

CIVIL WAR IN MATHEWS COUNTY



Confederate Soldiers and Sailors



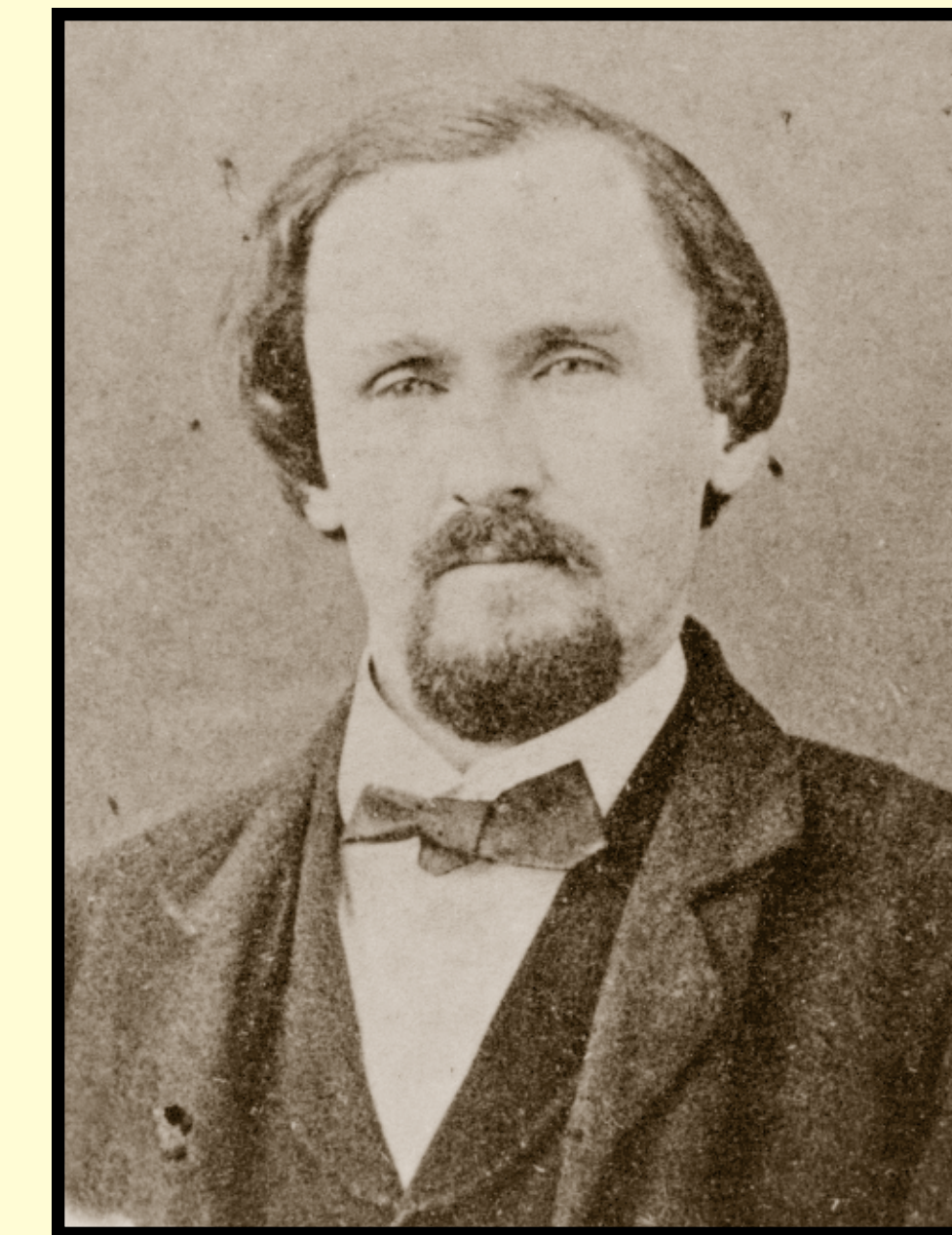
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Several Confederate companies were organized here during the war. The Mathews Light Artillery (formerly Co. H, 61st Virginia Militia) was organized in July 1861. On May 14, 1862, it was accepted into Confederate States service as Capt. Andrew D. Armistead's Company Virginia Light Artillery. A detachment under Capt. Robert E. Hudgins served at Gloucester Point. Armistead's company, reduced to 70 men, surrendered at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865, with

the Army of Northern Virginia. Capt. Gabriel F. Miller's Mathews Light Dragoons entered service on July 21, 1861. Designated Co. F, 5th Virginia Cavalry, by November 1862, it served "as couriers and rear guard ... on the different marches through the Valley of Virginia." Capt. Alexander James's Co. D, 26th Virginia Infantry, mustered into service on May 28, 1861, at Gloucester Point.

Confederate Navy Capt. John Taylor Wood and Acting Master John Yates Beall raided commercial vessels from

Mathews County. On the nights August 22–23, 1863, Wood captured the Union steamers *Reliance* and *Satellite* off Windmill Point on the Rappahannock River. Wood, commanding *Satellite*, returned to the river's mouth on August 25 and captured, stripped,



Acting Master John Y. Beall
Courtesy West Virginia State Archives



Capt. John T. Wood
Courtesy U.S. Naval Historical Center

and destroyed the Federal schooners *Golden Rod*, *Coquette*, and *Two Brothers*. During the same summer, the Confederate Marine Coast Guard operated from nearby Horn Harbor under Beall. The men cut the underwater cable between Cherrystone Inlet and Old Point Comfort, destroyed all the equipment at Cape Charles Lighthouse, and captured at least six Union ships. Gen. Isaac J. Wistar and Lt. Commander James H. Gillis led a Union army-navy task force here in October 1863 to suppress the Confederate raids.



Mathews County Courthouse, photo ca. 1894 – Courtesy Mathews County Historical Society