

### Battle of the Wilderness

From Gettysburg, Lee returned to Virginia, cautiously followed by Meade. After the indecisive campaigns of Bristoe Station and Mine Run, both armies went into winter quarters.

Assigned the supreme command of the Federal forces in March 1864, General Grant established his headquarters with Meade's army at Culpeper where he began active preparations for a spring offensive.

On May 4, the Federal Army crossed the Rapidan and began its flanking march toward Richmond. Informed of Grant's movement, Lee determined to strike the Federal columns in the Wilderness.

About 8 a. m. on May 5, Warren's Federal corps, moving along the Orange Turnpike, came upon Ewell's advance. Warren immediately attacked, but was repulsed. Hill's Confederate columns advancing along the Orange Plank Road met Getty's Federal division sent forward by Grant to hold the intersection of the Brock-Orange Plank Roads. The arrival of reinforcements under Hancock enabled the Federal forces to hold there despite heavy Confederate attacks.

At dawn, May 6, Hancock attacked, driving Hill's corps 1½ miles through the forest. At this critical moment Longstreet's corps arrived to stem the Federal advance. In desperate fighting, Lee attempted to turn first the left and then the right of the Federal flanks, but met only partial success. The next day the Federal Army resumed its advance by the left toward Richmond.

Casualties: in the battle of the Wilderness, the Federals lost 15,387 out of 118,000; the Confederates, 11,400 out of 62,000.

### Battle of Spotsylvania Court House

On the night of May 7, both armies moved in a dramatic race for Spotsylvania Court House. By forced marches, the Confederates were able to reach their objective first and take up a strongly entrenched position. In a battle fought with intermittent pauses from May 8 to 21, Grant vainly attempted to drive Lee from his fortified position. The bitter contest reached its greatest violence on May 12 in a savage hand-to-hand encounter that raged for 20 hours at the Bloody Angle as a surprise Federal attack penetrated a salient in the Confederate line only to be driven back in turn by desperate Confederate counterattacks.

The last major engagement ended on May 19, with the repulse of Ewell's assault on a division of Hancock's Federal corps near the Harris House. On the night of May 20, Grant's army, followed the next day by Lee, moved out of Spotsylvania Court House to renew fighting later at the North Anna River. Cold Harbor, Petersburg, and Appomattox followed in inevitable succession.

While Grant was delivering his hammer blows on Lee's army in Virginia in the summer of 1864, Sherman had begun the great march through Georgia which was to carry him through the heart of the Confederacy to Atlanta and the sea. Thus, Grant sought to strike on all fronts at once with unrelenting pressure. It is in the light of this broad strategical plan for the winning of the war that the battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House assume their true significance. In these desperately fought engagements Grant succeeded in destroying Lee's offensive power.

Casualties: in the battle of Spotsylvania Court House, the Federals lost 17,555 out of 110,000. Confederate losses are unknown; their strength, 51,000.

### The Park

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, established by act of Congress approved February 14, 1927, embraces, in its 2,421.21 acres of Federal lands, portions of the four battlefields of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, the Wilderness, and Spotsylvania Court House—all of which are within a radius of 17 miles of Fredericksburg. In addition to the battlefields, the park administers Fredericksburg National Cemetery wherein are buried 15,260 Federal soldiers of which 12,770 are unknown. Also included in the park is the Stonewall Jackson Memorial Shrine at Guinea Station. Here is preserved the house in which Lee's famous lieutenant died.

### How To Reach the Park

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park is reached by U. S. 1 at Fredericksburg, 52 miles south of Washington and 55 miles north of Richmond. From Fredericksburg the various separate battlefields may be reached by State roads indicated on the map on the back of this folder.

House in which Stonewall Jackson died.



### About Your Visit

During your visit you will see miles of original trench remains and gun pits which are still well preserved, along with such important historic sites as the Sunken Road, Marye's Heights, Hamilton's Crossing, Jackson Trail, Jackson Shrine, and Bloody Angle. Park roads make these remains and sites easily accessible to you.

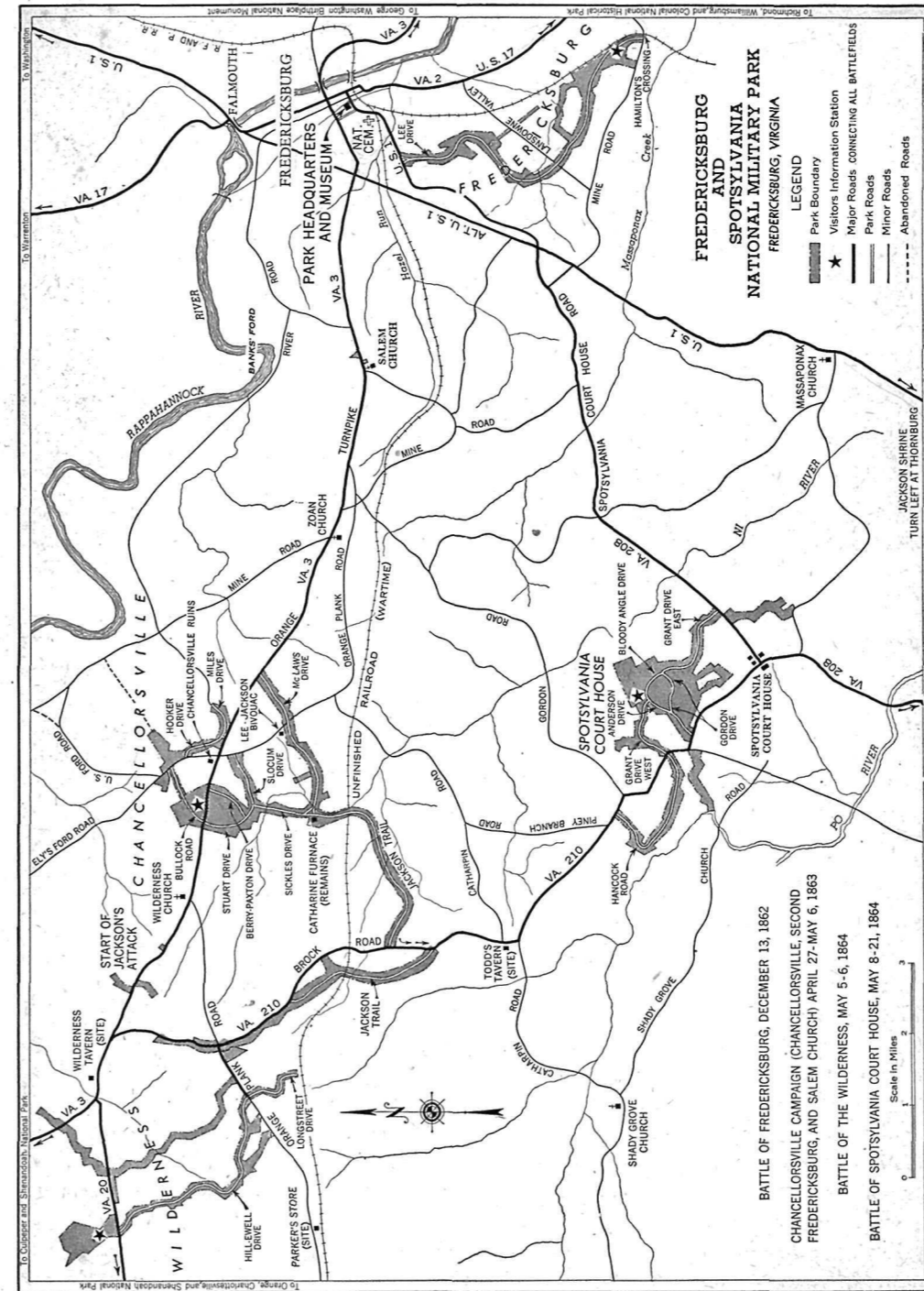
The administration-museum building is located at the foot of the national cemetery and Marye's Heights, along U. S. 1 near the southern edge of Fredericksburg. Here an extensive library relating to the war is available for your use. The museum, which you may visit daily from 9 a. m. to 5 p. m., contains a diorama, relief maps, a firearms collection, wartime photographs, and numerous wartime relics. There is a fee of 25 cents, including tax, for admission to the museum. Children under 12 years of age or groups of school children 18 years of age or under, when accompanied by adults assuming responsibility for their safety and orderly conduct, are admitted free. There is no admission charge to the Jackson Shrine.

Those who plan to visit in a group can arrange for special tours if advance arrangements are made with the superintendent.

### Administration

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Fredericksburg, Va., is in immediate charge.

The National Park System, of which this area is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.

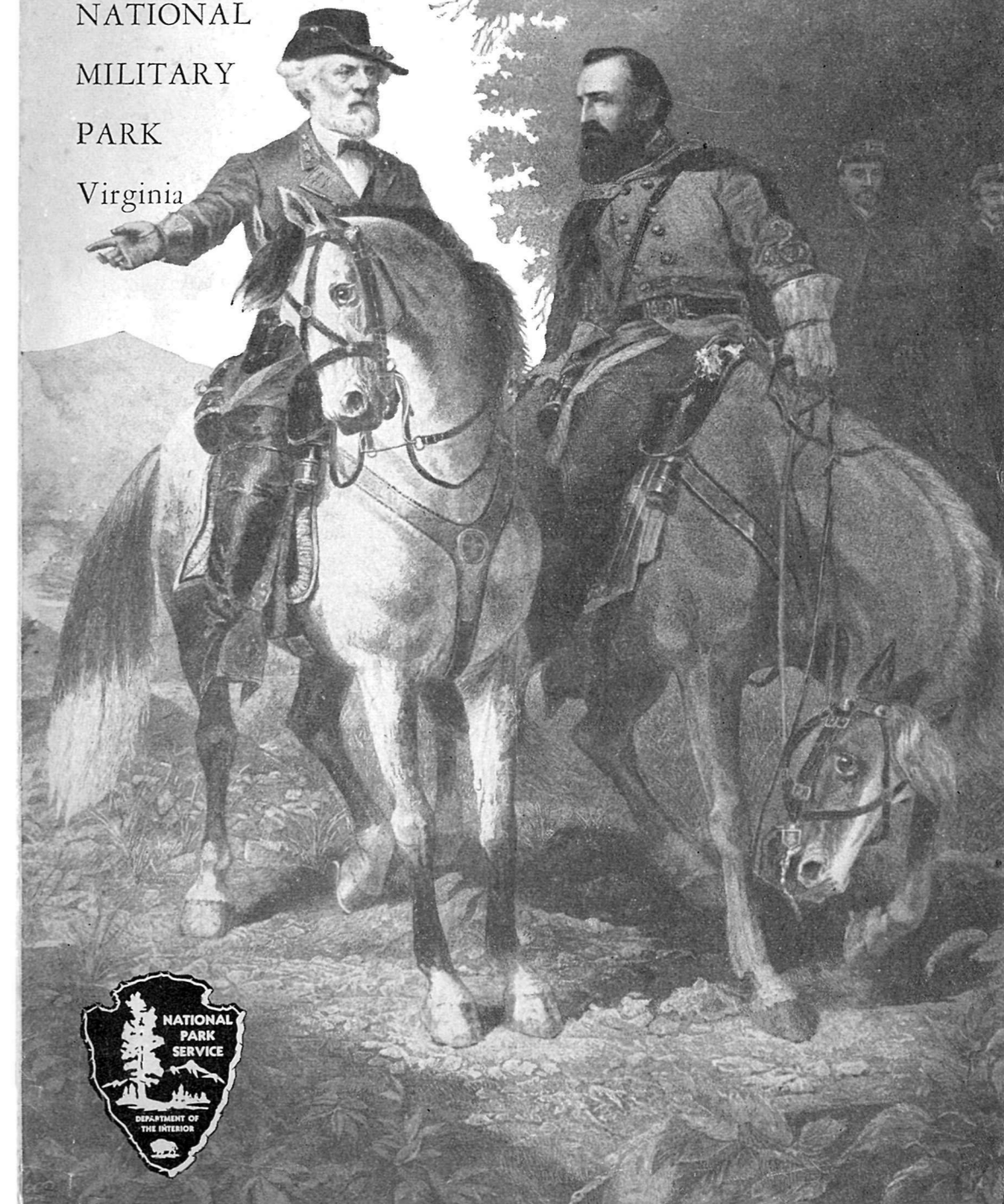


Civil War photographs courtesy of the National Archives.

Cover: The last meeting between Lee and Jackson. From the painting by Julio.

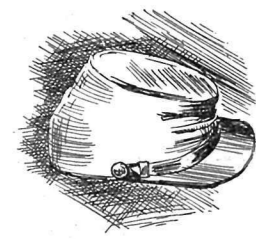
# Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania

NATIONAL  
MILITARY  
PARK  
Virginia



# Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania

## NATIONAL MILITARY PARK



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Douglas McKay, *Secretary*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Conrad L. Wirth, *Director*



*Scene of four major battles of the Civil War*

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park memorializes the Battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, the Wilderness, and Spotsylvania Court House—four major engagements of the Civil War. No other area of comparable size on the American continent has witnessed such heavy and continuous fighting. On the fields of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, Confederate arms won signal success, but at the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House a determined Union Army began the final drive that sealed the doom of the Southern cause.

In the West, Federal strategy was directed to the control of the Mississippi River and the strategic railheads; in the East, to the

blockade of the Southern coast and the capture of Richmond, capital of the Confederacy. Flanked by mountain ranges on one side and an intricate river system on the other, Richmond was geographically vulnerable to attack from the north.

Directly in the path of a northern invasion lay Fredericksburg, situated along the fall line of the Rappahannock River, midway between the Federal capital at Washington and the Confederate capital at Richmond. Here was to be found the shortest route to Richmond along which a good railroad was in active operation, and here an advance would provide a protecting cover to Washington. To the Confederates, the line of the Rappa-

*Fredericksburg in wartime, looking northwest from Stafford Heights.*



*The Sunken Road at the foot of Marye's Heights.*

hannock offered one of the main barriers to invasion. Thus, early in the war, Fredericksburg occupied a position of great military importance.

### *Early Progress of the War*

The battle of Fredericksburg represents the fourth of a series of Federal thrusts against Richmond. The first, under McDowell, witnessed the crushing defeat of the Union forces in the First Battle of Manassas, July 21, 1861. The second resulted in the ill-fated Peninsula Campaign of McClellan, May–July 1862. The third, under Pope, met a similar fate at the Second Battle of Manassas, August 28–30, 1862.

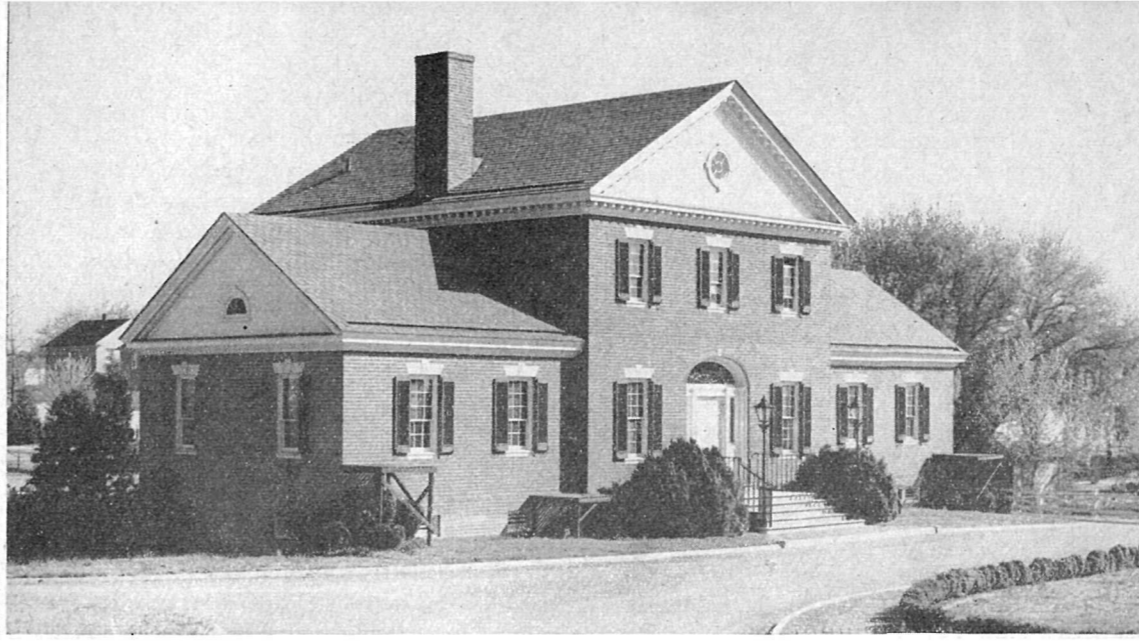
Following the defeat of Pope, Lee invaded the North for the first time. At Sharpsburg, Md., in the desperately fought battle of Antietam on September 17, he was turned back by McClellan, whereupon he withdrew slowly to the Valley of Virginia. Leaving Jackson at Winchester, Lee moved with Longstreet's corps to Culpeper Court House. McClellan

followed leisurely down the valley and established his headquarters in the vicinity of Warrenton.

McClellan's failure to advance quickly against either of the separated wings of the Confederate Army resulted in his replacement by General Burnside on November 9, 1862. Burnside soon presented to President Lincoln a plan which involved a rapid movement on Fredericksburg. Upon its capture he expected to move southward on Richmond supplying his army from a new base at Aquia Creek, 14 miles northeast of Fredericksburg.

### *Battle of Fredericksburg*

Burnside's forces began arriving on the banks of the Rappahannock opposite Fredericksburg on November 17. A delay in the arrival of the pontoon bridges prevented a crossing at that time. By November 30, Burnside's army occupied the heights along the north bank of the Rappahannock facing Fredericksburg, but the delay in crossing had enabled Lee to concentrate his two corps on



*Administration-museum building.*

the heights to the west and southwest of the city.

Early on the morning of December 11, under cover of fog, the Federal Army began laying pontoon bridges at two points opposite Fredericksburg and at a point about a mile south near the mouth of Deep Run. In front of the city the river crossings were hotly contested. Finally, a Federal force in boats effected a landing and, in sharp street fighting, captured the city. On December 12, they completed the crossing and massed on the south bank.

Burnside determined to dislodge Lee from his entrenched position on the heights by frontal assaults directed on the Confederate right near Hamilton's Crossing and on the left at Marye's Heights. About 9 a. m., December 13, Meade's division opened the attack on the Confederate right held by Jackson's corps. Repulsed twice in the morning by heavy artillery fire, he again resumed his courageous advance and, about 2 p. m., broke through the Confederate line. At this critical juncture Jackson's reserves were rushed

forward and forced Meade's withdrawal.

About noon, Sumner opened the attack on Marye's Heights just west of the town. At the foot of the heights ran a sunken road flanked by a stone wall which formed a parapet. Here Longstreet's troops were stationed four lines deep. Against this position wave after wave of Federal infantry swept forward in gallant assaults only to recoil and fall back under the withering force of Confederate artillery and infantry fire. Repulsed with heavy losses, Burnside, on the night of December 15–16, withdrew to the north bank of the river and placed his army in winter quarters.

Casualties (killed, wounded, and missing): the Federals lost 12,653 out of 142,551; the Confederates, 5,309 out of 91,760.

### *Battle of Chancellorsville*

Reorganized under General Hooker, who superseded Burnside in January 1863, the Army of the Potomac resumed offensive oper-

ations on April 27. In a well-planned campaign, Hooker proposed to leave a strong holding force in front of Fredericksburg and move with the main body of his troops past Kelly's Ford in a flanking movement designed to turn Lee's left and strike him from the rear.

Lee, foreseeing his adversary's purpose, detached Early with 9,000 troops to hold the heights behind Fredericksburg, and, on May 1, turned with his main force to meet Hooker's concentration in his rear. Confronted by Lee's sudden shift, Hooker hastily withdrew and took up a defensive position on the Chancellorsville plateau, with his left extending northeastward to the Rappahannock and his right reaching westward into the Wilderness.

On May 2, in a daring move, Lee again divided his forces. Jackson was sent by the left to turn Hooker's right and cut his communications across the river. Because of faulty information and a late start, Jackson did not attack until about 6 p. m. Although Hooker's right was driven back in great disorder upon the center, darkness fell before the Confederates could reform and complete their turning operation. While riding back about 9 p. m. from a reconnaissance of the Federal position, Jackson was mortally wounded by the mistaken fire of his own men.

On May 3, the issue of the campaign was decided in one of the most bitterly contested actions of the war. Abandoning the original plan of cutting Hooker off from the Rappahannock, the Confederate left, with Stuart in command, and the right, under Lee's personal direction, launched a converging attack on the Federal center, driving it across the plateau toward the river.

At noon the Confederate pursuit was stayed by the news that Early had been driven from the heights commanding Fredericksburg. Leaving Stuart to hold Hooker, Lee moved eastward to meet the threat of Sedgwick's Federal advance. Striking the Federals at Salem Church, May 4–5, from front and rear, he forced them to withdraw over the Rappahannock at Banks' Ford. Lee then countermarched his weary troops to Chancellorsville to find that Hooker had retired across U. S. Ford.

Confident of victory, Lee now prepared for his second invasion of the North but this time without the services of the irreplaceable Jackson, who had died at Guinea Station on May 10. The campaign ended with Lee's defeat at Gettysburg on July 1–3.

Casualties: in the battle of Chancellorsville, the Federals lost 17,278 men out of 133,868; the Confederates, 12,821 out of 60,892.

*Gen. A. E. Burnside*

*Gen. J. E. Hooker*

*Gen. U. S. Grant*

