

## Jeremy Francis Gilmer and the Confederate Engineers' Maps

The organization of military engineers, like that of other branches of the Confederate government, evolved hastily during the fevered climate of early 1861. By the following year the Confederacy moved to give a more permanent establishment to its corps of engineers. In September of that year a West Point graduate and engineer officer in the prewar army, Lieutenant Colonel Jeremy Francis Gilmer (1818-1883), took command of the Confederate Engineer Bureau, a post he held until the end of the war. By the time of the surrender at Appomattox, Gilmer, then a major general, had contributed greatly to the southern war effort. As chief of engineers he was charged with administering a myriad of tasks in circumstances of increasing adversity that would have overwhelmed a man of lesser skill. He supervised construction of coastal fortifications, built bridges, commandeered labor, and helped ensure a supply of iron for railroad lines. He assisted in laying out the defenses of Atlanta and Charleston. And he oversaw the making of maps.

If building forts and other such substantial military assets was an important task of the engineers, so too was supplying maps. The need of the South's armies for accurate intelligence of the terrain over which the war was fought was acute. From the outset, and increasingly as the war progressed, that terrain embraced the land of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

In 1861 the Confederates found the available maps-like nearly everything of military value except enthusiasm-out of date, in short supply, and inadequate to the task. Revisions of existing maps and creation of new ones fell to the province of military engineers both in Richmond and with individual Confederate armies. In the capital southern cartographers even experimented with applying photography to their work in order to make prints of maps for their armies. Some of the Virginia Historical Society's maps-all original documents and not copies-may have been photographed for distribution in the field.

The names of more than a dozen Confederate engineer officers appear on the Society's maps. The most frequent by far is that of Albert H. Campbell, the captain who headed the topographical division of the Department of Northern Virginia. Also appearing, though less commonly, are the names of Benjamin Lewis Blackford, Charles E. Cassell, and Walter Izard. Because all of these maps were created under the supervision of Jeremy Francis Gilmer and came into the Society's hands through the general's daughter, they have long been known informally, and with good cause, as simply "the Gilmer maps."

Among all the charts of Virginia and eastern North Carolina created by Gilmer's draftsmen, sixty-four were rescued by Gilmer from the evacuation fire following the fall of

Richmond in April 1865. All but one of these maps came into the possession of the Virginia Historical Society in 1911 through the generosity of Gilmer's only child, Louisa Porter (Gilmer) Minis of Savannah, Georgia. The other chart, one mapping a part of Henrico County, was presented by Mrs. Minis to the Bryan family of Brook Hill in 1897. In 1988 it rejoined its fellows at the Society as a gift of Jonathan Bryan III of Richmond. Three other maps, one depicting the area around Petersburg, one the south side of the James River, and the third eastern North Carolina, came to the Society in 1946 as part of the R. E. Lee Headquarters Papers acquired as a result of the Society's merger with the Confederate Memorial Association.

During the Second World War, the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution in Virginia funded the lamination of these precious charts to ensure their continued existence despite the heavy use they were put to by researchers. The lamination was carried out in memory of George Bryan, state president of the Sons between 1915 and 1917.

For nearly ninety years the Gilmer collection has been one of the most important and frequently consulted resources at the Virginia Historical Society. We are pleased now to make it available to a wider public.

No attempt has been made to clean up the maps. They are printed with all the stray marks, notations, tears, foxing, and mold-damage that appear on the originals. Some charts include presentation inscriptions from Louisa Gilmer Minis, and others have memorial cards commemorating the lamination of the maps by the Sons of the American Revolution in 1942. Several maps contain pencil notations made by the Civil War cartographers. In one instance, the map of Charles City and surrounding counties includes original marginal notes made in 1903 by Gilmer's brother-in-law, E. Porter Alexander. The Virginia Historical Society's call numbers are also reproduced on most of the maps.

The table of contents lists each of the maps ninety-four sheets in order. A notation has been made beside the maps that have not been reproduced. ( In most cases, these maps do not have significant detail to be of any interest.)

This collection does not include maps for each Virginia county. Some charts apparently did not survive the Civil War; other areas, especially those occupied by Union forces early in the conflict, were never surveyed at all. Several maps for Virginia counties surveyed under Gilmer's direction are housed in the collections of the United States Military Academy at West Point and at the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond; these maps are not reproduced.

## Maps by Number

- 1 Albemarle County, 1864
- 2 Amelia County, 1864
- 3 Amelia County, 1864 (1 of 2)
- 4 Amelia County, 1864 (2 of 2)
- 5 Bedford County, 1864
- 6 Bedford County, 1864
- 7 Botetourt County, 1864
- 8 Botetourt County, 1864
- 9 Botetourt County (Southwest Section), 1864
- 10 Botetourt County (Northwest Section), 1864
- 11 Brunswick County, 1864
- 12 Campbell County, 1864
  
- 15 Caroline and Surrounding Counties, 1863 (3 of 6)
- 16 Caroline and Surrounding Counties, 1863 (4 of 6)
- 17 Caroline and Surrounding Counties, 1863 (5 of 6)
- 18 Caroline and Surrounding Counties, 1863 (6 of 6)
- 19 Caroline County, 1864
- 20 Central Virginia, 1863
- 21 Charlotte County, 1864
- 22 Chesterfield County, 1862-63 (1 of 2)
- 23 Chesterfield County, 1862-63 (2 of 2)
- 24 Chesterfield County, 1864 (1 of 2)
- 25 Chesterfield County, 1864 (2 of 2)
  
- 27 Craig, Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski Counties, 1864 (1 of 2)
- 28 Craig, Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski Counties, 1864 (2 of 2)
- 29 Cumberland County, 1864
- 30 Dinwiddie County, 1864
- 31 Eastern Virginia, 1864 (1 of 6)
- 32 Eastern Virginia, 1864 (2 of 6)
  
- 35 Eastern Virginia, 1864 (5 of 6)

- 37 Fauquier County, 1863
- 38 Fluvanna County, 1863
- 39 Goochland County, 1863
  
- 44 Greenville County, 1864
- 45 Hanover County, 1864
- 46 Henrico County, 1862
  
- 52 King William County, 1865
- 53 Louisa County, 1863
- 54 Lynchburg and Vicinity, 1864 (1 of 2)
- 55 Lynchburg and Vicinity, 1864 (2 of 2)
- 56 Mecklenburg County, 1864
- 57 Mecklenburg, Brunswick, and Greenville Counties, 1864
- 58 Montgomery County, 1864
- 59 Nelson and Surrounding Counties, 1863
- 60 New Kent, Charles City, James City, and York Counties, 1863 (1 of 2)
- 61 New Kent, Charles City, James City, and York Counties, 1863 (2 of 2)
- 62 Nottoway County, 1864
- 63 Orange County, 1864
- 64 Petersburg and Vicinity, 1864
- 65 Powhatan County, 1864
- 66 Prince Edward County, 1864
- 67 Prince George County, 1863
  
- 70 Roanoke County, 1864 (1 of 2)
- 71 Roanoke County, 1864 (2 of 2)
- 72 Roanoke County, 1864
- 73 Rockbridge County, 1863 [1 of 4: Southern Section]
- 74 Rockbridge County, 1863 [2 of 4: Southwestern Section]
- 75 Rockbridge County, 1863 [3 of 4: Northern Section]
- 76 Rockbridge County, 1863 [4 of 4: Northeastern Section]
- 77 Lower Shenandoah Valley I, 1864
  
- 79 Lower Shenandoah Valley II, 1864 (2 of 3)
- 80 Lower Shenandoah Valley II, 1864 (3 of 3)

- 81 South Side of James River, 1864 (1 of 2)
- 82 South Side of James River, 1864 (2 of 2)
- 83 Spotsylvania and Surrounding Counties, 1864
  
- 85 Stafford County, 1863 (2 of 2)
- 86 Surry, Sussex, and Southampton Counties, 1863 (1 of 2)
- 87 Surry, Sussex, and Southampton Counties, 1863 (2 of 2)
- 88 Western and Southwestern Virginia, 1862
- 89 Bertie County, North Carolina, 1863
- 90 Bertie County, North Carolina, 1863 (1 of 2)
- 91 Bertie County, North Carolina, 1863 (2 of 2)
- 92 Brunswick County, North Carolina, 1863
- 93 Eastern North Carolina, 1864
- 94 Hertford and Part of Northampton and Bertie Counties, North Carolina, 1863

Maps Not Reproduced

- 13 Caroline and Surrounding Counties, 1863 (1 of 6)
- 14 Caroline and Surrounding Counties, 1863 (2 of 6)
- 26 Drewry's Bluff, Chesterfield County, 1864
- 33 Eastern Virginia, 1864 (3 of 6)
- 34 Eastern Virginia, 1864 (4 of 6)
- 36 Eastern Virginia, 1864 (6 of 6)
- 40 Greensville County, 1863 (1 of 2)
- 41 Greensville County, 1863 (2 of 2)
- 42 Greensville County, 1863 (1 of 2)
- 43 Greensville County, 1863 (2 of 2)
- 47 Isle of Wight County, 1861
- 48 Fort Huger, Hardy's Bluff, Isle of Wight County, 1863
- 49 Fort Huger, Isle of Wight County, and Mulberry Point Battery Battery, Warwick County, 1863
  
- 50 James River and Kanawha Canal, 1863 (1 of 2)
- 51 James River and Kanawha Canal, 1863 (2 of 2)
- 68 Richmond and York River Railroad, 1864 (1 of 2)
- 69 Richmond and York River Railroad, 1864 (2 of 2)
- 78 Lower Shenandoah Valley II, 1864 (1 of 3)
- 84 Stafford County, 1863 (1 of 2)