

# **THE BATTLE OF SEVEN PINES**

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The battle of Seven Pines by Gustavus W. Smith

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**GUSTAVUS W. SMITH**

**THE BATTLE  
OF SEVEN PINES**



*Jessie J. Hunt*

THE  
BATTLE OF SEVEN PINES.

BY  
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CALIFORNIA

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ANNOTATED

## P R E F A C E.

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MANY of the published accounts of the battle of Seven Pines are about as dark and confusing as were the tangled woods and swamps in which most of the close and bloody fighting took place. The following quotations will illustrate the conflict of statements on this subject. Federal writers say: "It is hardly denied by the most passionate of McClellan's partisans that the way was open before him to Richmond on the afternoon of the first day; that being McClellan's greatest opportunity." "The Confederates had thrown almost their whole force against McClellan's left wing (Keyes and Heintzelman), and on the second day were streaming back to Richmond in discouragement and disorder." "We now know the state of disorganization and dismay in which the rebel army retreated." On the Confederate side it is stated: "The way to Richmond was not open to McClellan." "The first day the Confederates attacked McClellan's left wing with but five brigades." "So far from streaming back to Richmond in discouragement and disorder, they [the attacking party] remained in possession of the captured works on the Williamsburg road, nearly twenty-four hours after the fighting ended; and, on the Nine-miles road the Confederates closely confronted Sumner's corps at Fair Oaks for several days thereafter."

The above quotations are from the *Century Magazine* for January, 1889, page 477. They are referred to here as constituting one of "a thousand" instances of conflicting opinions in regard to the principal features of this battle—which seem to call for the publication of an accurate account of the main facts and the proofs. While endeavoring to prepare such an account I have felt constrained—at the risk of being tedious—to comment upon erroneous "assertions" of "high authorities;" and to give, in some detail, important evidence contained in the recently published official reports of regimental, brigade and division commanders, on both sides.





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## BATTLE OF SEVEN PINES.

### PRELIMINARY CHAPTER.

In the latter part of May, 1862, the Army of Northern Virginia, about 50,000 strong, under General J. E. Johnston, reached the vicinity of Richmond from the defensive lines near Yorktown, and was followed by the army of the Potomac, nearly 100,000 strong, under General G. B. McClellan. There was a collision between the rear of the Confederates and the Federal advanced troops at Williamsburg, and a slight affair near the head of York river. Otherwise the withdrawal was not interfered with.

In retiring from Williamsburg, General J. E. Johnston's army was organized in two grand divisions, known as the First and Second Corps. The latter was commanded by Major-General James Longstreet and consisted of his own division and that of Major-General D. H. Hill. I commanded the First Corps, which was composed of the forces that were under Major-General J. B. Magruder, at Yorktown, before Johnston's army arrived there, and five other brigades; three of which, viz., Whiting's, Hood's and Hampton's, constituted a division under Brigadier-General Whiting; and the brigades of Pettigrew and Hatton, each of which reported direct to the headquarters of the First Corps. On the 28th of May, under authority from General Johnston, the following order was issued by my direction:

"The division now commanded by Brigadier-General Whiting and the brigades of Brigadier-General Pettigrew and Brigadier-General Hatton will, until further orders, constitute one division under command of Brigadier-General Whiting."