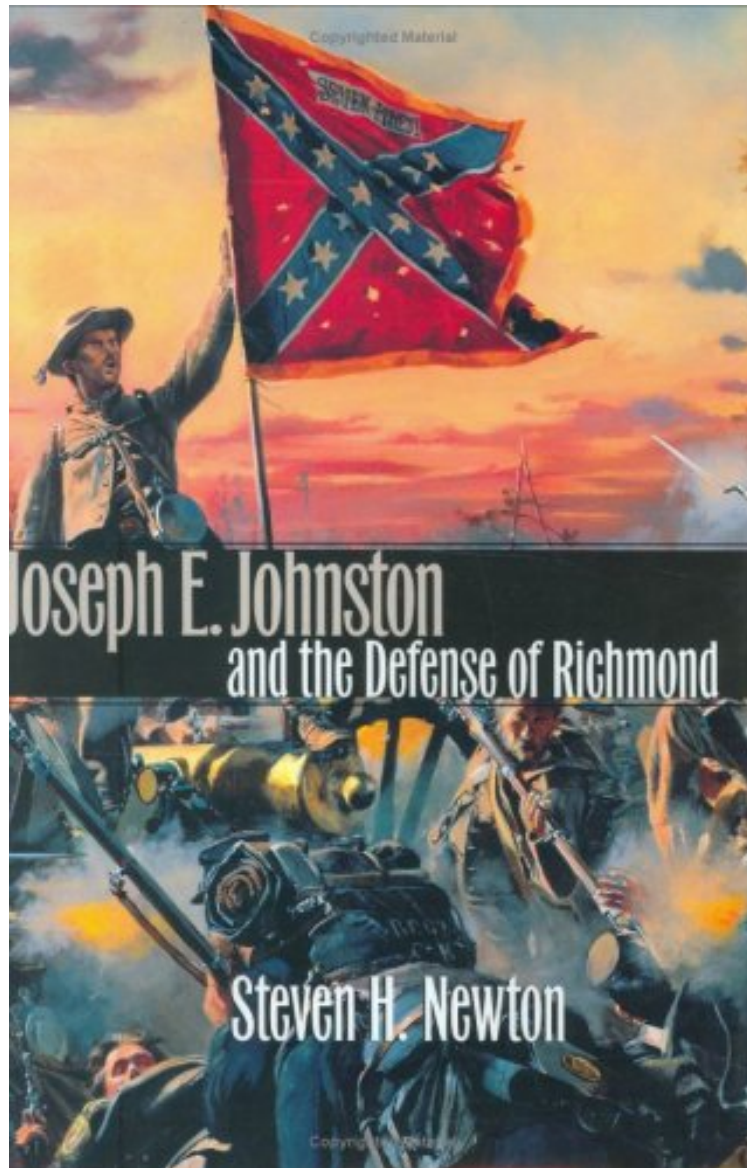


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Joseph E. Johnston and the Defense of Richmond (Modern War Studies (Hardcover))

Steven H. Newton

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Steven H. Newton : Joseph E. Johnston and the Defense of Richmond (Modern War Studies (Hardcover))

before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Joseph E. Johnston and the Defense of Richmond (Modern War Studies (Hardcover)):

3 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Was hoping for more By Thomas McMahon given the title of the

book, I thought the author would spend a bit more time on the Battle of Williamsburg - one of Johnston's few battles he fought before his wounding sent command over to Lee. Given Williamsburg is a topic of interest I was taken aback by several very poor inaccuracies made by the author. For example the author stated on page 136 "...neither he nor McLaws knew the exact locations of all the forts (at Williamsburg)." This is a terrible inaccuracy as McLaws oversaw the building of the fortifications and had his command based in Williamsburg for 6 months from 61-62. This fact really makes it questionable Johnston pulling him out of the defensive line he constructed and knew better than any other commander in the army in lieu of Longstreet. The Author takes much of the OR reports regarding this battle - especially Longstreets at face value which is a mistake. The map included in the book is a borrowed one from another publication (one on cavalry skirmishes on May 4 between Williamsbur and Yorktown and major flaws - the 6th Cavalry moved up on the East not West side of Fort Magruder on May 4th, Emory did not move up to Williamsburg on the Hampton Road on May 4 and Grier was with Gibson's guns not separate as shown. The author does not even mention who or what Grier's force was. He credits Stuart as keeping Johnston "informed of the advance of the union cavalry," when in actuality Stuart managed to get cut off and nearly captured. Johnston was so uninformed that the redoubts at Williamsburg were not even manned when the Union vanguard arrived. With regard to Stuart's near capture and forced march through the tidal pools of the James River the author characterizes this as being "resourceful in every extremity in detouring..." I could go on. It is details that are needed and really impact his revisionist take on Johnston and if the book contains as many imperfections as the section on Williamsburg one should read it with much caution when determine credibility. This is fast history based on OR accounts - a scratch of the surface with a new twist. 12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Joseph E. Johnson and the Defense of Richmond By E. E. Pofahl Professor Newton has written a readable account of the generalship of Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston for the period from February 1862 until General Johnson's wounding at the battle of Seven Pines on May 31, 1862. The book begins with a brief discussion of (1) the deteriorating trust between Johnson and Jefferson Davis; (2) the Department of Northern Virginia; and (3) the process, including both political and military factors, used in making the decision to move Johnston's army from Centerville, Virginia to be closer to Richmond. The decision and the details of withdrawal are well documented after which the author covers the Peninsula Campaign, the Battle of Seven Pines and ends with an interesting assessment of Johnston's campaign. Some scholars and Civil War buffs have questioned the expenditure of resources to defend Richmond and speculate that a capitol located in the interior of the Confederacy would have been preferred as being easier to defend. Professor Newton outlines the strategic importance of Richmond stating that it was a critical manufacturing, transportation and financial center. The Tredegar Iron Works alone justified the defense of Richmond. In addition, the city had four major banks, had five railroad lines and was a flour-milling center. Having established the strategic necessity of defending Richmond, the writer proceeds to document General Johnston's defense of the city. The writer objectively narrates the involvement of Lee in the decisions during this period noting areas of agreement and differences between Johnston, Lee and Davis. While Professor Newton openly states "...the tenor of this work is pro-Johnston in terms of my assessment of the general's handling of his army" he favorably reviews Joseph Johnston's performance without engaging in "Lee bashing" the approach often used by revisionist historians to support their thesis. He gives credit and/or blame where it is due in his opinion. This makes for interesting and provocative reading. Professor Newton gives a balanced evaluation of General Longstreet's performance. Longstreet is depicted as neither a hero nor a villain. The writer may well have summed up Longstreet's Civil War career in one sentence when he wrote "...that Longstreet, though undeniably talented, was incredibly willful, and his cooperation in operations of which he did not approve was notoriously poor." The narration of the Peninsula Campaign and Seven Pines is well worth the price of the book. Especially interesting is his description of Johnston's reaction to Federal transports reaching the mouth of the Pamunkey River and the Union gunboats ascending the York River following the Confederate evacuation of Yorktown; a situation Johnston both anticipated and feared. The author observes that at Seven Pines Johnston "...totally abdicated his responsibility for the overall conduct of the battle when he led Whiting's division down the Nine Mile Road..." and then makes the interestingly observation that this was a similar failing of almost all Civil War commanding generals, Confederate or Union, in their first offensive battle. The last chapter is an assessment of Johnston's campaign. Here the author states that Johnston's retreat from Williamsburg was a skillful maneuver with strategic insight. Professor Newton correctly states that Joseph Johnston did in fact successfully defend Richmond. In view of the strategic importance of Richmond in 1862 this was a significant accomplishment. The last chapter is insightful and well worth reading. The lack of a sufficient number of maps is the book's major shortcoming. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Solid, sober work. By CBreck Entertaining and educational account of Confederate General Joseph Johnston's uneven campaign to defend Richmond in 1862, with an interesting emphasis on both his inclination to do things his own way and determination to prevent Confederate President Jefferson Davis from taking over his campaign. A balanced portrayal that gives a real sense of his attributes and flaws as a commander.

Most often viewed as a prelude to Robert E. Lee's Civil War victories of 1862, Joseph E. Johnston's campaign in Virginia early that year has been considered uninspired at best, catastrophic at worst. Steven Newton now offers a

revisionist account of Johnston's operations between the York and James Rivers to show how his performance in the "Peninsular War" contributed to a crucial strategic victory for the Confederacy. Newton acknowledges the limitations usually attributed to Johnston by other historians but suggests that assessments of the general's performance in Virginia have been colored by later controversies. He argues that contemporary sources portray Johnston as conducting his operations competently and within the strategic framework laid down in Richmond, even when he personally disagreed with those decisions. By holding his outnumbered army together and delaying the advance of Union forces, the general bought critical time for the Confederacy to recruit, organize, and arm the expanded army that would drive the Federals away from Richmond soon after Johnston himself was wounded at Seven Pines. Focusing on the period between mid-February and late May 1862, Newton examines in detail the high-level conferences in Richmond to set strategy and the relationship of the Peninsula campaign to operations in the Shenandoah Valley and the western Confederacy. What emerges is a portrait of a general who was much more complex in thought and action than even his advocates have argued. By examining what Johnston actually accomplished rather than speculating on what he might have done, Newton shows that his overall conduct of the campaign holds up well under scrutiny. Marked by painstaking research and analysis, Newton's reconsideration of Johnston is a key account of Confederate operations in the pivotal eastern Virginia theater in 1862. It provides an important new look at an episode in the war that until now has received little attention and helps rescue an unduly maligned leader from the shadow of Lee.

"A challenging new assessment of Joe Johnston's conduct of the defense of Richmond and an important contribution to the scholarly debate about Civil War military leadership. No serious student of the war can overlook Newton's careful research and provocative conclusions."—Craig L. Symonds, author of *Stonewall of the West* "This is by far the best thing I know of on the war in Virginia in the first five months of 1862. I have learned a lot from Newton's work and I recommend it very strongly."—Richard M. McMurry, author of *Two Great Rebel Armies* "An impressive, invaluable, and bracingly revisionist account of Johnston's service in Virginia."—Steven E. Woodworth, author of *Davis and Lee at War* From the Back Cover "A challenging new assessment of Joe Johnston's conduct of the defense of Richmond and an important contribution to the scholarly debate about Civil War military leadership. No serious student of the war can overlook Newton's careful research and provocative conclusions."--Craig L. Symonds, author of *Stonewall of the West* "This is by far the best thing I know of on the war in Virginia in the first five months of 1862. I have learned a lot from Newton's work and I recommend it very strongly."--Richard M. McMurry, author of *Two Great Rebel Armies* "An impressive, invaluable, and bracingly revisionist account of Johnston's service in Virginia."--Steven E. Woodworth, author of *Davis and Lee at War* About the Author Steven H. Newton is associate professor of history at Delaware State University and the author of *The Battle of Seven Pines*.