

## Topic Page: [Johnston, Joseph Eggleston \(1807 - 1891\)](#)

Summary Article: **Johnston, Joseph Eggleston**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

1807–91, Confederate general, b. Prince Edward co., Va., grad. West Point, 1829. He served against the Seminole in Florida and with distinction under Winfield Scott in the Mexican War. Johnston was quartermaster general with the rank of brigadier general when he resigned (Apr., 1861) to fight for the Confederacy. In May he was made a brigadier general and assigned to command at Harpers Ferry. He evaded the Union army under Gen. Robert Patterson and marched to the aid of General Beauregard at Bull Run, where his part in the Confederate victory won him a generalcy and the command of the Army of Northern Virginia (July). Johnston opposed General McClellan in the Peninsular campaign until he was wounded at Fair Oaks in May, 1862. Upon resuming service in November, he was assigned to command the Dept. of the West. Although it seems certain that President Davis intended him to give orders to John Clifford Pemberton at Vicksburg and Braxton Bragg in Tennessee, Johnston chose to interpret his position as merely nominal. When he finally did take command in the Vicksburg campaign, it was too late to save Pemberton. Johnston, placed in command of the Army of the Tennessee (Dec., 1863), adopted the policy of strategic retreat against William Tecumseh Sherman in the Atlanta campaign—a policy that did not suit Davis, who appointed John Bell Hood to succeed him. He was restored to command in Feb., 1865, by Lee, now commander in chief. He obstructed General Sherman's advance through North Carolina, but upon hearing of Lee's surrender to General Grant, he capitulated to Sherman on Apr. 26. After the war Johnston served (1879–81) in the House of Representatives from Richmond, Va., and by appointment of President Cleveland, was (1885–91) federal commissioner of railroads. Cautious as he was, Johnston was not a brilliant offensive commander but was probably the peer of Lee in defensive generalship. Davis's hostility to Johnston was widely known and seriously disrupted Confederate military organization.

See Johnston's Narrative of Military Operations (1874; new ed. 1959, repr. 1969).

### **APA**

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Johnston, Joseph Eggleston. (2018). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from [https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/johnston\\_joseph\\_1807\\_1891](https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/johnston_joseph_1807_1891)

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## Chicago

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## Harvard

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## MLA

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