May 4, 1864 – the Union Army of the Potomac crossed the Rapidan River west of Fredericksburg setting into motion the bloodiest and most decisive campaign of the Civil War.
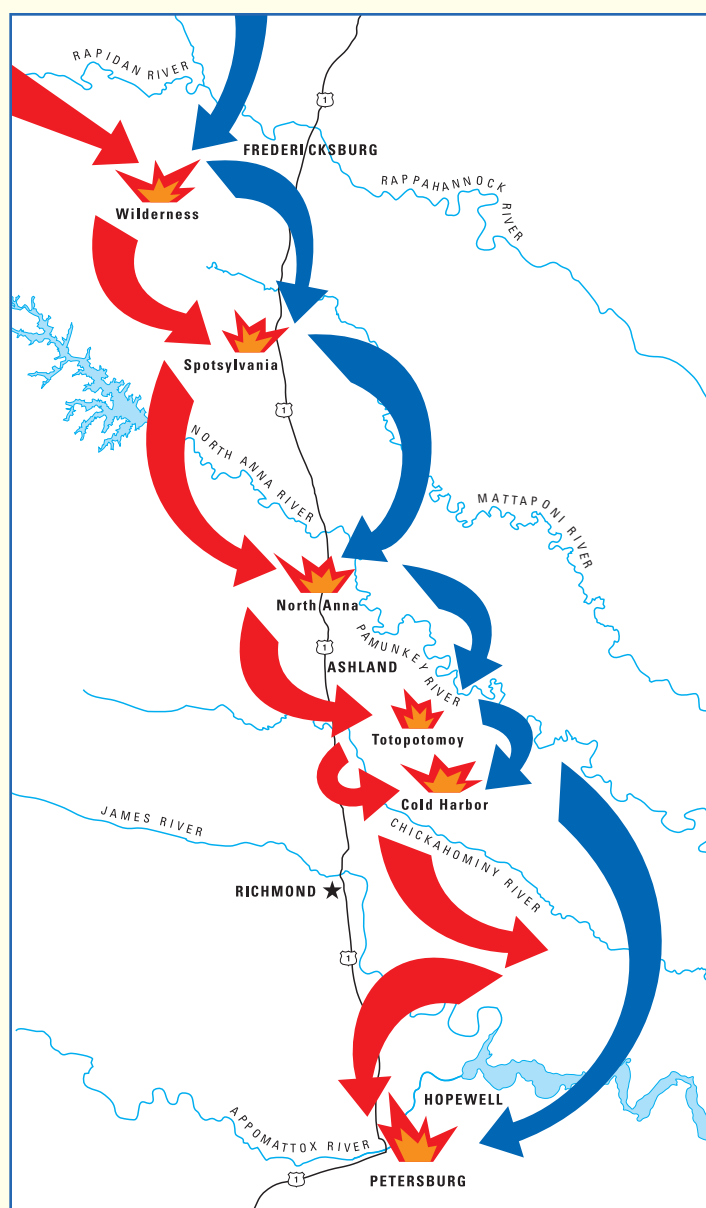
Robert E. Lee moved quickly to meet the challenge. The Confederate commander had just 60,000 soldiers with which to stop Grant's 120,000-man juggernaut. He had faced such odds before, and each time he had turned back the threat.

However, this time a new Union general-in-chief was traveling with the Federal forces. Gen. U.S. Grant would prove to be made of tougher stuff.

The Confederates delivered devastating blows to the Union advance as it moved through the tangled Wilderness south of the Rapidan, May 5-6. Rather than turn back as others had done, Grant pushed his army south toward Spotsylvania Court House.

Lee beat him there, barely. For nearly two weeks, the armies stood and fought – sometimes hand-to-hand – as Lee resisted blow after blow.

Failing to break through at Spotsylvania, Grant maneuvered cross-country, sliding south and east around the Confederate army. Lee, mirroring the Union movements, built a strong line of earthen fortifications protecting a critical rail junction south of the North Anna River.

Robert E. Lee
Commander, Army of Northern Virginia

When Grant's Union army (in blue) crossed the Rapidan River in May, 1864, Lee's under-manned Confederate troops (in red) moved quickly to engage them. The Union forces, though consistently repelled, continued to swing wide to the east and down to the south toward Richmond and Petersburg. Confederate troops mirrored the Union descent, meeting them in some of the most fierce battles of the war.

The battered Confederate army again turned the Northerners back, but Grant moved again, around the North Anna lines, and to the Pamunkey River. Lee moved to block Grant's progress. He held another strong position behind the Totopotomoy Creek. After three days of sporadic skirmishing, Grant turned his attention toward the Old Cold Harbor crossroads. The Union army now was positioned to threaten the Confederate capital itself.

After nearly a month of continuous fighting, Confederate soldiers found themselves digging defensive lines with Richmond at their backs.

Grant launched a desperate dawn attack against those earthen defenses near Cold Harbor, June 3. He lost nearly 5,000 men in less than an hour. Lee had won his last major victory.

On June 12, Grant again disengaged and moved south. The Union army crossed the James River and marched toward Petersburg and its vital rail connections to the south. Lee once again moved to meet the threat, but this time the Confederates were pinned down.

Grant, utilizing his greater numbers, stretched Lee's army to the breaking point. On April 2, 1865, the Confederate line snapped. The Army of Northern Virginia abandoned Richmond and started west. Appomattox was a week away.

Ulysses S. Grant
General-in-Chief, United States Forces

Battles are decided on battlefields; campaigns are decided by logistics. As the Union Army of the Potomac moved south toward Richmond in the spring and summer of 1864, its soldiers required tons of food, clothing, forage, ammunition, and other equipment to function and survive. An interruption—even for a few days—could spell disaster.

Union control of the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia's navigable rivers in 1864 gave the Union high command the ability to move vast amounts of supplies by water to rapidly moving soldiers.

Huge Union river bases at Belle Plain and Aquia Landing (Potomac), the White House (Pamunkey), and City Point (James) were established as the army moved south. In order to maintain contact with his bases,
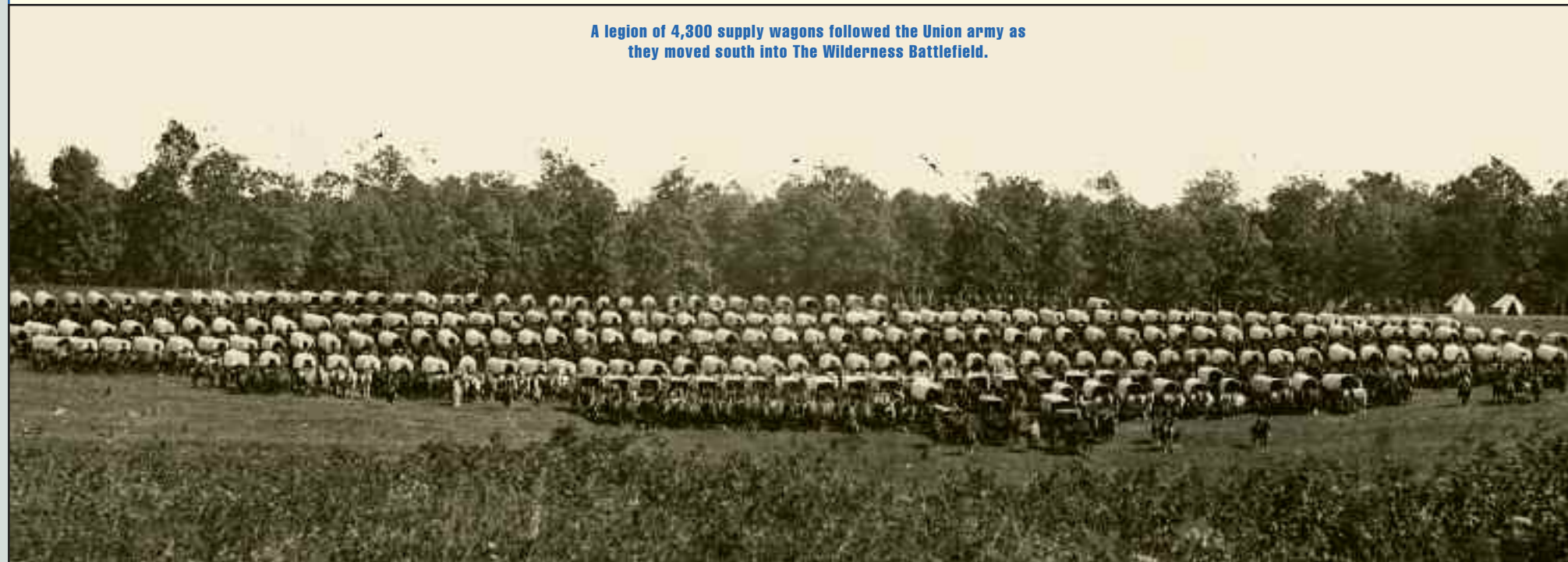
Grant had to keep his back to the rivers. Consequently, he always moved by the left flank, to the east, when maneuvering around Lee's army.

From those depots, miles of wagon trains and railroads delivered supplies to the front lines.

Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia relied on railroads for supply during the 1864 campaign. Lee fought to protect his rail lifelines at Hanover Junction (the intersection of the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac and the Virginia Central lines) and at Petersburg.

But the weight of Union provisions—skillfully brought to bear by Federal officers—and the tenuous nature of Confederate supply lines proved decisive.

U.S. Grant (right) looks on as President Lincoln is briefed by an officer on a hill overlooking the Union army's huge supply depot at City Point on the James River.

A legion of 4,300 supply wagons followed the Union army as they moved south into The Wilderness Battlefield.

Richmond became the capital of the Confederate States of America in the spring of 1861. The prosperous Upper-South city seemed an improbable choice to many, located only 100 miles south of the Union capital at Washington, D.C.

Yet Richmond survived as the capital for nearly four years. During the war, the city became a center for wounded soldiers and prisoners of war. Its industrial capacity turned out thousands of weapons used by Confederate troops in the field. Richmond was host to President Jefferson Davis and to the Confederate legislature. The city took on symbolic meaning to both sides.

Union armies moved into Richmond's suburbs twice during the war. Union Gen. George McClellan marched his soldiers within hearing of Richmond's church bells in 1862, and U.S. Grant approached the city in 1864. Each time, Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia turned back the threat.

Richmond finally fell April 2-3, 1865, when Lee's lines at Petersburg collapsed. As Davis and his government prepared to leave the city, fires set by evacuating Confederate troops to prevent warehouses full of supplies from falling into Union hands began consuming the commercial district of the city.

One of the war's largest prison camps was Richmond's Belle Isle. Today a suspended footbridge enables visitors to cross the James River to this site where tens of thousands of Union soldiers were imprisoned and many perished.

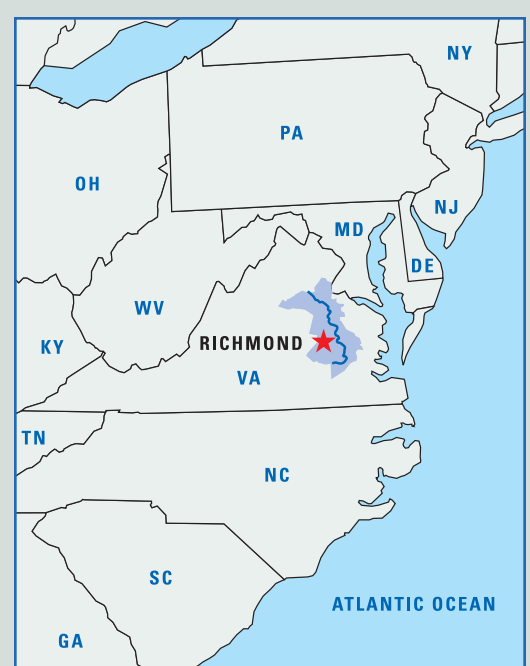The CSS Richmond returns to the naval yards located across the James River from Rocketts Landing.

A Currier and Ives print of the fall of Richmond in April, 1865. The city was partially destroyed by fires which rampaged out of control after being set by the evacuating Confederate troops.

More than 145 years ago, Union and Confederate soldiers marched the dusty backroads of Central Virginia. Now you're invited to follow in the footsteps of Lee and Grant by traveling along General Grant's "1864 Campaign" trail.

Charlottesville, Culpeper, Fredericksburg, Hopewell, Petersburg, Richmond, Scottsville, and the Counties of Caroline, Charles City, Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico, Orange, Louisa, Madison, New Kent, Prince George, Spotsylvania and Stafford

VIRGINIA CIVIL WAR TRAILS

For more information on other Virginia Civil War Trails, call toll free:

1·888·CIVIL WAR
www.civilwartrails.org

How to use this Map-Guide

The main part of this guide suggests a driving tour that follows the bloodiest march in American history. Two of the greatest armies this country has ever fielded slugged it out for more than a month in the spring and early summer of 1864. They battled across 100-miles of central Virginia, leaving tens of thousands of dead and wounded in their wake. Follow the soldiers by taking the "Blue Line" tour from the Rapidan River crossing at Germanna south to the gates of Petersburg. Peel back the years while driving, walking or biking the roads the soldiers used. Stop at the places they made famous. The entire tour from start to finish takes a full two days and covers four national battlefields. But feel free to opt for part of the tour. Slow down. Take a couple of the historic back roads. Visit a small town. Discover American history at its most dramatic, now unlocked from the landscape by Civil War Trails interpretive signs, indicated by the red stars (denoting 1864 campaign sites) and blue dots (denoting other Civil War sites) on the maps.

For more detailed travel information, stop by any Virginia Welcome Center or local/regional visitor center or contact any of the attractions or visitor bureaus listed in this guide. For additional Civil War Trails information, visit **www.CivilWarTrails.org**. For more Virginia travel information, see **www.Virginia.org**.

Travelers enjoy one of the colorful, interpretive markers along the trail.

VIRGINIA CIVIL WAR TRAILS

MARYLAND CIVIL WAR TRAILS | **NORTH CAROLINA CIVIL WAR TRAILS** | **WEST VIRGINIA CIVIL WAR TRAILS** | **TENNESSEE CIVIL WAR TRAILS**

Follow these signs to more than 1,000 Civil War sites.

The following further explore and expand upon the story of the Civil War:

Ashland/Hanover Visitor Center
800-897-1479
www.town.ashland.va.us

Charlottesville/Albemarle Convention and Visitors Bureau
877-386-1103
www.visitcharlottesville.org

Culpeper Visitor Center
888-CULPEPER
www.visitculpeperva.com

Dabbs House Museum
804-652-3406
www.co.henrico.va.us/rec

Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park
540-373-4461
www.nps.gov/frsp/vc.htm

Fredericksburg Visitor Center
800-678-4748
www.visitfred.com

Hopewell Visitor Center
800-863-8687
www.hopewellva.gov

Madison Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center
540-948-4455
www.madison-va.com

Museum of the Confederacy
855-649-1861
www.moc.org

Orange County Visitors Center
877-222-8072
www.visitorangevirginia.com

Petersburg National Battlefield
804-732-3531
www.nps.gov/pete

Petersburg Visitors Center
800-368-3595
www.petersburg-va.org

Richmond National Battlefield Park Civil War Visitor Center
804-771-2145
www.nps.gov/rich

Richmond Visitors Center
888-RICHMOND
www.visitrichmondva.com

Spotsylvania Visitor Center
877-515-6197
www.spotsylvania.va.us

Virginia Historical Society
804-358-4901
www.vahistorical.org

J.E.B. Stuart's coat and blood-stained sash, exhibited at the Virginia Historical Society.

The Confederate White House in Richmond has been restored to its 1860s appearance.

Virginia Civil War Trails is a statewide partner of the Virginia Sesquicentennial Commission (www.virginiacivilwar.org).

The Civil War Trust is America's largest nonprofit organization devoted to saving endangered Civil War battlefields. To help, visit www.civilwar.org or call 800-CWTRUST.

First Sergeant Powhatan Beaty, 5th U.S. Colored Troops

African Americans made significant contributions to both the Union and Confederate war efforts in Virginia.

Free blacks and slaves provided much of the labor for miles of earthen fortifications protecting Confederate strongholds at Richmond and Petersburg.

During the 1864 Virginia campaigns, black troops saw serious action for the Union cause. The United States Colored Troops (USCT) fought hard at Baylor's Farm, Deep Bottom, New Market Heights and Fort Gilmer.

MEN OF COLOR
To Arms! To Arms!
NOW OR NEVER
THREE YEARS' SERVICE

★ 1864 CAMPAIGN SITES ★

Gordonsville – Longstreet's camp. Home to Exchange Hotel Civil War Museum.

Montpelier – Site of Confederate winter camps, 1863–1864.

Orange – Confederates moved from this area to meet Grant in The Wilderness.

Town of Culpeper – Union camps dotted area prior to 1864 Overland Campaign.

Germanna Ford – Union soldiers crossed here May 4, 1864, starting the Overland Campaign.

Wilderness Battlefield Exhibit Shelter – National Park site at the scene of heavy fighting May 5–6, 1864.

Todd's Tavern – Union and Confederate cavalry clashed here May 6–7, 1864.

Spotsylvania Battlefield – National Park tour reviews the fighting of May 8–21, 1864.

Spotsylvania Court House Historic District – Battle shattered the village in 1864. Walking tours available.

Harris Farm – Site of last engagement of Spotsylvania fighting, May 19, 1864.

Zion Methodist Church – Spotsylvania landmark. Union army turned to Massaponax here in May 1864.

Massaponax Church – Site of photographs showing Federal high command planning campaign.

Plantations on Guinea Station Road – Antebellum homes line route of Union march in May 1864.

Guinea Station – Site of Stonewall Jackson's death in 1863 on Union march route a year later.

Bethel Church – Gens. Grant, Meade, and Burnside had headquarters here, May 22-23, 1864.

Bowling Green – Union soldiers broke into stores, freed prisoners, and looted the town May 21, 1864, during march to the North Anna River.

Milford Station – Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad station. Site of skirmish prior to North Anna, May 20, 1864.

Carmel Church – Union army reunited here in preparation for attacks at the North Anna River.

Ox Ford Battlefield (North Anna River) – Confederates turned back Union attacks May 24-25, 1864. Hanover County park. Tour information for North Anna Battlefield available.

Hanover Junction – Critical railroad junction Lee hoped to protect by defending the North Anna line.

Mangohick Church – Elements of the Union army marched past here after the North Anna battle.

Ashland – Lee marched his troops through here on the way to Cold Harbor.

Nelson's Crossing – Union army II and VI Corps crossed the Pamunkey River here.

Haw's Shop/Enon Church – Fierce cavalry battle fought here May 28, 1864.

Totopotomoy Creek – Site of fighting May 28-June 1, 1864.

Yellow Tavern – Site of the mortal wounding of Confederate Gen. J.E.B. Stuart, May 11, 1864.

Polegreen Church – Church destroyed by artillery June 1, 1864, prior to Cold Harbor.

Meadow Bridge – Union cavalry were nearly trapped after Battle of Yellow Tavern, May 1864.

Battlefield at Cold Harbor – A National Park visitor center and Hanover County park commemorates and interprets the battles fought May 31-June 12, 1864.

Trevilian Station – Cavalry fought here June 11-12, 1864, as Grant began infantry move. *(Multiple Trails sites.)*

Long Bridge – Union troops crossed Chickahominy River here after disengaging at Cold Harbor.

Wilcox's Landing – Site of main Union army James River crossing, this one via boat. Now a Charles City County park. *(No modern bridge.)*

North Bend – Union cavalry headquarters, June 1864.

Flowerdew Hundred – Parts of Union army crossed to this site on pontoon bridge over James River. Historical park. *(No modern bridge.)*

Prince George Court House – Large Federal cavalry camp located here.

Baylor's Farm – African American Union troops involved in fighting here June 15, 1864.

Port Walthall Junction – Two actions here in May 1864 to control railroad.

Swift Creek – Union Gen. Butler repulsed in effort to disrupt Confederate supply lines, May 9, 1864.

Ellerslie – Plantation was a key Confederate site during Swift Creek fighting.

Petersburg National Battlefield – Initial Union assaults on Petersburg defenses, June 15, 1864.

Cavalry Assault – Site of Union cavalry assault against Petersburg, June 9, 1864.

★ RELATED CIVIL WAR SITES ★

Kelly's Ford – Confederate Maj. John Pelham killed during cavalry battle here March 17, 1863.

Brandy Station Battlefield – Largest cavalry battle on the North American continent, June 9, 1863.

Graffiti House – Union and Confederate soldiers covered plaster walls with still-visible graffiti, 1863–1864.

Cedar Mountain Battlefield – Stonewall Jackson led Confederates in battle here August 9, 1862.

James City Battlefield – Day-long cavalry battle here Oct. 10, 1863.

Rochelle (Jack's Shop) – J.E.B. Stuart was almost cornered but escaped during this Sept. 22, 1863 battle.

Aquia Landing – Important Union supply base for campaigns in 1862-1864.

Potomac Creek Bridge – Union supply trains crossed here daily on a "cornstalk and beanpole" bridge.

White Oak Church/Museum – Site of Union camp in winter of 1862. Museum with related artifacts.

Fredericksburg Visitor Center – Information about the city's Civil War history.

Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor Center – Information about the battles at Fredericksburg, Wilderness, Spotsylvania and Chancellorsville.

Slaughter Pen Farm – Civil War Trust walking trail, site of failed Union attack on Jackson's position, Fredericksburg, Dec. 13, 1862.

Chancellorsville Battlefield Visitor Center – National Park visitor center on site of Stonewall Jackson's wounding during May 1863 battle.

First Day at Chancellorsville – Civil War Trust walking trail with markers to tell the story of the first day's actions.

Salem Church – Scene of May 3-4, 1863, fighting during the Chancellorsville Campaign.

Hartwood Presbyterian Church – Union troops burned interior woodwork for firewood.

Mine Run – Civil War Trust walking trail with markers to tell the story of only battle in this aborted Union campaign, Nov. 1863.

Rio Hill – Union cavalry under Gen. George Custer attacked Confederate winter camp here February 29, 1864.

Scottsville – Union soldiers burned buildings as they moved through here in early March 1865.

Hanover Tavern – J.E.B. Stuart passed through here on famous ride around McClellan in 1862.

Meadow Farm Museum – Antebellum farm interpreting agrarian life during the Civil War.

Beaver Dam Creek – National Park commemorating start of Seven Days' Battles, June 26, 1862.

Gaines' Mill – National Park commemorating fighting here June 27, 1862.

Dabbs House Museum – Lee's first headquarters (June 1862) as commander of the Army of Northern Virginia.

Museum of the Confederacy – Largest collection of Confederate artifacts housed in a modern museum. Confederate White House is restored and open for tours.

Virginia Historical Society – Houses the "Four Seasons of the Confederacy" murals and world's largest collection of Confederate-made weapons.

Confederate Memorial Chapel – One of two surviving buildings of R.E. Lee Camp No. 1, Confederate Soldiers' Home, a refuge for indigent veterans.

Richmond National Battlefield Park Visitor Center – Explore Richmond's battlefields with exhibits, film, and ranger assistance.

Belle Isle – Site of notorious Civil War prison camp holding Union enlisted men. Now a city park.

Confederate Navy Yard and Rocketts Landing – Site of busy deepwater port and ironclad ship-building facility on the James River.

Libby Prison (site) – Waterfront warehouse became a prison for Union officers.

Savage's Station – Union rear guard fought here while Gen. George McClellan withdrew his army to the James River, June 29, 1862.

Seven Pines – Scene of heavy fighting, May 31, 1862.

Darbytown Road – Confederate offensive to reclaim defense line, October 9, 1864.

Piney Grove – Farmstead depicting domestic life during the war.

Malvern Hill – Union defense here held in last of the Seven Days' Battles, July 1, 1862.

Drewry's Bluff – Confederate guns above the James turned back Federal gunboats, May 15, 1862.

Fort Stevens – Scene of fighting May 14-16, 1864, during Bermuda Hundred campaign.

Deep Bottom – James River crossing used by Union forces to attack Richmond defenses in 1864.

Dutch Gap – Union canal dug to cut off a James River "curl" and avoid Confederate river defenses.

Point of Rocks – Union field hospital site, 1864–1865.

Parker's Battery – Part of Confederate Howlett Line protecting Petersburg-Richmond front.

Bermuda Hundred Landing – Union troops under Gen. Benjamin Butler landed here May 5, 1864.

City Point Unit – Union supply depot and U.S. Grant's headquarters during 1864-1865 siege of Petersburg.

Depot Field Hospital (site) – Up to 10,000 Union patients treated in largest City Point hospital.

Weston Manor – Antebellum structure provides setting for interpretation of Civil War civilian life.

Union Fort – Union fortification in Hopewell city park protected perimeter of City Point base.

Beef Steak Raid – Confederate cavalry captured 2,486 steers meant to feed Union troops, September 1864.

Petersburg National Battlefield – Site of opposing lines during siege lasting 9½ months.

Violet Bank – Lee's headquarters June–October 1864 during siege.

Dunlop Station – Vital rail junction for Confederate supplies and evacuation, 1864-1865.

Chesterfield Batteries – Three Confederate batteries (now in city park) built to defend city.

Blandford Church – Situated just behind the Confederate lines and used as a temporary field hospital after the Battle of the Crater. Confederate cemetery adjacent.

Fort Davis – Built as result of Union capture of Jerusalem Plank Road and is one of the largest forts surrounding Petersburg.

Fort Hays – Constructed Aug.–Sept. 1864 after Globe Tavern battle.

South Side Station – Oldest remaining railroad station in Virginia. Union artillery bombarded the building during siege. Lee's Retreat tour begins here.

Lincoln in Petersburg – Three markers tell the story of the president's visits, April 3 and 7, 1865.

Union supply wagons crossed the Rapidan River as Federal troops fought in The Wilderness.

1861–1865 NORTHERN VIRGINIA
CROSSROADS OF CONFLICT
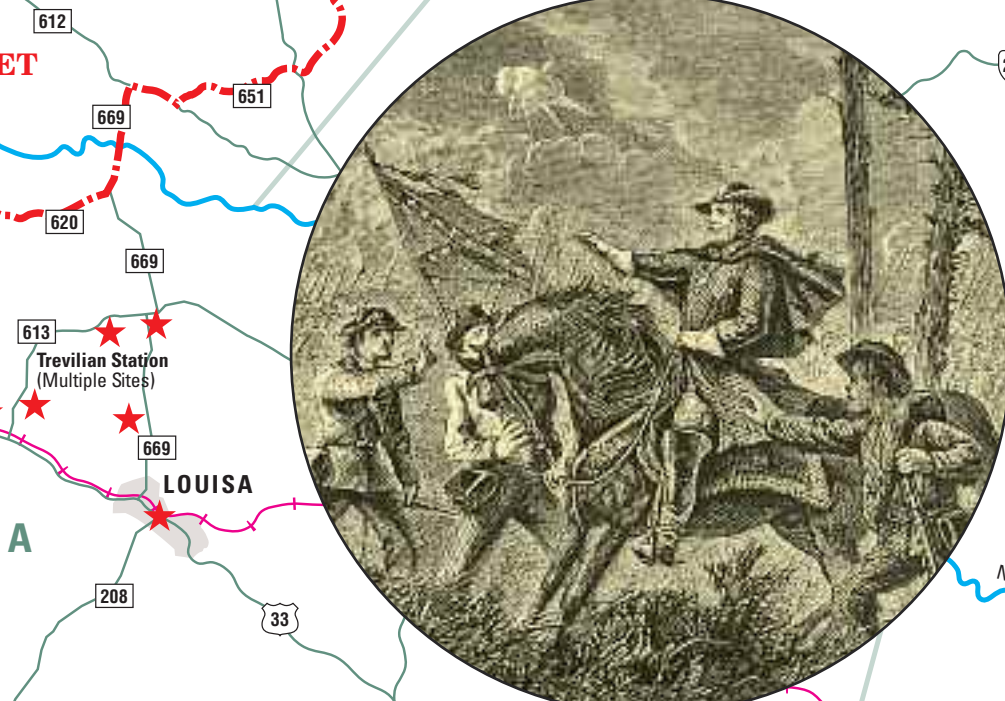
LEE vs GRANT
THE 1864 CAMPAIGN

- 1864 Overland Campaign Historic Route
- Confederate Troop Movements from Camps
- Union Troop Movements from Camps
- ★ 1864 Overland Campaign Site
- Other Civil War Trails Site
- Other Civil War Site
- National, State or County Park
- Information or Welcome Center
- Restrooms
- Handicap Accessible

One of a series of photographs by Timothy O'Sullivan of a Union High command meeting at Massaponax Church. U.S. Grant is leaning over a church pew conferring with his commanders.

Confederate cavalry commander J.E.B. Stuart (inset) was mortally wounded during the Battle of Yellow Tavern, May 11, 1864.

Confederate soldiers beg Lee to return to the rear as fighting grows intense in The Wilderness.

Lieutenant Colonel Charles L. Chandler rallying the 57th Massachusetts Infantry at Ox Ford, May 24, 1864.

The first Union attacks on thinly held Confederate lines at Petersburg were successful; but resistance stiffened resulting in a siege.

SHENANDOAH VALLEY
AVENUE OF INVASION
(Waynesboro, 38 miles)

To Charlottesville
(see inset below)

JOHN WILKES BOOTH
ESCAPE OF AN ASSASSIN

1862 PENINSULA CAMPAIGN
CIVIL WAR IN TIDEWATER
(Fort Monroe, 60 miles)

LEE'S RETREAT
THE FINAL CAMPAIGNS

WILSON + KAUTZ RAID

Virginia is for Lovers

N

0 1 2 3 4 5
Mileage Scale

No modern crossing. Site of 1864 pontoon bridge, and ferry crossing.
Modern roads connecting historic route.