Johnston’s withdrawal through Williamsburg to Eltham’s Landing and Seven Pines. At the end, the Federals were in the shadow of Richmond and a new Commander, Robert E. Lee, was planning a campaign to destroy McClellan’s army.

**Tuesday, February 19, 2019**

6 PM. Meet at the headquarters hotel to pick up your reading books, meet your fellow travelers, and receive an opening lecture from historian Len Riedel on “The Defense of the Virginia Peninsula 1861–1862.” We will break in time for you to have dinner on your own.

**Wednesday, February 20, 2019**

8:30 AM. This morning we will head for Fort Monroe. This venerable structure is at the heart of the rebels’ planning and is the anchor of the Union defense on the Peninsula. While here, we will speak of the early days of the rebellion and the Virginians’ efforts to capture it. We will then discuss the various military operations from there and the Confederacy’s response to them. After a visit and some time to examine the fort on your own, we will move to Newport News to discuss the epic battle of the *Monitor* and

*Virginia.* After a visit to the Mariner's Museum, we will end our day at Gloucester Point, where the Confederates had constructed earthworks. Lunch and dinner are on your own.

### **Thursday, February 21, 2019**

8:30 AM. This morning we will again be off at 0830 to the Wren Building on the College of William and Mary, where we will discuss the defenses of the Confederates as directed by Gen. John B. Magruder and meet his cast of subordinates, including a Secretary of War, several Georgia politicians, a college president, and a bombmaker. Our walk along Duke of Gloucester Street will emphasize the Confederate occupation of the town. After lunch, we will head to Jamestown Island and down the Colonial Parkway to Yorktown, where we will examine and discuss what would be Magruder's Warwick River Line. Our day ends at Yorktown, where we will examine his fortifications, built upon the old earthworks that failed Lord Cornwallis more than 80 years before. Lunch and dinner are on your own.

### **Friday, February 22, 2019**

Understanding the Peninsula in the 1860s is essential to understanding the successful defense of the Peninsula and the failure of Joe Johnston to meet his government's objectives. We have grounded you in the engineering challenges of the Peninsula from both sides, and now we will begin the campaign with McClellan from Newport News. Today will see us moving with McClellan to confront the Confederates along the two major axis of advance up the Peninsula. One axis will be along US 60 and in the trail of the Confederate withdrawal that led to the Battle at Williamsburg, which we will spend some time examining. After lunch we will fight the Battle of Dam #1 and follow McClellan's siege and occupation of Yorktown. What McClellan does and how he does it will finish our day as we work back to Williamsburg past Edgeview Plantation. Let's have a farewell dinner tonight in Williamsburg. Lunch and dinner are included.

### **Saturday, February 23, 2019**

**TIME?** Following the battle of Williamsburg, McClellan moved slowly against Johnston's withdrawal. We will talk about the Confederate withdrawal and McClellan's efforts to get infantry in front of Johnston's army. Our first stop will be at Eltham's Landing, where Gen. John Bell Hood will first gain notice of his superiors as the Federal advance is checked. We then will look at Johnston's repositioning in front of Richmond and McClellan's arrival and encampment. Our program will conclude with a detailed examination and discussion of the battle of Seven Pines, in which Johnston is seriously wounded and replaced by Robert E. Lee. A discussion of the successes and failures of the campaign will follow before we return to Williamsburg with the Peninsula Campaign complete. Lunch is provided.

If you have an extra day, you can then join us for the start of the **Seven Days Campaign** in the BGES tour, "**The Federals Meet Robert E. Lee: The Battles of Mechanicsville and Gaines Mill**" [add link] with Bert Dunkerly, which will be on February 24.

### **About the Faculty:**

**Len Riedel** is the Executive Director of the Blue and Gray Education Society. A retired Air Force officer with a Master's degree in History from Old Dominion University, Riedel has conducted more than a hundred different tours, but this theme mirrors his Master's work. He is the editor of the National Geographic's best-selling *The Civil War, A Travelers Guide* (2016).

### **Hotel Information:**

This program will be based in Williamsburg and the hotel will be announced on this site. A block of rooms will be established.

### **Transportation:**

The servicing airport is Richmond (RIC), which is about 35 miles from Williamsburg. The airport has numerous land transportation options and a rental car is not essential, but it would be useful after hours. A back-up airport with a limited flight schedule is Patrick Henry Field (PHF) in Newport News. Amtrak also serves Williamsburg with a limited schedule. The hotel will be convenient to I-64.

### **Recommended Reading:**

You will be provided with a reading book and maps upon arrival. We recommend the following books to enhance your preparation for this tour. *Amazon.com* has a program to support non-profits IF YOU SIGN UP to support Blue and Gray Education Society (EIN 54-1720582) at [AmazonSmile](#). When you sign up there rather than the normal Amazon site, one-half of one percent of your purchase price will be provided to BGES as a donation from Amazon. This will apply not only on this purchase but others you may make at other times.

Kevin Dougherty: [\*The Peninsula Campaign of 1862: A Military Analysis\*](#)

Kathryn Schively Meier: [\*Nature's Civil War: Common Soldiers and the Environment in 1862 Virginia\*](#)

Stephen Sears: [\*To the Gates of Richmond: The Peninsula Campaign\*](#)

Michael T. Settles: [\*John Bankhead Magruder: A Military Reappraisal\*](#)

Alexander Webb: *The Peninsula, McClellan's Campaign of 1862* **Is this:** [\*Campaigns of the Civil War: Peninsula\*](#)



## Registration Form

*The Peninsula Campaign, March to May 1862*

*A 2019 BGES Civil War Field University Program*

*Presented by Len Riedel*

*February 19-23, 2019*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration includes two lunches and a dinner, all paid admissions, a reading book with maps, the academic program, support of a professional historian, tour director, and transportation by passenger van. We will also provide snacks and bottled water.

\_\_\_\_\_ Registration \$850

\_\_\_\_\_ Current BGES member \$795

\_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/full time student with identification \$725

\_\_\_\_\_ I am not a member but would like to join so that I can get the member's rate or I am a member who is past due to renew. Please accept my donation of

\$\_\_\_\_\_ (must be \$75 or more which is tax deductible)

\_\_\_\_\_ I am sending a deposit of \$100 per person and or memberships. Total enclosed is \$

I will pay the balance due before the event.

\_\_\_\_\_ Check enclosed

Charge my (circle one) MC VISA AMEXP Discover \$\_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_

Exp: \_\_\_\_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to BGES Seminars, PO Box 1176, Chatham, VA 24531, or fax credit card registrations to 434-432-0596. You may also register online at [www.blueandgrayeducation.org](http://www.blueandgrayeducation.org).