

General G. T. Beauregard.

General:

In examining the Country between Charleston and Savannah and the S. C. R. R. from Jacksonboro to Pocotaligo on the former and from Ridgeville to Branchville & Medway on the latter, one cannot but be struck with the facilities offered to an enemy threatening the S. C. R. R. from the sea, by the directness with which the Southern part of the Edisto, the Saltketcher or Cambahaw and the Ashepoo rivers run from one to the other of these Rail Roads.

An enemy marching in this section from the sea towards the S. C. R. R. would have fine direct roads, and his progress would not be delayed by any of the Swamps with which the Country seems to be filled, were it not that the upper portion of the Edisto runs in an almost Easterly direction until turned sharply towards the South by a high Bluff at Grahams Ferry, thus affording a fine line for defence some 6 or 8 miles from the R. R. and parallel to it. It would be of the highest importance for an Officer operating in this Country, to note well the difference of effort required in moving to or from an enemy directly up or down the Country or across it, from East to West or from W to East, In the latter case Swamps or Causeways would be of constant occurrence in the former case he would meet none,

An enemy for instance who should march up the

right bank of the Combahee & then try to cross the head waters of the Salt Ketcher going East, would find the first part of his road perfectly free from natural difficulties, and the last part of it so full of them as to be impracticable if any opposition was offered to his march.

The same is true of all this Country excepting the pine barren portions of it north of Watterboro, which is perfectly open with only here and there a gall or bog and the small streams with sandy bottoms flowing from them all of which are easily crossed or turned.

These facts render the defence of the Edisto or Pompono as the Combahee Rivers at points as near their mouths as possible of great interest, not merely in view of the Savannah R.R., and our communications with that city, but in view of the S.C. R.R. & the entire R.R. communications between East & West of the seaboard of the Confederacy.

An enterprising enemy well led entering the Country between the Edisto & Combahee could easily protect his flanks by guarding the five crossings through their Swamps. He would occupy a central position as against the troops now guarding the Savannah R.R. who would find it difficult to unite.

He would directly threaten the S.C. R.R. & indirectly Charleston.

Against an enemy passing up the road from Willtown to Ridgeville, determined resistance should be offered at Balls Swamp on a line with Caw Caw

Balls
Swamp
Ridge

This position is not particularly strong and that is therefore the more reason for work to rivet it so, but the Country in

Bulls
Swamp
Bulls

Resistance should be offered
at Bulls Swamp on line with Caw Caw

St. Paul's

This position is not particularly strong and that is therefore the more reason for work to involve it, but the Country in the rear of Caw Caw is exactly adapted for troops resolved to remain and operate on the flank of an Army, which having forced Bulls Swamp should still push on to Ridgville, I do not know of any better field for the display of talents for the kind of warfare here required than this portion of St. Paul's offers.

Officers and men must personally study the ground or it would be no better for them than for their enemies.

If I might make a suggestion it would be that the troops in St. Paul's should not retire directly before an enemy, but remaining to attack his flank and break up his line of Communication, should leave the foe to be met in front by troops coming from the line of the S. C. R. R.

Givhams

At Dr. Charles' just above Givhams Ferry a good position offers. The River road has forks one branch for Ridgville and one crossing the Bridge over Town Hole Swamp for Orangeburg.

Ferry,

Dr. Charles

and Town Hole

Swamp

This Bridge should be strengthened and the lumber for it is just at hand, work should be done here as the enemy are met in front so far as the road is concerned, and troops here would be on their flanks should they venture to pass before them moving to their right towards the S. C. R. R., which they might attempt if the Country is as open as I fear it is.

If overwhelmed they could quickly put themselves

behind H Hole Swamp & hold it against great odds.

The river road from Giohams to Tuckers Bridge is good and there are seven (7) crossings through the River road Swamp (Edisto) from the bend to Branchville, North side of. At Giohams the Bluff is on the left bank Edisto - & so continues for some distance.

Giohams, There is a crossing just above H Hole Branch (on the Edisto) one at Raysors Bridge on the road from Georges Station to Waterboro very important. The Bluff is on the right bank but the ground is then so favorable for & the defenses so necessary that I would advise the occupation of the wrong side of the river and that the work needful to hold it should be done there.

The River bends so that but little ground need be enclosed, and all the work to be done here might be regarded as a Bridge Head.

Preparation should be made here to retire the troops by a flying Bridge either above or below the bend in case the Enemy should be enabled to destroy the present structure.

At Wiggins the Bluff is on our side as it is at Apples where there is a bridge, which like all others in this region as well as the flats at the ferries requires to be put in serviceable condition.

At Mays Ferry, there is a Bluff on both sides, at Tuckers there was a Bridge

This is the most important point in

Presently this section, directly on the line to Branchville the front & midway, all of the roads included, between the

at Tucker there was a bridge a Bluff on both sides;

This is the most important point in

between this section, directly on the line to Branchville
the front Midway, all of the roads included, between the
most important Salt Ketcher and the Edisto (going North)
meet here

The Bluff is on the right bank, but this point must
be held or an enemy could reach unopposed to
Midway without crossing the Edisto -

The position is very favorable for defense and the
Country west of it is represented as difficult, wet
and with out roads, not liable to be turned (not easily)

Branchville The crossing to Branchville some four miles
above Tucker is through a Swamp a mile wide
over four Bridges impracticable with attention,
The R.R. Bridge at Branchville should have
some protection on the right bank of the River

By Timber There are large quantities of Dry ^{ranging} ~~running~~
timber near the crossings and timber ^{trucks} benches
on every plantation which the enemy should
not be allowed to make use of

The progress of an enemy up the River roads
or through the Swamps might be delayed by
throwing down trees across the roads when they
pass over small streams, or through bays, galls,
or Swamps, having quit place large piles of
Obstruction light wood &c on either side to be set on fire
just before our troops are withdrawn,

Without this they can quickly remove
such obstructions, or a well made fire they
must wait

If there is fear of their pulling such
fire to pieces, a few torpedoes to explode
if they pull certain sticks, might help.

They might be retarded at Bridges or Causeways
by thin ^{large} logs or piles on either side of them.

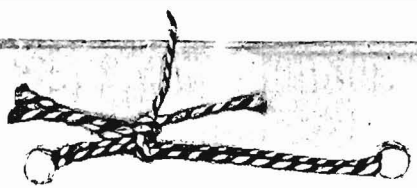
I will again allude to the difference it
would make in your plans for defence at
Location of this moment had the Savannah RR been
S.C.R.R. run on the healthy pine land back of Watterboro
and not ~~as~~ now over streams acceptable to
the first movements of an enemy.

Maj Arthur Hays & Mr S Y Hyde
examined this Country with me whilst
Messrs Watkins King Sill & Porter passed
from Watterboro via Latham Ladrons
Shawbery & Christ Church reporting good roads

Very Respectfully
Lewis M Hatch

Copy.

[COL. LEWIS M. HATCH]
23RD S.C. REGIMENT



Copy of
Report made
by Paul Pennington

as to the country
included between
the 40th & 42nd
Parl Roads and
the Schell and
Combarles Rivers
as appearing
in
Pencil
by W. H. H. H. H.
(no date)