A photograph of a Civil War-era cannon in a field at sunset. The cannon is positioned in the middle ground, angled towards the left. It has large, spoked wooden wheels and a long, dark metal barrel. The field is filled with green grass and small white wildflowers. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, with scattered clouds. A thin white vertical line runs down the center of the image, passing through the cannon's wheels.

A Guide to Seeing the **Battlefields of Virginia**

John Kanaster

Battlefield 
Tours of Virginia

battlefieldtoursofvirginia.com

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A Guide to Seeing the **Battlefields of Virginia**

The American Civil War featured battles and flashpoints across thousands of different locations. From the St. Albans Raid, which involved Confederate soldiers launching an attack from the Province of Canada, to the Battle of Picacho Pass in Arizona and the Battle of Fort Myers in Florida, the Civil War affected just about every inch of the United States.

But with around 700,000 killed during the conflict, its geographic sweep should cause no surprise. The Civil War marked the dawn of a new kind of warfare, industrialized and merciless in its intensity.

The states that saw the highest number of battles were Tennessee and Virginia, with the former hosting around 1,000 military engagements and the latter breathtakingly hosting more than 2,000.

The following guide will look at some of Virginia's major Civil War Battlefields and outline what you can see if you visit today.

At Battlefield Tours of Virginia, we organize private battlefield tour experiences led by expert guides. If you are interested in touring key Civil War sites in Virginia, please explore our range of **Civil War Battlefield Tours**.

First Manassas, July 21, 1861 (Northern Virginia Area Battlefields)

Overview of the Battle of First Manassas



Located in Prince William County, Northern Virginia, the Manassas National Battlefield Park is home to the battle sites of two important American Civil War battles: the Battle of First Manassas (also known as the First Battle of Bull Run) and the Battle of Second Manassas (also known as the Second Battle of Bull Run).

Attracting over 700,000 visitors annually, the Manassas National Battlefield Park features several fascinating historical sites and the **Henry Hill Visitor Center**. This museum focuses exclusively on the Battle of First Manassas.

One of the most famous battles of the American Civil War, the Battle of First Manassas marked the first major land battle of the war.

The bombardment of Fort Sumter had happened just three months prior, and Union forces were confident they could make short work of

the Confederate armies. The public in the North was also convinced of their side's military superiority, and there was a widespread desire that the Union Army should march straight to Richmond, Virginia, the Confederacy's capital. This over-optimistic outlook was to prove costly.

In July 1861, Brig. Gen. Irvin McDowell led 36,000 inexperienced Union troops to Manassas Junction to launch a surprise attack on Brig. Gen. P. G. T. Beauregard's Confederate Army. It was not to go smoothly.

General Beauregard had been made aware of the approaching Union soldiers and had massed some 20,000 troops; these forces were soon to be joined by an additional 9,000 reinforcement troops under the leadership of General Joseph Johnston. The Confederacy would go on to win the battle where Thomas Jackson would receive the nickname "Stonewall".

Although larger, more ferocious battles would soon eclipse the casualties of that day, the North and South governments were shocked by the bloodshed. As Confederate president Jefferson Davis remarked, "We have won a glorious but dear-bought victory."

Almost 1,000 men lost their lives during the Battle of First Manassas, and approximately 2,500 were wounded – a dark foreshadowing of the tragedy ahead.

Overview of the Battle of First Manassas

Notable Places of Interest at the First Manassas Battle Site

Manassas: End of Innocence Film – A high-quality film located at the visitor center that gives an excellent insight into how the battle would have been experienced.

The Henry Hill Visitor Center – Features artifacts related to individuals who were at the Battle of First Manassas, including weapons, alongside other items from the Civil War era.

Henry House – The historic remains of the house of Judith Henry, the only civilian killed during the Battle of First Manassas

Stone House – Building surviving from the Civil War era that was used as a hospital during the battles of First and Second Manassas.

Matthews Hill – The starting point for the Battle of First Manassas.

Stonewall Jackson Monument – Bronze monument on Henry Hill commemorating the legendary Confederate general.

First Kernstown, March 23, 1862 (NRN Shenandoah Valley Battlefields)

Overview of the Battle of First Kernstown



The site of two significant battles, Kernstown, Virginia, is home to a 388-acre Civil War battlefield park. The site features a **Kernstown battlefield Visitor Center** to help bring the story of the battles to life and the Pritchard House, the 1854 home of the Pritchard family, who had to take cover as the battle raged on their land.

The site of two significant battles, Kernstown, Virginia, is home to a 388-acre Civil War battlefield park. The site features a Kernstown battlefield Visitor Center to help bring the story of the battles to life and the Pritchard House, the 1854 home of the Pritchard family, who had to take cover as the battle raged on their land.

In March 1862, the mission of the Confederacy's Gen. Stonewall Jackson was to keep as many Union troops in the Shenandoah Valley

as possible to prevent them from driving deep into the heart of the South. Meanwhile, Gen. Joseph E. Johnston had been withdrawing his own troops from Northern Virginia to protect Richmond, the Confederate capital.

Jackson's adversary in his mission was the Union's Maj. Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks – he had to tie him down in the Shenandoah Valley. To put a stop to Banks' attempts to leave the Valley and create an opportunity for the retaking of the town of Winchester, Jackson forced his men to perform a grueling 40-mile march in cold, inclement weather.

Due to unverified reports from local civilians, Jackson believed his 3,000 troops were heading north to meet a depleted Union Army of comparable size. However, the information was incorrect. When Jackson's forces arrived in Kernstown, they would be launching an assault on Union forces numbering almost 9,000.

The Confederates quickly ran out of ammunition, and they were ultimately overwhelmed by the superior size of the Union forces.

Ordering his troops to retreat, Stonewall Jackson faced his only battlefield defeat of the American Civil War. However, what was to be a defeat on the day represented victory when looked at strategically.

Lincoln and his generals regarded Jackson's audacious attack on much larger forces than his own to be of grave concern.

Fearing similar events, Lincoln ordered Gen. Banks to move his troops back along the Shenandoah Valley.

Jackson had prevented 60,000 Union troops from joining McClellan's

campaign on Richmond. The Confederates had lost the battle, but their main objective was achieved. Some historians even say that Jackson's efforts at Kernstown would enable the rise of Gen. Robert E. Lee and ultimately continue the war for two more years.

At the Battle of Kernstown, 118 Union soldiers lost their lives, while the Confederate Army lost 80.

Overview of the Battle of First Kernstown

Notable Places of Interest at the Kernstown Battle Site

Pritchard Farmhouse – 1854 farmhouse, standing since the battle. The family residing there even had to take shelter in the basement to ensure they were not harmed by stray gunfire.

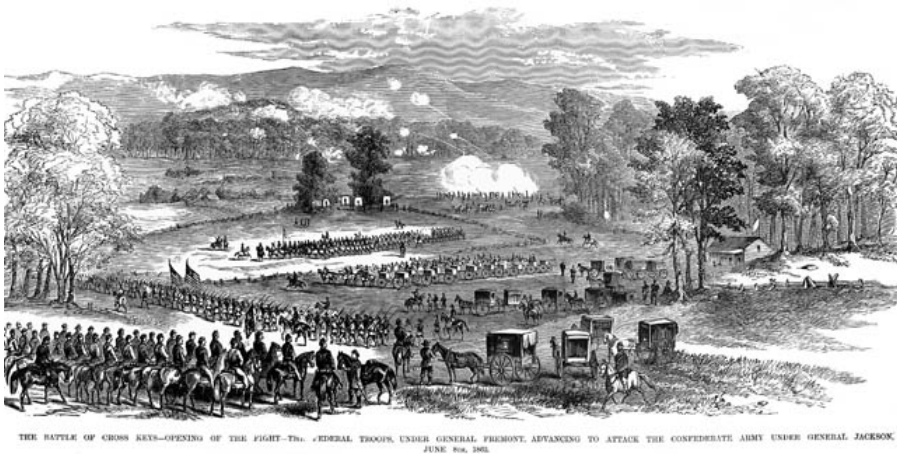
Museum and visitor's center inside the home.

Natural surroundings of Rose Hill Park on the battlefield itself.

Drystone wall that played a pivotal part in the battle itself.

Cross Keys, June 8, 1862 (Southern Shenandoah Valley Battlefields)

Overview of the Battle of Cross Keys



The Battle of Cross Keys took place on June 8, 1862, and was the penultimate battle in Jackson's Valley Campaign. Along with the Battle of Port Republic, fought the next day, the battle would prove decisive.

From March of 1862, Gen. Stonewall Jackson had been marching his troops across the Shenandoah Valley at an impressive speed and with an ease that could only dishearten Union forces.

Following his March 23 defeat at the Battle of Kernstown, Jackson enjoyed a run of military victories. This Confederate success prompted the Union generals Frémont and Shields to attempt to attack Stonewall's men from the northeast and northwest.

However, being aware of this looming threat, Stonewall Jackson laid out plans to attack the two Union armies before they could concentrate themselves at Port Republic.

Jackson and his men set up an encampment at the Port Republic, taking control of the North Bridge in the process; this was the last remaining bridge that spanned the Shenandoah River.

The Confederate's superior defensive positions and successful advances had prevented the Union from mounting a coordinated attack. As the day passed into night, the Confederate troops continued pursuing the Union forces and got within a quarter mile of their positions at Keezletown Road.

They knew, though, that the battle had already been won and retreated before any unnecessary risks were taken. After the battle, Union casualties totaled 557 killed and wounded and 100 captured, while the Confederates had 288 casualties, with only 41 deaths.

It was a victory for the Confederates. Having successfully pushed the Union forces back, Confederate soldiers under Ewell could head south and join Stonewall Jackson in the fight against Shields.

Overview of the Battle of Cross Keys

Notable Places of Interest at Cross Keys Battle Site

Cross Keys Cemetery – Cemetery where Ewell's men grouped themselves and loaded weapons; some Civil War soldiers are buried here.

Cross Keys Ruritan Hall (Union Church) – Site of the original Civil War-era church that acted as a hospital for the wounded.

Artillery Ridge – The ridge on which Ewell's forces gathered is visible today.

The Port Republic Museum – Located down the road in the historic Frank Kemper house, exhibits on the battle and local history are found here.

Port Republic, June 9, 1862 (Southern Shenandoah Valley Battlefields)

Overview of the Battle of Port Republic



Located three miles east of Port Republic in Rockingham County, Virginia, the Port Republic battlefield retains many Civil War-era features. The battle that took place here on June 9, 1862, proved to be a bloody affair, with almost two thousand casualties.

The Battle of Port Republic was the final battle in Jackson's Valley Campaign. It was a decisive victory for the Confederates, allowing Stonewall Jackson's troops to reinforce Robert E. Lee before Richmond in the Seven Days Battles.

On June 8, under Gen. Ewell's command, Confederate troops had successfully repelled Frémont's army at the Battle of Cross Keys. Now it was Jackson's turn to engage the Federals in battle.

Jackson aimed to attack the Union brigades of Gen. James Shields (though Gen. Erastus Tyler was commanding them on the field),

hoping he would be victorious through sheer numbers alone.

However, getting his troops together at Port Republic was more difficult than he thought, and he began the fight outnumbered.

The Union forces also had a geographical advantage. Their left flank was stationed on a hill known locally as The Coaling, and the right flank was anchored on the Shenandoah River. With his infantry in such a good position and covered by 16 artillery guns, Tyler would not be easy to defeat.

The Confederates, however, eventually took control of The Coaling, and Jackson was able to implement a general advance.

The Union's Gen. Erastus Tyler was forced to withdraw his troops from the field. Although Union reinforcements had arrived under the leadership of Frémont, it was no use. Ewell had burned the last remaining bridges across the Shenandoah River, meaning the Union army faced too many obstacles to be able to mount another counterattack.

Though the day had not gone according to initial plans, the Confederates had secured their victory, and Jackson's Valley Campaign was complete. Afterwards Jackson would lead his army to join Robert E. Lee in Richmond to repel Union General McClellan.

In the end, the Union's casualties numbered 1,002, while Confederate casualties totaled 816 — another reminder of the viciousness of this war.

Port Republic, June 9, 1862 (SRN Shenandoah Valley Battlefields)

Notable Places of Interest at the Port Republic Battle Site

The Port Republic Battle Monument – located next to The Coaling, the epicenter of the battle.

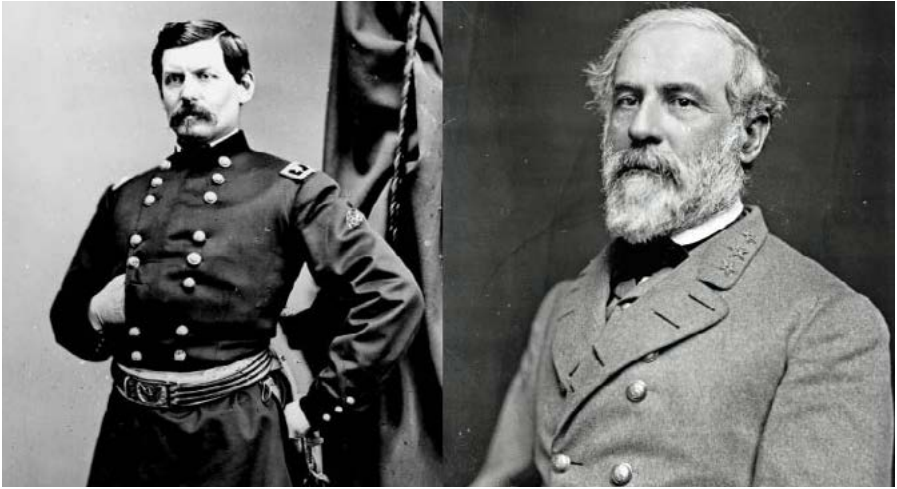
The Coaling – The prominent hill where Jackson's forces clashed with those under the command of Tyler.

Various Wayside Markers – Markers detail the boundaries of the battle and provide detailed historical information.

The Port Republic Museum – Located in the historic Frank Kemper house, exhibits on the battle and local history are found here.

Seven Days' Battles, June 25 – July 1, 1862 (Richmond Area Battlefields)

Overview of the Seven Days' Battles



The Seven Days' Battles took place from June 25–July 1, 1862. It was the culmination of Union Gen. George McClellan's Peninsula Campaign in his drive for the Confederate Capital of Richmond.

This event witnessed the rise of Gen. Robert E. Lee, where seven battles were fought over seven days as part of the Defense of Richmond.

Located in Hanover and Henrico County, Virginia, east of Richmond, the Seven Days' battlefield today sits on the Richmond National Military Park.

Union Gen. George McClellan's 100,000-strong army is at the gates of Richmond after his drive up the Peninsula.

On May 31, 1862, at the battle of Seven Pines (Fair Oaks), Confederate

Gen. Joseph E. Johnston was wounded. Confederate President Jefferson Davis will put his military advisor, Gen. Robert E. Lee, in command of the army, which began the rise of Gen. Robert E. Lee.

Gen. Lee will order a defensive network of earthwork fortifications to encircle Richmond, for which his men will call him “The King of Spades.”

With the arrival of Stonewall Jackson from the Valley bringing Confederate numbers to 90,000 men, Gen. Lee determined the best defense plan was to go on the offensive. This will initiate a series of bold but costly battles over seven days.

This campaign will result in the Federals being driven off the Peninsula after sustaining 16,000 casualties. Gen. Lee emerged victorious at the cost of 20,000 casualties. In the end, the Army of Northern Virginia comes to be seen as an immense force to be reckoned with, and Robert E. Lee will be heralded as the Savior of the South.

Overview of the Seven Days' Battles

Notable Places of Interest at the Seven Days' Battles Site

Richmond Defenses – Traces of the Richmond Exterior Line of Defense can be seen at the Chickahominy Bluffs with surviving earthworks.

Watt House – A historic home used as Union General Fitz John Porter's headquarters on the Gaines' Mill battlefield.

11th Mississippi Monument – Stone monument on the Gaines' Mill battlefield dedicated to a regiment who took part in the last charge against the Federal line.

Glendale National Cemetery – Located on the Glendale (Frayser's Farm) battlefield, 2,000 Federals are interred here from the surrounding battlefields.

Cedar Mountain, August 9, 1862 (Culpeper Area Battlefields)

Overview of the Battle of Cedar Mountain



The Battle of Cedar Mountain took place on August 9, 1862, and was the last independent command of Stonewall Jackson. Cedar Mountain was also part of the end of the defense of Richmond and the genesis of the Second Manassas Campaign.

Located in Culpeper County, Virginia, the Cedar Mountain battlefield is today preserved by the American Battlefield Trust and owned by the Virginia State Parks.

One of the lesser-known battles of the American Civil War and part of President Abraham Lincoln's attempts to open a second front on Richmond in 1862. Two adversaries of the 1862 Valley Campaign, Jackson and Banks, will meet again.

In the summer of 1862, President Abraham Lincoln grew tired of Gen. George McClellan's progress on the Peninsula drive for Richmond

and took matters into his own hands. President Lincoln formed the U.S. Army of Virginia and placed Gen. John Pope in command on June 26, 1862. His objective is to threaten the back door of Richmond from the west and put additional pressure on the Confederate capital.

The Confederates will own the battlefield, and Jackson will emerge victorious. This will set the stage for the Second Manassas Campaign, which would later start the Maryland Campaign with a climactic ending at Antietam.

The toll of the day, Union casualties, would total 2,400, while the Confederates had 1,400 casualties.

Overview of the Battle of Cedar Mountain

Notable Places of Interest at the Cedar Mountain Battle Site

Contact Station – Information and interpretive material on the battle.

Artillery display – Artillery grouping of a Confederate battery.

Unit markers – Multiple Rare markers of infantry and battery locations from the earliest attempts to mark and preserve the battlefield.

3rd Wisconsin Regiment Monument – Stone monument located at their furthest position.

Culpeper National Cemetery – In the City of Culpeper, Federal graves and several impressive Civil War monuments can be found here.

Second Manassas, August 28–30, 1862 (NTH Virginia Area Battlefields)

Overview of the Battle of Second Manassas



The Battle of Second Manassas, or Second Battle of Bull Run involved a total of around 127,000 men and led to almost 3,000 deaths alongside a further 15,000 wounded.

This battle would give Gen. Robert E. Lee the momentum to initiate his Maryland Campaign, deal a severe blow to Union morale, and lead to the ignoble sacking of the Union's Maj. Gen. John Pope.

The Battle of Second Manassas proved to be a decisive victory for the Confederates. Defeating an army much larger than his own, Gen. Robert E. Lee caused the Federals to retreat back to Bull Run and was able to get his army across the Potomac River and begin the first invasion of the North, leading to the battle of Antietam.

Before the battle, the fate of the Confederates was uncertain. Though they had enjoyed their share of victories, Union Gen. Ulysses S.

Grant kept the Confederates in check in the West, and Gen. George B. McClellan built the largest army North America had ever seen.

But with Gen. Robert E. Lee in charge of the Army of Northern Virginia, the Confederates took the fight to the Union.

Jackson's attack led to the Confederates taking Pope's supplies stores at Manassas Junction. His soldiers enjoyed the spoils of this conquest, eating and drinking well for a night before setting fire to the rest of the supplies. They then based themselves near the site of the First Manassas battlefield.

Lee's risky strategy was to prove a success: Pope pursued Stonewall Jackson's forces, just as Lee wanted. On August 29, intense fighting broke out between Jackson's forces and Union brigades at Brawner Farm. The battle runs from the daylight hours of the afternoon into the dark of night.

On 30 August, Pope launched attack after attack on Jackson's men but were continually repulsed. Unbeknownst to Pope, Jackson would also be reinforced during the afternoon by Confederate forces under the command of Maj. Gen. James Longstreet.

But it was August 30 when Pope would make his greatest mistakes. After receiving conflicting pieces of information, he erroneously concludes that the Confederates must be on the retreat and decides to pursue them.

Of course, Lee's army had gone nowhere and easily repulsed Pope. Pope orders further advance unwisely undeterred, but the Confederate artillery again repulses them.

Now, sensing the momentum is with them, Lee and Longstreet launch an enormous counterattack. It sends the Union lines into a panic and onto the retreat.

The Battle of Second Manassas was a major victory for Lee and allowed the Confederates to ready themselves for the first invasion of the North.

Tragically, the battle took the lives of many. It is estimated that the Union forces lost nearly 14,500 (dead and wounded) and the Confederates over 7,000 (dead and wounded).

Pope was dismissed and sent west for his humiliating defeat and incompetent leadership. Following his firing, the Union's Brig. Gen. Alpheus Williams would remark, "more insolence, superciliousness, ignorance, and pretentiousness were never combined in one man."

Overview of the Battle of Second Manassas

Notable Places of Interest at the Second Manassas Battle Site

Brawner's Farm Interpretive Center – A historical center with exhibits and an electronic battlefield map.

Deep Cut/The Unfinished Railway Trails – Walking trails along the unfinished railways' site proved pivotal during the battle.

5th and 10th New York Monuments – Memorials to these brigades.

Chinn Ridge – Ridge where Union forces made their brave final stand before retreating.

Fredericksburg, December 11-13, 1862 (Fredericksburg Area Battlefields)

Overview of the Battle of Fredericksburg



One of the famous battles of the American Civil War, the Battle of Fredericksburg, is known as the most lopsided Union defeat of the war. It was one of the largest and deadliest battles of the entire war, with nearly 200,000 combatants involved.

None of the southern towns made famous by blood would become more famous than Fredericksburg. No population in any community in America would face the calamity of a greater scale.

The battle of Antietam –the bloodiest day in U.S. military history– occurred three months prior. In November of 1862, President Abraham Lincoln promoted General Ambrose Burnside to gain victory before the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect on January 1, 1863.

In mid-November 1862, General Burnside planned to cross the

Rappahannock River at Fredericksburg and race to Richmond, the Confederate Capital, getting ahead of General Robert E. Lee's Army.

The delay of General Burnside's pontoon bridges resulted in General Lee blocking the Federals from crossing and fortifying the heights beyond the town.

On December 11, 1862, U.S. artillery bombarded Fredericksburg, the first time the U.S. Army would purposely target a U.S. city in an active battle.

This day would also witness the first instance of urban combat in the Civil War would occur on this day as well.

On December 13, 1862, waves of Union brigades would assault the Confederate held stone wall at Marye's Heights with no success.

Ultimately, victory would go to the Confederates with the Battle of Fredericksburg being remembered as one of the most one-sided battles of the Civil War. One observer would describe it as "butchery."

The grim arithmetic shows Lee suffered 5,000 casualties but inflicted more than twice that many losses on his opponent. Almost two-thirds of the 12,000 Federal casualties fell in front of the stone wall.

Overview of the Battle of Fredericksburg

Notable Places of Interest at Fredericksburg Battle Site

The Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor Center – Features three rooms covering before, during, and after the battle, including weapons, alongside other items from the Civil War era.

Fredericksburg: Film – A high-quality film located at the visitor center gives an excellent insight into how the battle would have been experienced.

Fredericksburg: Museum Shop – In the National Park gift shop, one will find Civil War books, collectibles, and clothing items.

Innis House – One of the few surviving structures along Sunken Road. The walls are still riddled with bullet holes from the battle.

Fredericksburg National Cemetery – The resting place for 15,000 soldiers from six surrounding area battlefields. It's the largest cemetery containing unknown Civil War dead in the U.S.

Chatham Manor – A plantation home constructed in the 1770s, it was used as a Union headquarters and hospital during the battle.

Slaughter Pen Farm – The largest battlefield preservation acquisition in the U.S. on the lower portion of the battlefield, saved by the American Battlefield Trust.

Angel of Marye's Heights Monument – Bronze monument near the stone wall commemorating the humanity of Sergeant Richard Kirkland.

Kelly's Ford, March 17, 1863 (Culpeper Area Battlefields)



Also known as the Battle of Kellysville or Kelleysville, the Battle of Kelly's Ford was a largely inconclusive event that provided positives and negatives for both the Union and Confederate armies.

Today, the American Battlefield Trust preserves and maintains 1,370 acres of the battlefield in Culpeper County.

Often regarded as a prelude to The Battle of Chancellorsville, the Battle of Kelly's Ford occupies an unusual place in American Civil War history. On the eve of battle, Brig. Gen. William Averell of the

Union army stated that he aimed to “rout or destroy” the cavalry of Brig. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee, a Confederate leader who had been menacing Union forces on regular raids.

However, at the battle’s end, Averell would call for his men to withdraw before any real routing or destruction had been achieved. The battle would prove to be a morale boost for the Federals – something they very much needed.

In the lead-up to the battle, it was clear that the newly established Union Cavalry Corps had healthier numbers of men and horses and access to superior weaponry than their Confederate counterparts. What they did not yet possess, though, was the tenacity of their foe.

In early March, Confederate cavalry under Brig. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee had carried out raids against the Union forces camped along the Rappahannock River. This constant threat of raids is what finally spurred the Union forces into action.

On March 16, 1863, Brig. Gen. William Averell decided to launch an offensive against Fitzhugh Lee’s brigade. The following day, Averell’s advance guard reached Kelly’s Ford on the Rappahannock. Waiting for them were 60 Confederate sharpshooters.

A Union brigade led by Major Samuel E. Chamberlain eventually broke through, and over the next two hours, Averell and his men followed across the river.

Fitzhugh Lee’s Confederates started the battle poorly, outnumbered two to one and facing an enemy that had got its artillery into an excellent position.

At this point, experienced Confederate leader Jeb Stuart and his horse artillery chief, Maj. John Pelham arrived and joined the fight (they were each in the area by coincidence and hurried toward the conflict.

Though the 24-year-old Pelham was not meant to be involved that afternoon, he led a charge against the Union forces and was mortally wounded when an artillery shell exploded above his head.

Union brigades under Duffié and Reno did well to drive the Confederates back, though neither capitalized on their success. In the early evening, Averell “deemed it proper to withdraw” as his men were exhausted.

In the aftermath of the battle, some would attack Averell for not continuing the fight, suggesting that a prolonged attack could have truly destroyed Fitzhugh Lee’s forces. However, what Averell achieved was still deeply significant: his men knew they could take the fight to the Confederates and win.

The great sorrow for the Confederates came with the death of the talented young Maj. John Pelham.

Pelham would succumb to his battlefield wound the day after the battle, and the heartache it caused Jeb Stuart was so great that he wrote to his wife to suggest they name their next son John.

However, for all the loss and regret, the Confederates could claim a crucial tactical victory – they managed to keep possession of the battlefield.

When the dead and wounded were later counted, it was found that the Union had suffered 78 casualties (6 killed, 50 wounded, 22 missings) while the Confederates lost 133 (11 dead, 88 wounded, 34 captured).

Overview of the Battle of Kelly's Ford

Notable Places of Interest at the Kelly's Ford Battle Site

The Battle of Kelly's Ford – The artillery battlefield is well preserved. The area features many walking trails ideal for exploring the beautiful surrounding landscape.

The Gallant Pelham Memorial Stone – A memorial to the exceptional young Major who tragically died here.

Various Interpretive Markers – Markers detail the boundaries of the battle and provide detailed historical information.

Brannin House – Former inn dating back to the 1700s.

Chancellorsville, May 1–3, 1863 (Fredericksburg Area Battlefields)

Overview of the Battle of Chancellorsville



One of the most famous battles of the American Civil War, the Battle of Chancellorsville is known as one of General Robert E. Lee's greatest victories. Jackson's famous Flank Attack is still studied around the world today.

Following the humiliating defeat at Fredericksburg, President Abraham Lincoln tried revitalizing the East's stumbling war efforts. He named General Joseph Hooker to command the Army of the Potomac, the 5th Union General to face the Confederates.

With General Lee still in Fredericksburg and General Hooker across the river, he proposed a bold plan after he managed to get the Army into shape. General Hooker placed a large force in front of Fredericksburg as a feint while he led the other portion around General Lee's left and rear, catching the enemy by surprise.

Confidently, General Hooker would say, “My plans are perfect. May God have mercy on General Lee, for I will have none!”

On May 1, 1863, General Hooker’s plan was unraveled by General Lee’s initiative and quick thinking. General Lee would divide his force and direct his Army on a head-on collision course against an enemy twice his size.

This would drive General Hooker back to the Chancellorsville Crossroads in a defensive position and a forested region of Spotsylvania County known as the Wilderness.

That night, General Lee would hatch his career’s most brilliant offensive plan.

On May 2, 1863, he split his army yet again by sending Stonewall Jackson’s Corps on an all-day flank attack march to get at General Hooker’s flank and rear. This will culminate in Jackson’s Flank Attack. This wildly successful attack would be Jackson’s last victory as he was mortally wounded by friendly fire as he tried to continue the fighting into the night.

May 3, 1863, would be the bloodiest morning of the Civil War. Still reeling, at dawn General Hooker found himself fighting off Confederate attacks from both sides. One of the most dramatic artillery duels of the war would ensue. On this day, one casualty would fall each second for the next five hours as both sides slugged it out in a point-blank match.

Despite heavy losses on both sides, General Lee would emerge victorious. Dividing his force in the face of a superior enemy along with seizing the initiative with bold and audacious moves would pay

off by many folds. This victory encouraged General Lee to invade the North a second time in June 1863, leading to the Gettysburg Campaign.

Overview of the Battle of Chancellorsville

Notable Places of Interest at the Chancellorsville Battle Site

The Chancellorsville Battlefield Visitor Center – Features exhibits on the battle of Chancellorsville and the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House, including artifacts, alongside other items from the Civil War era.

Chancellorsville: Film – A high-quality film at the visitor center gives an excellent insight into how the battle would have been experienced.

Chancellorsville: Museum Shop – The gift shop is located in the visitor center; Civil War books, collectibles, and clothing items will be found.

Hazel Grove Artillery Display – Various types of Civil War artillery can be found here, along with their limber chests.

Spotsylvania County Museum – Located on the Chancellorsville Day 1 site preserved by the American Battlefield Trust. This county visitor center gives a rich background of the surrounding county area.

Stonewall Jackson Monument – Stone monument near Jackson's wounding location and commemorates his life and legacy.

Brandy Station, June 9, 1863 (Culpeper Area Battlefields)

Overview of the Battle of Brandy Station



The battle of the Brandy Station took place on June 9, 1863. The opening battle of the Gettysburg Campaign resulted in the largest cavalry battle in North America.

Located in Culpeper County, Virginia, the Brandy Station battlefield is today preserved by the American Battlefield Trust and owned by the Virginia State Parks.

In one of the lesser-known battles of the American Civil War, during Gen. Robert E. Lee's invasion route of the North, Confederate cavalry was screening the rebel movements outside of Culpeper Court House. Federal cavalry was sent to destroy or disperse this large buildup of Confederate cavalry threatening Washington, resulting in this battle.

After the Confederate victory at Chancellorsville, May 1-3, 1863, Gen. Robert E. Lee is permitted to invade the North a second time in

an attempt to win a victory on Northern soil to crush the will of the Northern people to continue the war. This resulted in the Gettysburg Campaign.

On June 3, 1863, Gen. Lee left Fredericksburg and headed west to the Shenandoah Valley, the invasion route of the North. Gen. Lee's first stop is around Culpeper Court House in Culpeper County.

His cavalry under J.E.B. Stuart is massed just to the north and below the Rappahannock River near Brandy Station, a whistle-stop on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad.

Lee's invasion plans are unknown to Union Gen. Joseph Hooker, but he will notice the large mass of Confederate Cavalry in Culpeper County.

He will turn to his new cavalry commander Gen. Alfred Pleasonton with orders to destroy or disperse the rebel threat.

At dawn on June 9, 1863, Gen. Pleasonton sent two Federal cavalry columns across the Rappahannock River. The column that crossed at Beverly Ford immediately ran into an unknown hornet's nest of Confederate cavalry guarding the ford. With J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry alerted, this will start the battle of Brandy Station.

Fighting will rage along the St. James Church and Yew Ridge. Union Gen. John Buford will say, "Out flew the sabers, and most handsomely they were used" as both sides engaged one another on horseback.

The climax of the battle was at Fleetwood Hill where desperate charges and counter charges would rage for hours.

In the end, the Confederate cavalry will manage to thwart the Federals and own the battlefield. This Confederate victory marked the end of the Confederate cavalry dominance in the east. The Federal cavalry came of age at this battle, and from this point in the war on, it gained its strength and confidence.

With nearly 20,000 total cavalry combatants, this will become the largest cavalry battle in North America. In the end, Union casualties will be 900, and Confederate casualties will be 400.

Overview of the Battle of Brandy Station

Notable Places of Interest at the Brandy Station Battle Site

Graffiti House – The battlefield visitor center with information and interpretive material on the battle.

Auburn House – Historic plantation home constructed in 1855 and was the site of grand Confederate cavalry reviews. (Private property)

St. James Church Ruins – An Episcopal church that sat on the Confederate defensive line, it was later demolished by Union troops for building materials during the winter encampment of 1863-1864.

Observation Telescope – Placed on Fleetwood Hill, this observation telescope gives the viewer a closer look at the surrounding battlefield landmarks.

Rappahannock Station, November 7, 1863 (Culpeper Area Battlefields)

Overview of the Battle of Rappahannock Station



The Second Battle of Rappahannock Station took place on November 7, 1863. After Gettysburg, Union General George Meade took the fight against Robert E. Lee's defenses along the Rappahannock River.

This battlefield is located in Fauquier County, less than 5 miles from the Brandy Station battlefield in Culpeper County. Today, the American Battlefield Trust has preserved nearly 900 acres of the battlefield.

This is part of a series of battles after Gettysburg, known as the Forgotten Fall of 1863, as both armies spar up and down the Orange and Alexandria Railroad and maintain close contact. Rappahannock Station is the first major Union offensive attack since the battle of Gettysburg.

After the battle of Gettysburg, Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee made his way back into Virginia and finally settled in Culpeper County. There is a period of inactivity out east while the war effort and troops are sent west to Chattanooga, Tn. Gen. George Meade is pressured to do something from Washington as the campaign season draws close.

Following a Union minor success at Bristoe Station on October 14, 1863, Gen Lee positioned his Confederate army in a line along the south bank of the Rappahannock River in Culpeper County.

However, Gen. Lee will establish a strong defense fortification on the north bank of the Rappahannock River near the village of Rappahannock Station (today Remington) along the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. This foothold on the north bank, connected by a single pontoon bridge, would help to prevent a flanking movement by the enemy and would also make them divide their forces.

Gen. Meade will divide his forces just as Gen. Lee predicted. Union Gen. Sedgwick will attack the Confederate fortifications at Rappahannock Station, while 5 miles downriver, Union Gen. French will force a crossing at Kelly's ford. Once across, both Union army wings were to converge at Brandy Station in Culpeper County.

Meade's plan went into action on the afternoon of November 7, 1863, as Union Gen. French stormed across the river at Kelly's Ford. Gen. Lee's plan depended on meeting Gen. French with his main force while his smaller force at the Rappahannock Station bridgehead held Gen. Sedgwick until Gen. French could be defeated.

Union Gen. Sedgwick shelled the rebels at Rappahannock Station all afternoon with no sign of attack, making Gen Lee believe this was only a feint. The famous Louisiana Tigers of Confederate Gen.

Jubal Early's Division held the rebel fortification at Rappahannock Station, consisting of two earthen redoubts on a hilltop connected by a trench. Confederate batteries on the south bank gave them additional protection.

Gen. Sedgwick would later skirmish with the Confederate Tigers at dusk before he launched a thunderous bayonet assault at night, something rare in Civil War battles.

The Federals penetrated the Confederate defenses, and a desperate hand-to-hand fight ensued. Believing the Federal force was much larger due to poor nighttime visibility, the rebel defenders would break and run for the other side of the river as hundreds of rebel prisoners were taken.

With a large Federal force on the south bank of the Rappahannock River, Gen. Lee believed that Culpeper County was untenable and would withdraw his Army of Northern Virginia to the south, on the other side of the Rapidan River in Orange County.

Gen. Meade will occupy Culpeper County, where he will make plans for one last offensive before winter calls of the campaign season. This will lead to the Mine Run campaign, the last battle of the Forgotten Fall of 1863.

Rappahannock Station became an embarrassing Confederate defeat as 1,700 Confederates would be killed, wounded, or captured; nearly eighty percent were involved. Meanwhile, the Union army will only suffer 400 casualties.

Overview of the Battle of Rappahannock Station

Notable Places of Interest at the Rappahannock Station Battle Site

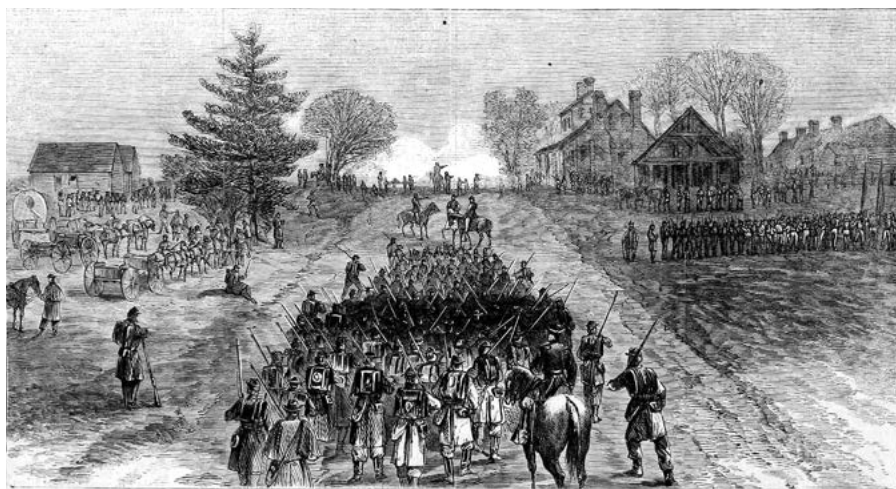
Rector Tract Park – Location of the Confederate right flank and original mill site next to the railroad. Best access to the Rappahannock River.

The town of Remington – Known as Rappahannock Station during the war, today it still maintains its quaint charm and gives a sense of the Union approach.

Kelly's Ford – A preserved natural area with trails and access to the Rappahannock River, where portions of the battlefield can still be seen today.

Mine Run, Nov 26 – Dec 1, 1863 (Fredericksburg Area Battlefields)

Overview of the Battle of Mine Run



The Battle of Mine Run took place on November 26–December 1, 1863. It was part of the Forgotten Fall of 1863. An echo of Fredericksburg would lead to the moral courage of Union Gen. George Gordon Meade.

Located in Orange County, 3 miles west of the Wilderness battlefield, only the action at Payne's Farm is preserved by The American Battlefield Trust, with the rest of the battlefield waiting to be preserved.

This is one of the lesser-known battles of the American Civil War and part of the Forgotten Fall of 1863. Under enormous pressure after Gettysburg to land a decisive blow against Gen. Robert E. Lee, Union General George Gordon Meade will launch one last campaign before the approach of winter.

After the battle of Gettysburg, both armies ended up back in Virginia,

where they played a cat-and-mouse game up and down the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. On November 7, 1863, the Union army overwhelmed the Confederate line along the Rappahannock River at Rappahannock Station and Kelly's Ford. The Federals will take Culpeper County, while Gen. Robert E. Lee will withdraw safely behind the Rapidan River in Orange County.

As the temperatures start to fall, Gen. Meade is compelled to take action and match the success of Gen. Grant out west and silence his critics. Finding out that Gen. Lee's army is divided, he intends to cross the Rapidan River at numerous sites out of reach from the rebels and make a rapid movement on the Confederate flank.

On November 26, 1863, the first National Day of Thanksgiving, Meade launched his last campaign. After two days of heavy rain with the river swollen, the Union army will have pontoon crossing problems and lose a day trying to get the army across. This will cost the Federals a large portion of their speed and surprise.

The Federal rendezvous point was at Robinson's Tavern. Once Gen. Warren's Corps made it there on November 27, 1863, he found Confederates under Gen. Jubal Early in his front.

This will start the battle known as Mine Run. Federals to his left and right had not come up yet, and he decided not to bring on a general engagement until he was reinforced.

Meanwhile, Union Gen. French will get bogged down in a Wilderness region moving up from Jacob's Ford on Warren's right. Due to Federal delays and confusion, they will run into a Confederate force near Payne's Farm. An intense action will erupt where some of the heaviest casualties will be seen. With neither side getting a clear advantage, darkness will call off the fight.

The next day on November 28, 1863, a combined Federal force will press forward, finding no Confederates in sight. Once they reached Mine Run creek, they found Gen. Lee's army on the other side along a ridgeline where they constructed earthwork fortifications with artillery placed in every advantageous position. It was Fredericksburg, or worse, exclaimed some Union soldiers.

The only option Gen. Meade had was an idea Gen. Warren came up with: to march a large Union force to Gen. Lee's right flank where there was no creek or earthwork defense. On November 29, 1863, Gen. Warren marched his force and got into position for a morning attack the next day.

On November 30, 1863, Gen. Warren awoke to prepare for an assault, only to find rebels in his front. After learning about this Federal movement from rebel cavalry, Gen. Lee shifted his reserve overnight. With a Union barrage already underway, Gen. Warren would call off his flank attack and refuse to attack unless Gen. Meade gave him a direct order.

Seeing the futility for himself upon arrival, Gen. Meade calls off the entire attack, which only implies death and destruction. While he lost his last opportunity before Grant would go out east, Gen. George Gordon Meade's moral courage would earn his men's undying affection as he chose their lives over his own career ambitions.

With no clear opportunity, on December 1, 1863, Gen. Meade started to withdraw back to Culpeper and cross the Rapidan River. The Army of the Potomac will immediately go into winter quarters with dreams of a spring campaign in 1864. The actions at Mine Run will be inconclusive, with 1,300 Union and 700 Confederate casualties.

Overview of the Battle of Mine Run

Notable Places of Interest at the Mine Run Battle Site

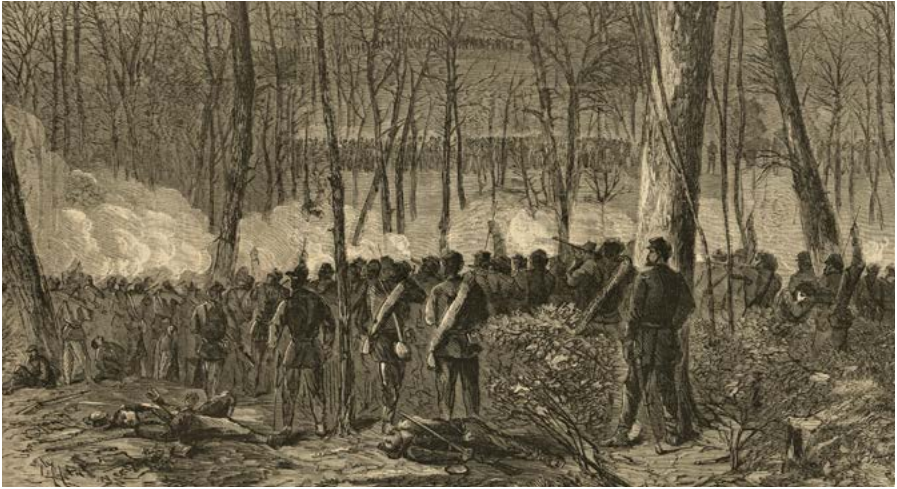
Robinson's Tavern – A historic house used as a Union headquarters can be seen (private property).

Payne's Farm – A looped interpretive trail with markers as part of the American Battlefield Trust property.

New Hope Church – The site of a cavalry fight and inspiration for a Christmas carol.

The Wilderness, May 5-6, 1864 (Fredericksburg Area Battlefields)

Overview of the Battle of the Wilderness



One of the most famous battles of the American Civil War, the Battle of the Wilderness, is known as the opening phase of General Ulysses S. Grant's Overland Campaign.

This will be the first battle between General Ulysses S. Grant and General Robert E. Lee, which will see fighting with the forests ablaze. This battle is the beginning of the end of the Confederacy.

With little gains in the East after Gettysburg, President Abraham Lincoln appointed General Ulysses S. Grant general-in-chief of all Union Armies in early 1864. General Grant initiated a war of attrition with a campaign to fight General Lee's Army in a series of costly battles all the way to the Confederate Capital of Richmond.

In the spring of 1864, General Grant made his headquarters with General George Meade's Army of the Potomac. Together, on May 4,

1864, they will cross the Rapidan River and travel through a forested region known as the Wilderness with the goal of getting on General Lee's vulnerable flank at Orange Court House.

On May 5, 1864, the battle began when General Lee intercepted General Grant's larger army as they traveled through the Wilderness, which negated the Union's numerical superiority. Fighting on the first day will rage in Saunder's Field, explode at the Brock/Plank Road intersection, and grapple throughout the entire forested region.

On May 6, 1864, General Grant launched an all-out attack at dawn to destroy General Lee's right flank. Led by General Winfield Hancock, the Federals would have almost succeeded if it wasn't for the last-minute arrival of General James Longstreet's Corps. A Confederate counter and flank attack will send the Federals reeling. The day will end inconclusively with forest fires sweeping through portions of the battlefield.

By the morning of May 7, 1864, the battlefield was a stalemate, with the forest ablaze. Despite the costly nature of the battle, General Grant refused to order a retreat like all his predecessors had done.

Instead, he will withdraw to the south, closer to Richmond, where he will say "There's no turning back."

Overview of the Battle of the Wilderness

Notable Places of Interest at the Wilderness Battle Site

The Wilderness Exhibit Shelter – An outdoor exhibit on Saunder's Field where the opening shots of the battle were fired.

Ellwood Manor – Plantation home from the 1700s used as a Union headquarters. Open seasonally, it houses special exhibits.

The Chancellorsville Battlefield Visitor Center – Located 10-minutes away, it features exhibits on the battle of the Wilderness as well as Chancellorsville and Spotsylvania Court House.

Chancellorsville: Museum Shop – The gift shop is located in the visitor center; one will find Civil War books, collectibles, and clothing items.

The Texas Monument – Stone monument in Tapp Field commemorates this brigade's valor during a crisis.

The Vermont Monument – Stone monument paying tribute to this bloodied, unsung brigade who held and fought at the Brock/Plank Road intersection.

Spotsylvania Court House, May 8–21, 186
(May 8–21, 1864 – Fredericksburg Area Battlefields)

Overview of the Battle of Spotsylvania



One of the famous battles of the American Civil War and the second battle of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's Overland Campaign. This two-week battle is known for Gen. Robert E. Lee's Mule Shoe defenses, where intense hand-to-hand combat occurred at the Bloody Angle.

On May 7, 1864, after two days of bloody but inconclusive fighting in the Wilderness, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant decided to disengage and move to the southeast. He planned to reach the next road network to Richmond at Spotsylvania Court House, get between Gen. Lee and Richmond, and defeat him in an open area with his numerical superiority.

May 7–8, 1864, the Confederate cavalry fought a running delaying action allowing Gen. Lee's army to get ahead of Gen. Grant and block the road to the village of Spotsylvania Court House. As both sides settled in, they established miles of defensive earthworks.

The Confederates established an enormous salient in their lines nicknamed the Mule Shoe due to its similar shape and stubborn defense. This was part of an endless network of extensive defensive breastworks, trenches, and artillery emplacements that would foreshadow the First World War.

An initially successful breach of the Mule Shoe by a daring charge led by U.S. Col Emory Upton on May 10, 1864, proved that the rebel salient wasn't invincible.

At dawn, early light on May 12, 1864, an enormous tidal wave of blue-coated soldiers assaulted the Mule Shoe further up the line in the rain.

They broke open an enormous breach in the salient where huge gains were made against its rebel-held defenders. A desperate Confederate counterattack would ensue, leading to 22 hours of sustained hand-to-hand combat.

As both sides grappled over the muddy and bloodied earthworks, the most intense and insane fighting occurred at a place in the line known as the Bloody Angle. After midnight, Gen. Lee will establish a final line that will call off the gruesome desperate fight.

After days of heavy rains, further fighting occurred as Gen. Grant looked for weak positions in the Confederate-held line and attacked to no avail.

On May 21, 1864, after finding no clear advantage to break the stalemate, Gen. Grant decided once again to withdraw and move to the southeast, closer to Richmond. Days earlier he would cable Washington and say, "I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer."

Overview of the Battle of Spotsylvania

Notable Places of Interest at the Spotsylvania Battle Site

The Spotsylvania Court House Exhibit Shelter – An outdoor exhibit where the battle started. Maps and pictures will orient you to the battlefield.

Earthworks Display – A portion of Lee's Final Line defense has been recreated, showing what a Civil War earthwork looked like.

Gen. John Sedgwick Monument – Stone monument in the vicinity where the highest-ranking U.S. General fell in the Civil War.

The New Jersey Monument – Stone monument located at the Bloody Angle, which pays tribute to the 15th New Jersey Regiment.

The Chancellorsville Battlefield Visitor Center – Located 30 minutes away, it features exhibits on the battle of Spotsylvania Court House and Chancellorsville and the Wilderness.

Chancellorsville: Museum Shop – The gift shop is located in the visitor center; Civil War books, collectibles, and clothing items will be found.

Confederate Cemetery – Located 10 minutes away in the historic Spotsylvania Court House Village, nearly 1,000 Confederates from numerous states are buried here.

New Market, May 15, 1864 (Southern Shenandoah Valley Battlefields)

Overview of the Battle of New Market



The Battle of New Market took place on May 15, 1864. A Confederate General and former U.S. Vice President will call up the V.M.I. Cadets and thwart Union efforts to clear the Valley. It is remembered as the only time in U.S. history when a student body was used as an organized combat unit.

Located in the Southern Shenandoah Valley in Shenandoah County, the New Market battlefield is today a State Historic Park with portions preserved by the American Battlefield Trust.

This is one of the better-known battles of the Shenandoah Valley and the first battle of the 1864 Valley Campaign, also known as the Lynchburg Campaign. Part of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's overall wartime strategy was to clear the Shenandoah Valley once and for all, which would eliminate the breadbasket of the Confederacy and the invasion route of the North. It will also threaten Gen. Robert E. Lee's left flank

if effective.

The Lincoln administration turned to Union General Franz Sigel for clearing the Valley. A German immigrant with a spotty wartime record, Sigel was a political appointee to try to win German immigrant votes for President Lincoln in the upcoming election.

Sigel's objective was to march his force of 10,000 men south and take the vital rail hub at Staunton, which would cut supplies from out west from reaching the Confederate capital of Richmond.

Meanwhile, Confederate Gen. John C. Breckenridge, a former U.S. Vice President, would concentrate his hardscrabble army half the size of his opponent at Staunton.

Part of his force would include the cadet corps from the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) in Lexington, which numbered 247 cadets.

While the Confederate cavalry under John Imboden slowed the lumbering Federal advance down the Valley Turnpike, Gen. Breckenridge decided to fight against the enemy's vanguard and moved north on May 13, 1864.

The advance guard cavalry from both sides would clash outside of the village of New Market just west of the Massanutten Mountain on May 13-14, 1864.

Hearing that part of Gen. Sigel's Union force was just north of the village of New Market, Gen. Breckenridge marched his army at 1 am on May 15, 1864. He hoped to trap and destroy this Union advance force with their backs against the Shenandoah River.

Both armies would clash mid-morning on May 15, 1864, just south of the village of New Market. The Confederate axis of advance would go along the Valley Turnpike with Col. George S. Patton Sr. (the grandfather of famous WWII General George S. Patton Jr.) in command of the right wing.

After Gen. Breckenridge failed to lure Union forces into a trap, he attacked at noon. The Confederate advance would push the Union battle line off Manor Hill and take up a position north of the Bushong Farm on Bushong Hill.

Heavy, concentrated Union fire against the Confederate center would unhinge it, causing part of their right flank to withdraw in confusion. While the Confederate battle line stalled, Gen. Breckenridge will reluctantly call out the cadets of VMI to fill in the center gap in their line at the Bushong Farm.

The Confederate gray line would surge past the Bushong orchard and blunt several Union counterattack attempts. The Confederate line would surge again after 3 pm, and many VMI cadets would lose their shoes in the muddy fields beyond the Bushong orchard, later called the Field of Lost Shoes.

With the swollen Shenandoah River, Confederate cavalries could not cross and destroy the bridge behind the Federals, cutting them off. The Union army managed to retreat, burn the bridge, and escape.

This Confederate victory would cost 500 casualties while inflicting nearly twice that number against the Union army. With Gen. Sigel's major withdrawal and the Valley momentarily safe once again, it will allow Gen. Breckenridge to join Robert E. Lee to the east just before the battle of Cold Harbor.

Overview of the Battle of New Market

Notable Places of Interest at the New Market Battle Site

Virginia Museum of the Civil War – A museum and visitor center on the New Market battlefield. The Stonewall Jackson statue from VMI was relocated here.

Bushong Farm – A historic house with outbuildings along the Confederate battle line used as a hospital after the battle.

New Market Battlefield Military Museum – This private museum is located on Manor Hill. A large militaria collection is housed here.

Strayer House – Located in New Market, this visitor center and museum is the headquarters for the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation.

54th Pennsylvania Monument – Stone monument dedicated to this regiment on the Union left flank.

North Anna, May 23–24, 1864 (Richmond Area Battlefields)

Overview of the Battle of North Anna



The Battle of North Anna took place on May 23–24, 1864, and was the third battle of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's Overland Campaign. This is one of Robert E. Lee's last great opportunities to strike a blow against the Army of the Potomac.

Located in Caroline and Hannover County, Virginia, the North Anna battlefield is today preserved by the Richmond National Battlefield Park, the American Battlefield Trust, and the Hannover County Parks.

One of the lesser-known battles of the American Civil War and the third battle of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's Overland Campaign. This is one of Robert E. Lee's last great opportunities to strike a blow against the Army of the Potomac.

After a two-week bloody stalemate at Spotsylvania Court House on

May 21, 1864, Gen. Grant withdrew to the southwest, hoping to lure Gen. Lee out into the open.

Gen. Lee will win the race to the next natural defensive barrier to the south, on the south bank of the North Anna River.

At this point, both armies were totally exhausted from constant marching and fighting since May 5, 1864. Gen. Grant's war of attrition began to take a serious toll on Gen. Lee's health, who was ill and must ride in the back of the carriage.

After serious Union casualties at Spotsylvania Court House and the last major Confederate reinforcements from Richmond to arrive just before the battle, both armies will be the most evenly matched they will ever be, with 67,000 Union versus 53,000 Confederates. This proved to be one of Gen. Lee's last great opportunities to strike a blow against the Union Army.

While Gen. Lee sat on the porch of the Fox House enjoying a glass of buttermilk, the sound of artillery announced the arrival of Gen. Grant, which would open the third battle of the Overland Campaign. Gen. Grant will attempt to cross the North Anna River and strike the rebels at two different locations.

On May 23, 1864, Gen. Grant's left wing under Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock charged an ensconced Confederate brigade at Henagan's Redoubt and captured the Chesterfield Bridge intact along the vital Telegraph Road. The Federals will hold their positions as it gets dark.

Meanwhile, on the same day, Gen. Grant's right wing under Gen. Gouverneur K. Warren was nervously crossing his corps at Jericho Mills. One of A.P. Hill's Confederate Divisions brought on a bold and

aggressive attack that sent the Federals reeling back. U.S. artillery arrived in time, unlimbered, and repelled the charging rebels before they could push the Federals back into the river.

That evening, Gen. Lee's Chief Engineer Martin Luther Smith, the architect of the Vicksburg defenses, devised an innovative defense to set a trap for the Federals. Using natural geography and taking advantage of a series of dominating ridges, a series of earthworks would form an inverted-v shape.

As the Federals pressed forward, the inverted-v would divide the Union army. A portion of Lee's army could then spring the trap and destroy a Union Corps before it could be supported.

On May 24, 1864, the Federals moved forward and started to engage with the rebels in their fortified earthworks. As Gen. Lee lay in his tent ill, hearing the guns, he would say, "We must strike them a blow, we must strike them a blow!"

The opportunity to spring the trap slipped between the rebels' fingers as Gen. Grant caught onto Gen. Lee's plans and withdrew his forces to safety. Gen. Lee emerged as the most indispensable man in the Confederacy without a competent rebel commander to spring the trap.

Both sides would entrench, and another stalemate would ensue. Gen. Grant would withdraw again and move to the southeast using the Pamunkey River to screen his army as he got closer to the gates of Richmond.

After this stalemate, Union casualties would total 2,600, while the Confederates had 1,600 casualties.

Overview of the Battle of North Anna

Notable Places of Interest at the North Anna Battle Site

Mount Carmel Church – Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's headquarters for the campaign, today it is an active church.

Fox House – The location where Gen. Robert E. Lee heard the first shots of the battle. Today it's owned by the American Battlefield Trust. (Closed to the public)

Dr. Miller's House – A landmark along the main Confederate battle line. (Private Property).

Hanover County Park at Ox Ford – A hiking trail with numerous interpretive signs along Lee's Inverted- V, it has some of the best examples of Civil War earthworks.

7th Wisconsin Regiment Monument – Rock monument dedicated to this Iron Brigade Regiment.

Piedmont, June 5, 1864 (Southern Shenandoah Valley Battlefields)

Overview of the Battle of Piedmont



The Battle of Piedmont took place on June 5, 1864. Union Gen. David Black Dave Hunter will institute a scorched earth policy and engage Confederate Gen. William Grumble Jones outside of the village of Piedmont.

Located in the Southern Shenandoah Valley, Augusta County, three acres of the battlefield are preserved today by the Shenandoah Battlefield Foundation.

This is one of the lesser-known battles of the Shenandoah Valley and part of the first phase of the 1864 Valley Campaign also known as the Lynchburg Campaign. Part of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's overall wartime strategy was to clear the Shenandoah Valley once and for all while eliminating the breadbasket of the Confederacy and the invasion route of the North. If effective, it will also threaten Gen. Robert E. Lee's left flank.

Immediately following the Union defeat at the battle of New Market on May 15, 1864, Gen. Grant took swift action and replaced Gen. Franz Sigel with Gen. David Hunter in charge of the Union Army of the Shenandoah on May 21, 1864.

A scorched earth policy is enacted in the Valley. Gen. Hunter's army of 8,500 will live off the land as they march towards their objective of Staunton, a major rail hub, which will deprive Richmond of western supplies of the Valley and beyond.

After the battle of New Market, Gen. Breckenridge will lead most of the Confederate army in the Valley east to join Gen. Lee. This will leave only a small rebel force under Gen. Imboden's Valley Reserves until Gen. Grumble Jones' will assemble a small scrabbled army from the Department of Southwest Virginia and East Tennessee bringing the total to 5,500.

On June 3, 1864, Union Gen. Hunter arrived in Harrisonburg and found the direct route to Staunton blocked by Confederate Gen. Imboden. The next day, Gen. Hunter will leave a small diversionary force while his main force will march east to Port Republic to try to flank the rebels.

The Confederates will catch onto the ruse and march east to confront Gen. Hunter.

On June 5, 1864, Gen. Imboden's Confederate cavalry fought a delaying action against Union cavalry just north of the village of Piedmont, around the Bonnie Doon Plantation until Gen. Grumble Jones could bring up the infantry.

Gen. Jones will form a strong battle line on each side of the road with

his left flank on a high bluff along the Middle River and his right flank six hundred yards to the rear along a farm lane, creating a gap in his center.

Gen. Jones will form a strong battle line on each side of the road with his left flank on a high bluff along the Middle River and his right flank six hundred yards to the rear along a farm lane, creating a gap in his center.

When Gen. Hunter's main force arrived, they threw uncoordinated and unsuccessful attacks against each Confederate flank with no result.

Captain Henry DuPont, commanding Union artillery, systematically silence most of the Confederate guns which will help turn the tide of battle. With the southern guns crippled, the Federals will assault the Confederate left flank and were repulsed.

Confederate Gen. Jones will shift troops from his right to left flank in order to bolster it. With his right weakened and a gap in the center, the Union will launch an assault to exploit the gap and the Confederate line will become unhinged. While trying to rally his men, Confederate Gen. Grumble Jones was shot in the head and was instantly killed.

The southern retreat became a route and this became the first Union victory in the Valley for many years. The Union suffered 875 casualties while the Confederates sustained 1,500 casualties, most being prisoners.

The next day on June 6, 1864, Union General Hunter seized Staunton, his first objective. He will continue his scorched earth policy and

burn the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) in Lexington for the loss at New Market. Though he will turn his attention to Lynchburg, Gen Lee will send a force west under Gen. Jubal Early where he will stop the Union advance on June 18, 1864.

Overview of the Battle of Piedmont

Notable Places of Interest at the Piedmont Battle Site

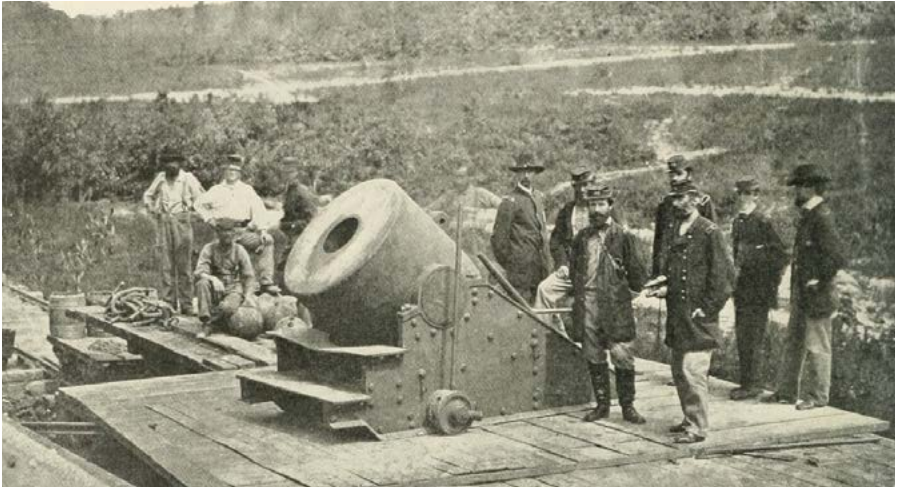
UDC Freeman Battlefield Marker – Erected in the 1920s, it's one of the few landmarks to identify the battlefield today.

Bonnie Doon – A 19th Century Plantation where Confederate forces converged and opening cavalry actions occurred. (Private property)

Civil War Orientation Center & Valley Turnpike Museum – Located in Harrisonburg 20 miles away, under one roof some excellent interpretation material on the battle and visitor center can be found here.

Petersburg, June 9, 1864 – March 25, 1865 (Petersburg Area Battlefields)

Overview of the Battle of Petersburg



The Petersburg Campaign or Siege of Petersburg took place from June 9, 1864 – March 25, 1865. For nearly 10 months a series of battles were fought where extensive trench systems were used and the largest concentration of U.S. African American troops saw action.

Today, the preserved battlefield area is in and around the Petersburg area along a 27-mile line. The Petersburg National Military Park is the epicenter.

Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's Overland Campaign was a series of inconclusive battles fought against Gen. Robert E. Lee from the Rapidan to the James River in May and June 1864. After the bloody battle of Cold Harbor; May 31 – June 12, 1864, Gen. Grant moved around Gen. Lee to the south, crossed the James River, and moved to Petersburg below Richmond.

Petersburg was a vital rail junction where five railroads converged. Gen. Grant knew that if Petersburg fell, Richmond, the Confederate capital, would fall close behind. The first trenches around Petersburg were constructed in 1862 with further improvements made in the following years with redoubts, gun emplacements, moats, earthen walls, forts, and miles of earthworks.

The battle of Petersburg began on June 15, 1864, when Gen. William F. Smith moved his force against Gen. Beauregard's hard-scrabbled defenders. The Confederate defenses held as both sides rushed reinforcements the next day. Despite several Union attacks, the Confederate line held fast.

Though Gen. Grant had assembled a force of over 100,000 by June 18, 1864, he realized the staunch defenses around the city would prove to be difficult. Gen. Grant changed his plan to starve out the Confederate defenders and attack whenever an opportunity presented itself. Ultimately, the Confederates would assemble a combined force of 60,000.

Subsequent battles ensued resulting in the extension of the trench lines. Perhaps, the most famous battle known as The Crater occurred on July 30, 1864. To break the stalemate, some of Union Gen. Burnside's troops who were Pennsylvania miners came up with a plan.

Tunnel under the Confederate works, plant explosives, and rush troops in the gap. While the operation went off and created an enormous crater in the lines, the Confederates launched a successful counterattack resulting in high Union casualties including African American troops.

Ultimately the Siege of Petersburg would see extensive use of trench warfare, foreshadowing the First World War. Over the next 10 months, the front line would eventually stretch 40 miles and claim thousands of lives.

On March 24, 1865, President Lincoln and Gen. Sherman visited Gen. Grant at his headquarters at City Point to plan a strategy to bring the war to a final conclusion. Shortly after, Gen. Lee made his last desperate attack at the Union position at Ft. Stedman which failed.

Gen. Grant finally cracked the Confederate defenses on April 1, 1865, at Five Forks where he smashed the flank of Lee's southwest line at Petersburg. The next day Gen. Sheridan made a successful assault on Gen. Lee's vulnerable right flank on April 2, 1865. Next Gen. Grant ordered an all-out attack along the entire line and Lee's shattered front collapsed with his army in full retreat.

On April 2, 1865, the Army of Northern Virginia fled Richmond along with the Confederate government that night. The next day, Union troops entered Richmond April 3, 1865, after a 10-month siege.

With the fall of the Confederate capital, it was only days later when Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered to Gen Grant on April 7, 1865, at Appomattox Court House.

In the end, the Petersburg campaign would cost 42,000 Union casualties while the Confederates sustained 28,000 casualties. The campaign would take the lives of 16 generals.

Overview of the Battle of Petersburg

Notable Places of Interest at the Petersburg Battle Site

Petersburg National Battlefield – Covering an area of 30 miles, the park includes thirteen separate sites with three different visitor centers.

The Crater – This site is located in the Eastern Front portion of the Petersburg National Battlefield Park. One can see the remnants of the actual crater and a recreation of the entrance of the mine.

City Point – Located 12 miles east of Petersburg, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's Headquarters is a unit of the Petersburg National Battlefield and contains a visitor center and museum.

Five Forks Historical Park – Located 20 miles west of Petersburg, it's a unit of the Petersburg National Battlefield. The site includes a visitor contact station with museum displays, a video, and a trail system.

Pamplin Historical Park – A 420-acre private park with components of the Petersburg battlefield, The National Museum of the Civil War Soldier, and an antebellum plantation site with historic structures can be found here.

Third Winchester, Sept 19, 1864 (NTH Shenandoah Valley Battlefields)

Overview of the Battle of Third Winchester



The battle of Third Winchester took place on September 19, 1864. In the largest and bloodiest battle in the Valley, Union Gen. Philip Sheridan will attempt to clear the Shenandoah Valley once and for all as Confederate Gen. Jubal Early blocks his advance east of Winchester.

Located in the Northern Shenandoah Valley outside of the city of Winchester, today portions of the battlefield have been preserved by the American Battlefield Trust and the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation. Notable sites include the Middle Field and Second Woods.

This is the largest battle in the Shenandoah Valley and part of the last phase of the 1864 Valley Campaign also known as Sheridan's Campaign. The battle included two future U.S. Presidents, two future governors of Virginia, a former U.S. Vice President, and a colonel

who would be the grandfather to WWII legend George S. Patton Jr.

Part of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's overall wartime strategy was to clear the Shenandoah Valley once and for all while eliminating the breadbasket of the Confederacy and invasion route of the North. If effective, it will also threaten Gen. Robert E. Lee's left and rear flank.

While Gen. Ulysses S. Grant was outside of the gates of Richmond at Petersburg, Confederate Gen. Jubal Early's Army of the Valley in the Shenandoah Valley gave Washington much grief.

Union Gen Philip Sheridan was placed in charge of the Army of the Shenandoah and was strategically located between Gen. Early's force in Winchester and Washington. On the eve of President Lincoln's re-election in November 1864, Gen. Sheridan was cautioned to avoid a military disaster that would cause Lincoln votes.

However, in September 1864, Gen. Sheridan saw an opportunity to strike against a portion of Gen. Early's force east of Winchester. On September 19, 1864, a large slow-moving Union force moving west along the Berryville Pike towards Winchester encountered Confederates at the Berryville Canyon.

This will delay the Union advance and allow Confederate Gen. Early to consolidate his largely outnumbered army along a strong ridge, running north to south, east of Winchester, and use the topography to his advantage.

The Union army had 40,000 while the Confederate defenders had 15,000. A general engagement ensued with a fury that day, especially at the Second Woods and Middle Field.

A large Federal assault was rebuffed by the Confederate veterans. Confederate Division commander Gen. Robert Rhodes and Union Division commander Gen. David Russell were killed a few hundred yards from each other during the intense engagement.

While the main Confederate line held steady against superior numbers, a late afternoon attack with fresh Union infantry and cavalry divisions descended from the north and smashed into the Confederate left flank. This attack will unhinge the Confederate line and drive them back towards their forts and defenses outside of Winchester

At the end of the day Gen. Alfred Torbert will lead a grand cavalry charge down the Valley Turnpike with infantry support and take the Star Fort, Fort Collier, and other surrounding defenses. This would cause the Confederates to retreat, running through the streets of Winchester, and ending the battle.

The bloodiest battle of the Valley will cost the Union 5,000 casualties including one general dead and two others wounded. Meanwhile, the Confederates will take 4,000 casualties, just over twenty-five percent, with two generals killed and four others wounded.

Third Winchester was the beginning of the end of the Confederate supremacy of the Valley. A series of Confederate defeats that fall will ensue which will help aid the reelection of President Lincoln.

Overview of the Battle of Third Winchester

Notable Places of Interest at the Third Winchester Battle Site

The James R. Wilkins Winchester Battlefields Visitor Center – Located next to the Third Winchester battlefield, it interprets all three Winchester battlefields. Gift shop on site.

The Shenandoah Valley Civil War Museum – Located in historic downtown Winchester, the collection is housed in the old Frederick County Courthouse.

Fort Collier Civil War Center – Located where the final Union attack broke the last Confederate line. See preserved earthworks and the recreated Stine House.

Winchester National Cemetery – A cemetery for Federal soldiers, many Civil War regimental monuments can be found here.

Stonewall Confederate Cemetery – A subsection in Mount Hebron Cemetery in Winchester. 2,575 Confederates are buried here including Gen. Turner Ashby and the Patton brothers. Various Civil War monuments are located here as well.

Maj. Gen. Robert Rodes Monument – Stone monument located near the spot where the general fell mortally wounded while leading a counter-attack.

Cedar Creek, October 19, 1864 (Northern Shenandoah Valley Battlefields)

Overview of the Battle of Cedar Creek



The Battle of Cedar Creek took place on October 19, 1864. In the last great battle in the Valley, Confederate Gen. Jubal Early tries to reverse his losses with a surprise attack at dawn. Union Gen. Philip Sheridan rallied his army at the eleventh hour in one of the greatest reversals of the war.

Located in the Northern Shenandoah Valley, 15 miles south of Winchester, today, portions of the battlefield have been preserved by the American Battlefield Trust and the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation.

This is one of the major battles in the Shenandoah Valley and part of the last phase of the 1864 Valley Campaign, also known as Sheridan's Campaign.

Gen. Philip Sheridan aimed to carry out Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's

orders to clear the Shenandoah Valley once and for all, which would eliminate the breadbasket of the Confederacy and the invasion route of the North.

In September 1864, while Gen. Ulysses S. Grant was outside of the gates of Richmond at Petersburg, Gen. Sheridan delivered a stunning set of victories in the Valley at Third Winchester, Fisher's Hill, and Toms Brook.

Next, in late September and early October of 1864, he destroyed crops, barns, manufacturing centers, and anything that would aid the Confederate war effort. This period in the Valley was known as "The Burning."

With the Confederate Army of the Valley no longer an apparent threat, Gen. Sheridan was called back to Washington to discuss where his army might be needed next.

Meanwhile, Robert E. Lee sent Confederate Gen. Jubal Early reinforcements from Longstreet's Corps. Gen. Gordon, Gen. Early's second in command, saw an opportunity to get at a large concentration of Federals camped on the east bank of Cedar Creek.

The outnumbered Confederates devised a plan to silently get three columns in place at night for a surprise dawn attack.

At dawn on October 19, 1864, the three-pronged surprise attack would cross Cedar Creek and drive three Union Corps back. Though some brave Federal soldiers made a stand, by midmorning, 14,000 Confederates had pushed 32,000 Union soldiers into a general retreat.

Gen. Early believed the battle had been won, while Gen. Gordon urged continuing the pursuit. The advance came to a stop as tired and hungry soldiers who had marched at night and fought all morning needed to rest. Many other rebels plundered the Union camps looking for much-needed supplies. This was known as “The Fatal Halt”, a decision that would haunt both men.

Gen. Sheridan arrived back at Winchester the day before. Hearing the distant guns from his headquarters in Winchester, he made a dramatic and famous ride to the front. Along the way, he will stop retreating units and direct them back to the fighting. He rode the length of his battle lines, restored his men’s morale, and made plans to counterattack. This legendary moment became known as “Sheridan’s Ride”.

Gen. Sheridan’s reformed battle lines stretched for nearly two miles. The Union counterattack began at 4:00 pm. Though the Union advance met strong resistance, the Confederate left was ultimately turned. The Union cavalry then struck hard, and the Confederate line unraveled, turning into a retreat. The Federals took back all of the ground they had lost that morning.

In the end, Union casualties would be nearly 6,000, while Confederate casualties were 3,000. This became the last major battle of the Valley, and Gen Early will never be able to make another serious offensive again. This was one of the Union victories in late 1864 that would help to secure President Lincoln’s reelection.

Overview of the Battle of Cedar Creek

Notable Places of Interest at the Cedar Creek Battle Site

Cedar Creek National Historic Park Visitor Center – National Park rangers can help plan your visit here.

The Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation Museum – This visitor center houses exhibits, visitor services, and a gift shop.

Belle Grove Plantation – A 1797 manor house located in the epicenter of the battlefield and was used as a Union headquarters.

Hupp's Hill Museum – Inside the Strasburg Visitor Center, Civil War artifacts are on display. Outside are original Civil War earthworks.

Ramseur Monument – Stone monument dedicated to Confederate Maj. Gen. Stephen Ramseur is located near the entrance to Belle Grove Plantation.

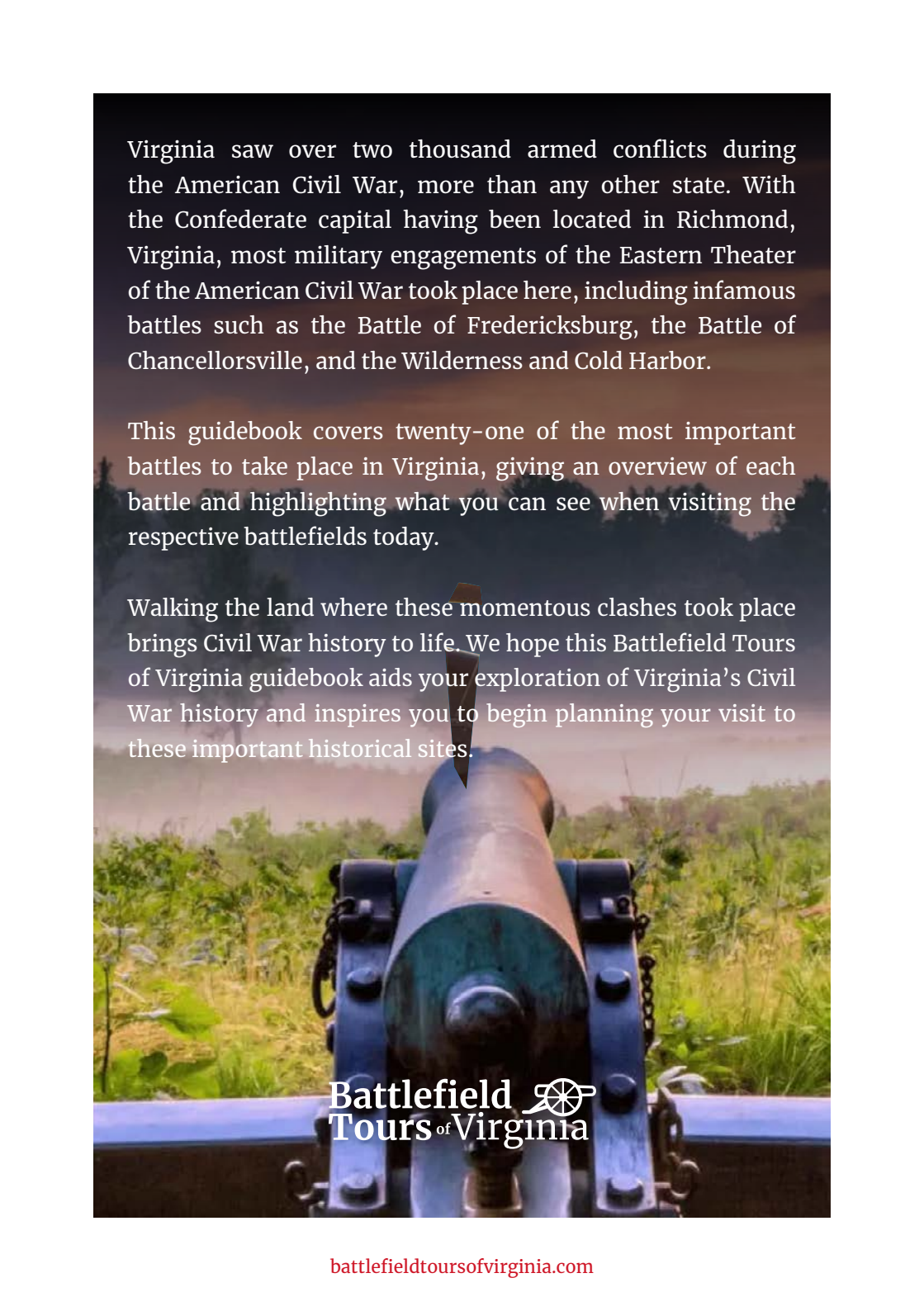
John Kanaster

About the Author



John is the owner and operator of Battlefield Tours of Virginia. He is driven by a passion to get visitors mobile with a local battlefield guide and create the best private battlefield tour experience. He is a U.S. Army veteran who worked for the government for over 25 years.

John is a member of various Civil War organizations and gives speaking engagements. Today, he resides in historic Fredericksburg, Virginia with his wife, son, and a house full of retrievers. His home sits on the Fredericksburg portion of the battlefield known as Bloody Plain, where countless waves of Union soldiers charged the Confederate-held positions on Marye's Heights.

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a Civil War-era cannon, likely a 12-pounder Napoleon, positioned in a grassy field. The cannon is dark, possibly black or dark blue, and is mounted on a carriage. It is pointed towards the right side of the frame. The field is green with some taller grass and weeds. In the distance, there are trees and a hazy horizon. The sky is a mix of blue and white, suggesting a bright day with some clouds. The overall tone is historical and serene.

Virginia saw over two thousand armed conflicts during the American Civil War, more than any other state. With the Confederate capital having been located in Richmond, Virginia, most military engagements of the Eastern Theater of the American Civil War took place here, including infamous battles such as the Battle of Fredericksburg, the Battle of Chancellorsville, and the Wilderness and Cold Harbor.

This guidebook covers twenty-one of the most important battles to take place in Virginia, giving an overview of each battle and highlighting what you can see when visiting the respective battlefields today.

Walking the land where these momentous clashes took place brings Civil War history to life. We hope this Battlefield Tours of Virginia guidebook aids your exploration of Virginia's Civil War history and inspires you to begin planning your visit to these important historical sites.

Battlefield 
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