

= Battle of Garnett 's & Golding 's Farm =

The Battle of Garnett 's and Golding 's Farms took place June 27 ? 28 , 1862 , in Henrico County , Virginia , as part of the Seven Days Battles of the American Civil War 's Peninsula Campaign . While the battle at Gaines 's Mill raged north of the Chickahominy River , the forces of Confederate general John B. Magruder conducted a reconnaissance in force that developed into a minor attack against the Union line south of the river at Garnett 's Farm . The Confederates attacked again near Golding 's Farm on the morning of June 28 but in both cases were easily repulsed . The action at the Garnett and Golding farms accomplished little beyond convincing McClellan that he was being attacked from both sides of the Chickahominy .

= = Background = =

= = = Military situation = = =

Richmond , Virginia , as the center of the Southern rebellion , was a city of obvious strategic importance to both sides of the American Civil War . In this context , General George McClellan and his Army of the Potomac began a campaign on the Virginia Peninsula to take the city . His early attempts were successful . In fact , on nearly every front , the Northerners had an advantage over the Confederates . By the end of May 1862 however , McClellan 's army was split in half along the banks of the Chickahominy River , with one wing , encompassing two Union corps , to the south river , and the other wing , with some three Federal corps , to the north . On May 31 , Joseph E. Johnston , the general @-@ in @-@ chief of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia , sought to capitalize on the bifurcation and led three columns of soldiers towards the Union position at the south of the river . The resulting conflict , called the Battle of Seven Pines (or Fair Oaks) , was inconclusive . Johnston 's plan fell apart , and the Army of the Potomac lost no ground . Johnston himself was wounded however , and the next day , June 1 , Jefferson Davis , the President of the Confederate States , appointed his military adviser , General Robert E. Lee , to lead the Confederate armies . There was a lull in the fighting on the Peninsula in subsequent weeks , ending in a Union offensive at Oak Grove on June 25 . Lee 's men managed to halt the attacking Federals , and the next day , the Confederates went on the offensive in the Battle of Mechanicsville (or Beaver Dam Creek) . The battle ended in a Confederate repulse and heavy Southern casualties . Nevertheless , the victorious Federals , under General McClellan 's orders , retreated to Boatswain 's Swamp at the south Chickahominy and established a formidable battle line . There , on June 27 , the Confederate armies launched an attack at Gaines 's Mill , which would become one of the bloodiest battles of the Peninsula Campaign . While the conflict at Gaines 's Mill raged , another conflict was brewing near two farms to the south , which would turn into the Battle of Garnett 's and Golding 's Farm .

= = Opposing forces = =

= = = Union = = =

= = = Confederate = = =

= = Battle = =

James M. Garnett 's farm , near Old Tavern , was situated on the edge of the bluffs at the banks of the Chickahominy River . Near the Garnett farm was Golding 's Plain , belonging to Simon Gouldin .

Between the two farms was a precipitous ravine , a creek and a hill named Garnett 's Hill . Union soldiers from Brigadier General William T. H. Brooks 's brigade of William F. " Baldy " Smith 's VI Corps began placing artillery pieces on Garnett 's Hill the night before the battle . This activity was resumed by Brigadier General Winfield Scott Hancock 's brigade of the same Corps the following morning ? June 27 , 1862 . Six batteries of reserve artillery were placed .

While the Federals worked , Confederate soldiers of Major General David R. Jones 's division began taking up positions in the area . Brigadier General Robert Toombs 's brigade positioned themselves at the west side of the ravine , while Colonel George T. Anderson 's brigade took up a position northwest of the area , less than a mile from the Garnett house . Anderson 's and Toombs 's artillerists were ordered to fire on the Union soldiers whenever the opportunity presented itself . The Federals , now preparing for a general engagement , were told to avoid a clash with the Confederates . The result was a brisk shelling that lasted about an hour , and ended in a Confederate withdrawal . The Union 's twenty @-@ three , well @-@ positioned guns withstood the Confederates 's ten guns , which were situated in an open field . Later , some of Major General Lafayette McLaws 's men advanced towards the Union line at the Garnett farm at about 4 pm , but withdrew after ten minutes under heavy fire . There was a lull in the subsequent hours , ending with Toombs 's attack on the Union line at about 7 pm . Toombs was ordered to reconnoiter or " feel the enemy " . Instead , he engaged the Federals in a " sharp and sustained fight " . After nightfall , Toombs 's advance was repelled by Winfield Hancock 's brigade after about an hour and a half of fighting . The Confederates suffered some 271 casualties during the day 's conflict . The action at the Garnett farm accomplished little .

The following day , June 28 , Union and Confederate soldiers clashed again near the Golding house . Jones suspected that the Federals near the house were withdrawing , and authorized Toombs to perform a reconnaissance @-@ in @-@ force to ascertain whether this was true . However , Toombs turned the reconnaissance operation into a full engagement and advanced with some of Anderson 's men . Before he could be countermanded , the Confederates had already been repulsed by the VI Corps .

= = Aftermath = =

In the two days of fighting at the Garnett and Golding farms , the Confederates suffered 438 casualties , while the Federals suffered 189 . Anderson 's men , who bore the brunt of the Federal counterattack , suffered 156 casualties on the second day of fighting . This battle accomplished little , but helped to convince McClellan that he was being attacked from both sides of the Chickahominy . On the evening of June 28 , McClellan convened a meeting with his generals . He announced that he was willing to pursue an attack on Richmond , but such an attack could spell the defeat and destruction of the Army of the Potomac . The result of the meeting was that the Federals would begin a retreat . " The commanding general announced to us his purpose to begin a movement to the James River on the next day , " noted Union general William B. Franklin . McClellan 's decision to withdraw to the James set the stage for the subsequent Battle of Savage 's Station .