

STUART'S RIDE



Safe among Friends and Family



CivilWarTrails.org

1862 PENINSULA CAMPAIGN

In May 1862, Union Gen. George B. McClellan led the Army of the Potomac up the Peninsula to the gates of Richmond. Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee assumed command of the Army of Northern Virginia in June and began planning a counterattack. On June 12, Gen. J.E.B. Stuart led 1,200 cavalymen on a daring 3-day reconnaissance and discovered that the Union right flank was unsecured. Stuart's "Ride around McClellan" gave Lee the vital information he needed to launch the offensive known as the Seven Days' Battles on June 26.

At about 1 P.M. on June 14, 1862, Gen. J.E.B. Stuart and his cavalymen had accomplished their dangerous and difficult crossing of the Chickahominy River. With the river between them and pursuing Union cavalry, Stuart and his weary men felt confident that they would return safely to Richmond and pressed on through Charles City County at a somewhat slower pace.

Stuart earlier had selected two New Kent County residents from the 3rd Virginia Cavalry to guide the column through New Kent and Charles City counties. One of them, Lt. Jones Rivers Christian, who had been born at Sycamore Springs 6 miles north of here, led the way from Tunstall's Station to the Chickahominy River. He escorted the troopers across Charles City County to the homes of kinsmen and other trusted acquaintances where they gathered intelligence and briefly rested their horses.

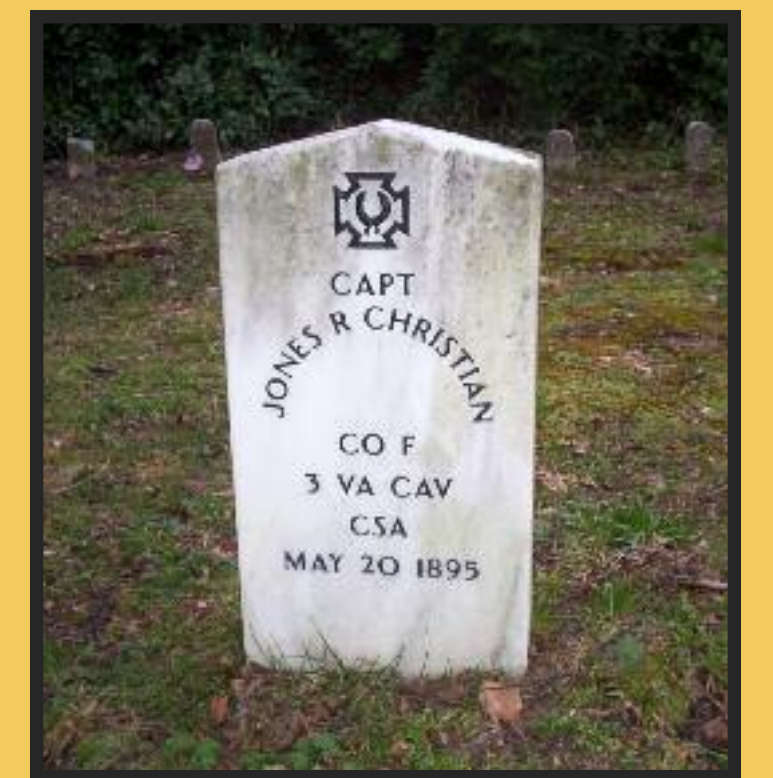
The first stop was two miles north at Green Oak, the home of Thomas Christian, where Stuart was



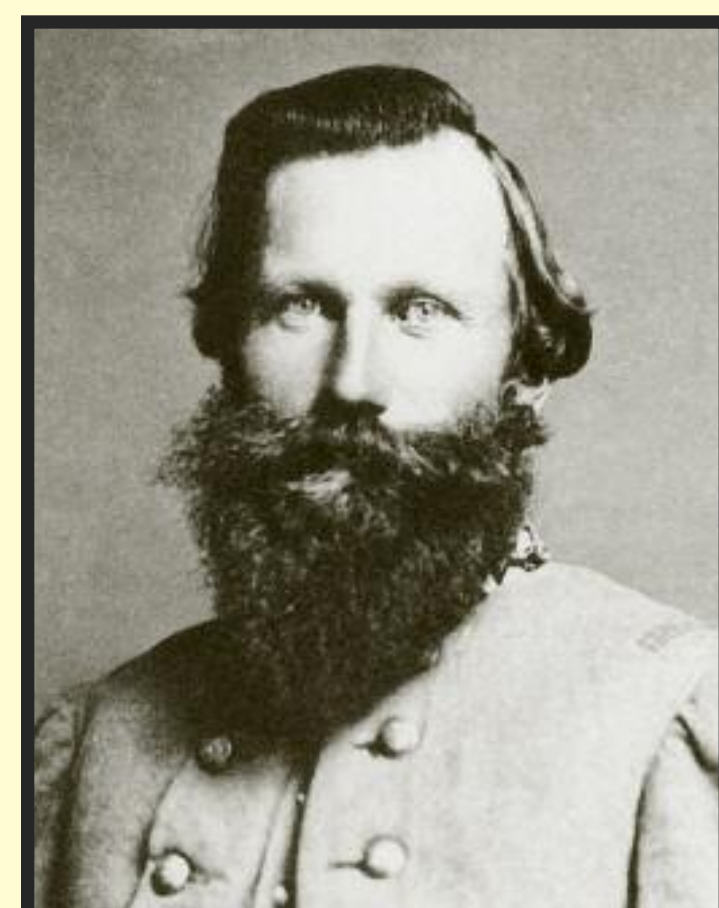
Green Oak, 1886 – Courtesy Green Oak Farms

offered coffee and rested for about two hours. Stuart then rode down the road in front of you and stopped just south of here at Woodburn, the home of Judge Isaac Christian. His men moved on to Buckland, the home of Judge James M. Willcox. At Buckland, Stuart placed Col. Fitzhugh Lee in command with instructions to let the men rest until 11 P.M. before resuming the ride to Richmond. Stuart departed with a few escorts eager to reach Richmond and report to Gen. Robert E. Lee.

Capt. Jones R. Christian was later captured and was among the "Immortal 600" Confederate prisoners whom the Union army used as human shields during the shelling of Charleston, South Carolina. Christian spent the last years of his life as a resident of the R.E. Lee Camp No. 1 Confederate Soldiers Home in Richmond and is buried at Hollywood Cemetery.

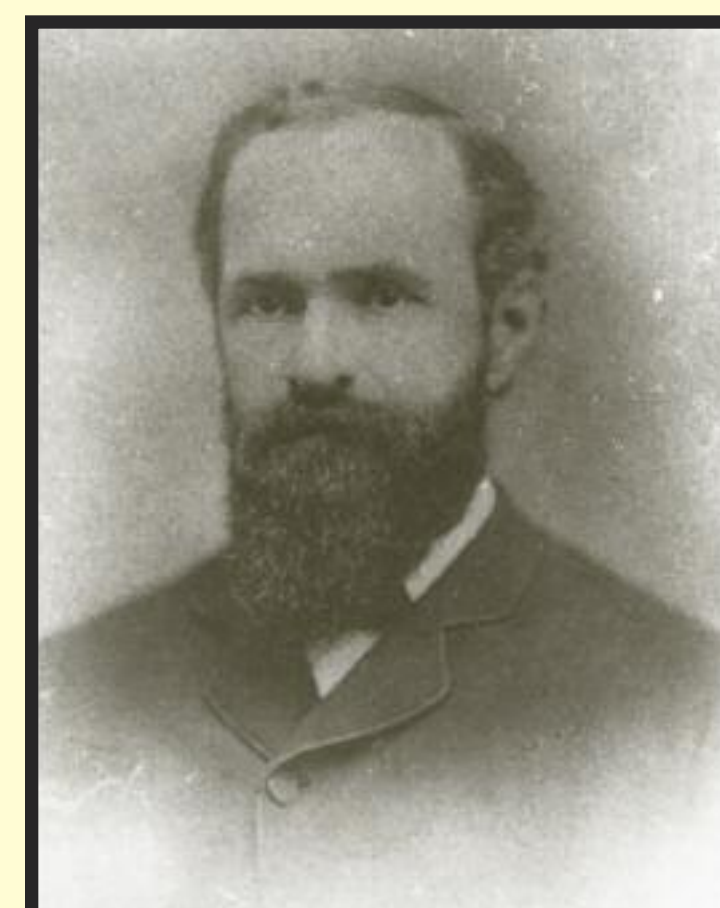


Courtesy Jim DuPriest



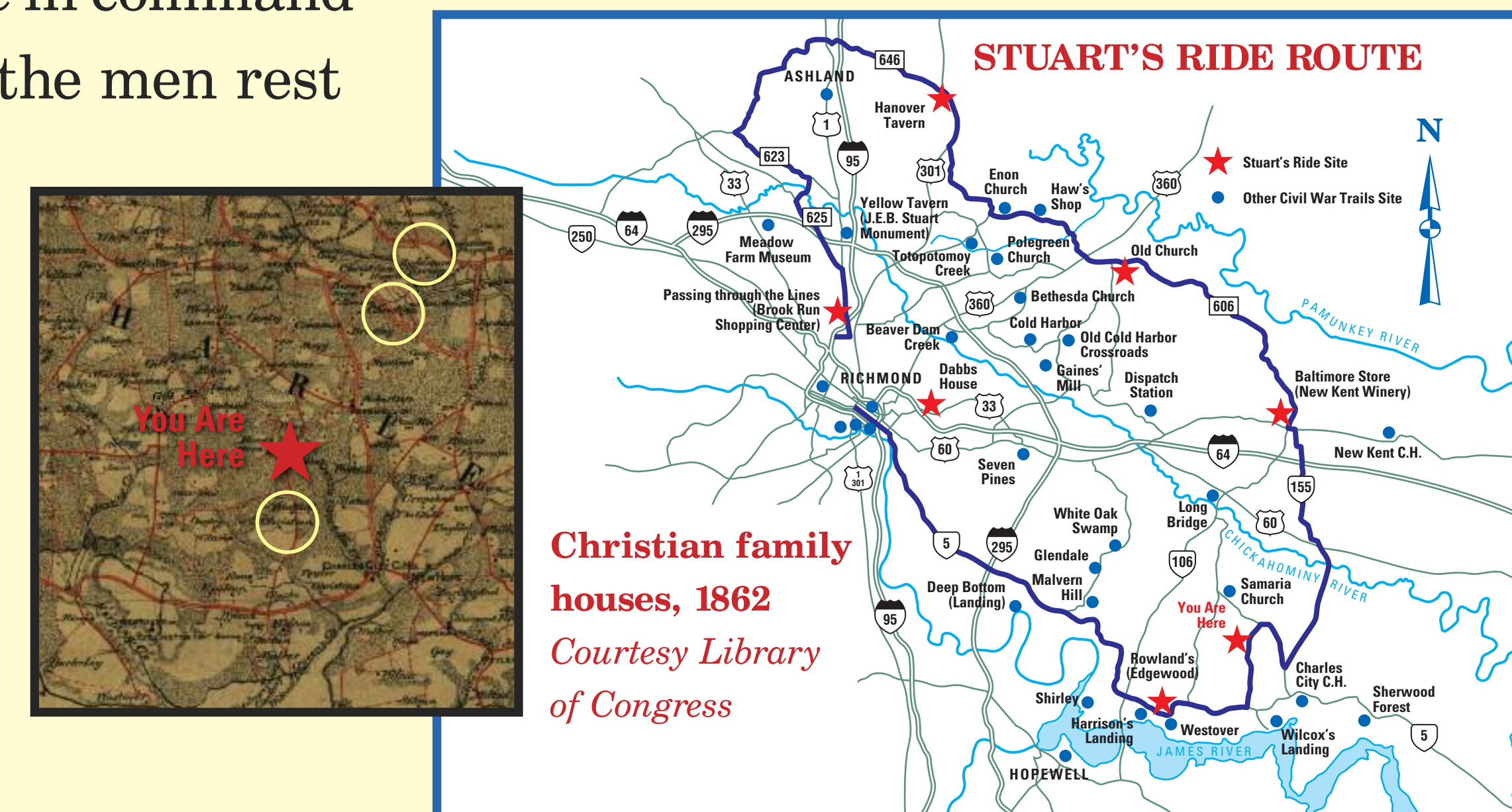
Gen. J.E.B. Stuart

Courtesy Library of Congress



Judge Isaac Christian

Courtesy Mrs. Evelyn Hill



Christian family houses, 1862
Courtesy Library of Congress