

Official Map and Guide



McClellan's 1862 Peninsular Campaign brought the Union army within sight of Richmond for the first time in the Civil War. The city might have fallen but McClellan dallied too long and, in a series of encounters known as the Seven Days' Battles,

Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee drove the Federals back to their base on the James River. The contest ended at Malvern Hill, where a staunch Union resistance (left) halted Confederate pursuit.



At Gaines' Mill, the third of the Seven Days' Battles, Union troops under Fitz-John Porter (shown left with his staff) held fast until finally overwhelmed by a massive Confederate assault.



The Battle of Cold Harbor (left), fought during Grant's 1864 overland campaign, cost the Federals nearly 6,000 casualties. The battle proved to be Lee's last major victory in the field.

Embattled Capital 1861-65

April 3, 1865. "As the sun rose on Richmond, such a spectacle was presented as can never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. . . . All the horrors of the final conflagration, when the earth shall be wrapped in flames and melt with fervent heat, were, it seemed to us, prefigured in our capital. . . . The roaring, crackling and hissing of the flames, the bursting of shells at the Confederate Arsenal, the sounds of the instruments of martial music, the neighing of the horses, the shoutings of the multitudes . . . gave an idea of all the horrors of Pandemonium. Above all this scene of terror, hung a black shroud of smoke through which the sun shone with a lurid angry glare like an immense ball of blood that emitted sullen rays of light, as if loath to shine over a scene so appalling. . . . [Then] a cry was raised: 'The Yankees! The Yankees are coming!'"

Thus did Sallie Putnam, who had lived in Richmond throughout the war, recall the final disastrous hours of the city whose existence preoccupied northerner and southerner alike through 4 bitter, bloody years and whose final subjugation signalled the beginning of the end for the Confederate States of America.

Situated at the head of navigation on the James River and only 176 kilometers (110 miles) from the Federal capital of Washington, Richmond had been a symbol and a prime psychological objective since the beginning of the Civil War in 1861. If the city were to be captured, southerners might lose their will to resist—so reasoned leaders on both sides. But there were even more compelling reasons why Richmond became a military target, for besides being the political center of the Southern Confederacy, it was a medical and manufacturing center, and the primary supply depot for troops operating on the Confederacy's northeastern frontier.

Of the seven major drives launched against Richmond, two brought Union forces within sight of the city—George B. McClellan's Peninsular Campaign of 1862, culminating in the Seven Days' Battles, and Grant's crushing overland campaign of 1864 which ultimately brought the Confederacy tumbling down.

By early 1862 Gen. George B. McClellan had forged around the "cowering regiments" that survived the First Battle of Manassas a ponderous but disciplined 100,000-man fighting machine called the Army of the Potomac. With it he moved by water to invest east central Virginia and capture Richmond. The operation was to have been assisted by an overland assault by troops under Gen. Irvin McDowell and coordinated with a water-borne move up the James River. A Union naval attack was halted on May 15 at Drewry's Bluff and by May 24, when McClellan was deployed within 10 kilometers (6 miles) of the Confederate capital, President Lincoln had become alarmed for Washington's safety and suspended McDowell's movement.

Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, the Confederate commander, now believing that McClellan planned to stay north of the James River, decided to attack. On May 31 Johnston's troops fell on the Federals near Fair Oaks. Although the resulting battle proved indecisive, it did produce significant results for both armies. The already deliberate McClellan was made even more cautious than usual. More important, because of a serious wound sustained by General Johnston during the battle, President Jefferson Davis placed Gen. Robert E. Lee in command of the defending forces.

McClellan, who had maintained a dangerous position astride the Chickahominy River expecting McDowell's corps to join him, hesitated too long.

On June 26 Lee's Army of Northern Virginia attacked the Union right flank at Mechanicsville, then suffered heavy losses in futile attacks against the strong Union positions on Beaver Dam Creek. Thus began the Seven Days' Battles, a series of side-stepping withdrawals and holding actions that climaxed the Peninsular Campaign at Malvern Hill and enabled the Union army to avoid disaster by circling east of Richmond to the security of Federal gunboats on the James River at Harrison's Landing. When the Seven Days ended, some 35,000 soldiers, north and south, were casualties, and many on both sides probably shared the view of a young Georgian who wrote home: "I have seen, heard and felt many things in the last week that I never want to see, hear nor feel again. . . ."

For two years, while the armies fought indecisively in northern Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, Richmond entrenched and applauded Lee's unbroken successes in keeping northern armies at bay. In March 1864 Gen. Ulysses S. Grant assumed command of all Union armies in the field. Attaching himself to the Army of the Potomac, then under the command of Gen. George Gordon Meade, Grant embarked on an unyielding campaign against Richmond and the Army of Northern Virginia. Said Lee: "We must stop this army of Grant's before he gets to the James River. If he gets there it will become a siege, and then it will be a mere matter of time."

In a series of flanking movements designed to cut Lee off from the Confederate capital, the Union army slipped past the southerners at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, North Anna River, and Totopotomoy Creek, although it suffered heavy casualties. At Cold Harbor on June 3, 1864, Grant's massive frontal assaults against the strongly

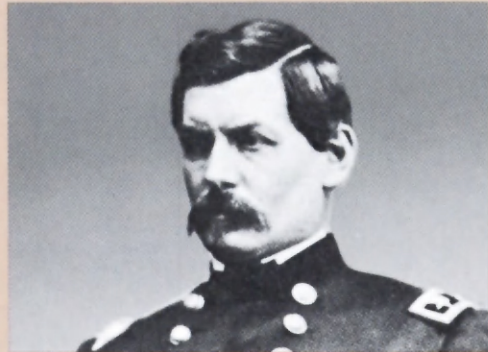
entrenched Confederate lines failed dismally, with appalling casualties. For 10 days the badly bruised Federals and hungry Confederates broiled in the trenches under 100-degree heat; then Grant silently withdrew, crossed the James River, and drove toward the important rail center of Petersburg, south of Richmond.

Throughout the late summer and fall Grant continued to threaten the outer defenses protecting Richmond and Petersburg. Several major assaults met with partial success, including the capture of Fort Harrison in September 1864. Winter weather eventually brought active operations to a close. Life in the trenches around the besieged cities became routine and humdrum. Just finding enough to eat and keeping warm became constant preoccupations.

Grant's successful siege of Petersburg over the winter of 1864-65 forced Lee to retreat westward from that city on April 2, 1865. The following day, soon after dawn, Richmond's mayor, Joseph C. Mayo, delivered the following message to the commander of the Union forces waiting to enter the Confederate capital: "The Army of the Confederate Government having abandoned the City of Richmond, I respectfully request that you will take possession of it with organized force, to preserve order and protect women and children and property."

Upon evacuation of the city, the Confederate government authorized the burning of warehouses and supplies, which resulted in considerable damage to factories and houses in the business district. Before the charred ruins of Richmond had cooled, Lee, with the remnant of his army, surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865. The collapse of the Confederacy followed swiftly.

The Generals



George B. McClellan was a superb military organizer, and his creation, the Army of the Potomac, was a proud and finely disciplined body of soldiers. McClellan's dilatory tactics in the 1862 campaign, however, helped to save Richmond from capture.



Robert E. Lee was offered command of United States troops in 1861 but he chose to join the Confederacy instead. Under his leadership, the Army of Northern Virginia fought valiantly to defend Richmond against repeated Federal onslaughts.

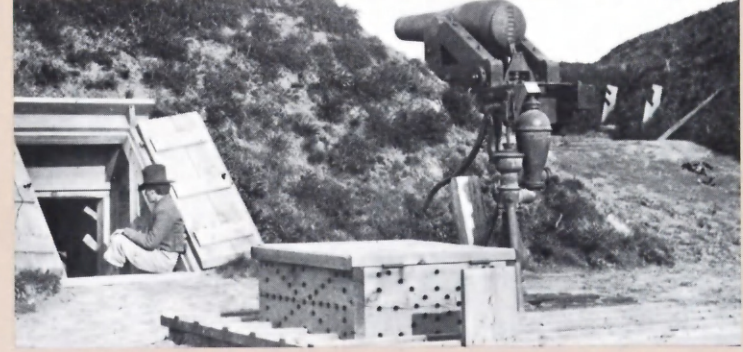


Ulysses S. Grant, as general in chief of all Federal armies, vowed that wherever Lee went he would follow. His unrelenting 1864-65 campaign proved costly to the North but finally brought about the defeat of Lee and the surrender of Richmond.

The Fortifications of Richmond



The Army of Northern Virginia was only one factor in the successful defense of the Confederate capital from 1861-65. Another was the fortifications built by the South which nearly encircled the city. The outer ring of defenses, stretching for more



than 104 kilometers (65 miles), was approximately 16 kilometers (10 miles) from the capital. Within that ring was an intermediate line about 6 kilometers (4 miles) from the city. And just outside the city limits stood a series of star forts as inner defenses.

These forts and breastworks, along with others such as the trenches built at Cold Harbor, served to help repel the numerous attempts by Union armies to capture the coveted capital of the Confederacy.

Touring Richmond's Battlefields

Richmond National Battlefield Park consists of the ten units listed below plus the **Civil War Visitor Center** and the **Chimborazo Medical Museum**. A complete tour of the park involves an 80-mile drive as outlined on the map. For your convenience, we

1862

Chickahominy Bluff A part of the outer Confederate line defending Richmond, this bluff offers a view of Mechanicsville and the Chickahominy River Valley. Within sight of the earthworks here, Gen. Robert E. Lee watched the start of the Seven Days' Battles.

Beaver Dam Creek Part of the two-mile Union front that the Confederates unsuccessfully attacked on June 26, lies here in the valley of Beaver Dam Creek at Ellerson's Mill. Few Confederates crossed the stream as Union artillery and infantry fire stopped Lee's attack all along the line.

Gaines' Mill (Watt House) On June 27, Confederate infantry repeatedly assaulted the fortified Union line along Boatwain's Creek, about one mile from the mill. By nightfall both armies had suffered more than 15,000 casualties, victims of the heaviest fighting of the Seven Days' Battles. At the Watt House, a restored landmark built about 1820, Union Gen. Fitz John Porter established his headquarters. The short trail beginning near the house leads to the site where Texas and Georgia troops broke through the line and precipitated the Union withdrawal.

Glendale (Frayser's Farm) On June 30, Union troops protected the vital crossroads near the old Frayser farm, Glendale, while McClellan's retreating army snaked south toward Malvern Hill. Throughout the afternoon, Confederate forces repeatedly attacked the position but failed to carry it. The next day, when a Confederate general commented that it appeared McClellan would escape, a frustrated Lee responded: "Yes, he will get away because I cannot have my orders carried out."

1864

Cold Harbor Here Confederates blocked Grant's path to Richmond by building powerful entrenchments stretching six miles between Bethesda Church and the Chickahominy River. On June 1 and June 3, Union forces tested these defenses with massive, ill-conceived assaults. The June 3 fighting alone cost Grant's army nearly 6,000 killed and wounded, most of them in one hour's time. During the two-week battle, the total combined casualties for both armies were 16,000 men. The well-preserved trenches along the 1.25-mile tour road are fine examples of Civil War field fortifications. The actions at Cold Harbor changed the course of the war in the East from a war of maneuver to one of siege. Cold Harbor also influenced the strategy and tactics of future wars by demonstrating that well-selected, well-manned entrenchments, supported by artillery, were practically impregnable against frontal assaults. A one-mile walking trail begins at the visitor center.

Garthright House This restored house served as a Union field hospital during the Battle of Cold Harbor. It afterwards became a Confederate hospital. The house is an exterior exhibit only and is not open to the public. Portions of the house date to the 1700s.

Fort Harrison and Vicinity After Cold Harbor, General Grant crossed the James River and directed his

have color-coded the park units according to the campaign in which each figured most prominently. Sites associated with McClellan's 1862 campaign are indicated in red, those associated with Grant's 1864 campaign in blue.

Malvern Hill Fought July 1, this was the last of the Seven Days' Battles, after which McClellan withdrew to his base at Harrison's Landing. The Federals, on the defensive, dug no trenches. Instead they stood in battle formation across the gently sloping fields, their massed artillery and infantry fire shattering the ranks of the attacking Confederates. The steep slopes of Malvern Hill on the Union left and the swampy bottoms on the right forced the southerners to advance across open ground. According to one Confederate officer, "It was not war—it was murder." Follow the short walking trail to view the steep slopes that protected the Federal left flank.

Drewry's Bluff Union soldiers referred to this Confederate guardian of the James River as Fort Darling. On May 15, five Federal vessels, including the famous ironclad *Monitor*, attacked the fort, but were driven off. The successful defense prevented Richmond from being shelled early in the war, and the presence of the fort was a deterrent to other Union naval forays up the James. The fort and surrounding area served as the Confederate Naval Academy and Marine Corps Camp of Instruction during much of the war. Exhibits along a self-guiding walking trail give details of the fort's history.

Other battlefields not part of the park, but important to an understanding of McClellan's 1862 campaign are Seven Pines/Fair Oaks (May 31-June 1), Oak Grove (June 25), Savage's Station (June 29), and White Oak Swamp (June 30). State historical markers and monuments explain the fighting at these places.

main effort against Petersburg. In a surprise attack designed to prevent Lee from shifting troops to another sector of operations, Union soldiers captured Fort Harrison on September 29. (The gallantry of several regiments of black Union troops that day was recognized by the awarding of Medals of Honor to 14 black soldiers.) The fort was occupied and enlarged by the Federals, thus forcing a realignment of Richmond's southern defenses. Forts Gilmer, Gregg, Johnson, and Hoke were all Confederate defense works connected by miles of breastworks. Union Fort Brady anchored the line from Fort Harrison. It was constructed after September 29 to prevent Confederate gunboats from moving downriver to threaten Grant's supply system. Exhibits and signs along a self-guiding walking trail through Fort Harrison provide details of the battle and the fort.

Parker's Battery This small Confederate artillery position was part of the Howlett Line, a chain of entrenchments that "bottled up" Union Gen. Benjamin F. Butler's Army of the James in the spring of 1864. After watching Butler fall back into the Bermuda Hundred peninsula, the men of Parker's Virginia Battery built this strongpoint and helped to seal off the southerly route to Richmond.

Notice

The possession or use of metal detecting devices on park property is illegal. This map is not for use in determining present legal boundaries. Please check at a visitor center for accurate boundary information.

Battlefield Tour

Tour stops include sites within the park only. Please respect the rights of private landholders.

Tour stop for 1862 battle site (within park):
Malvern Hill

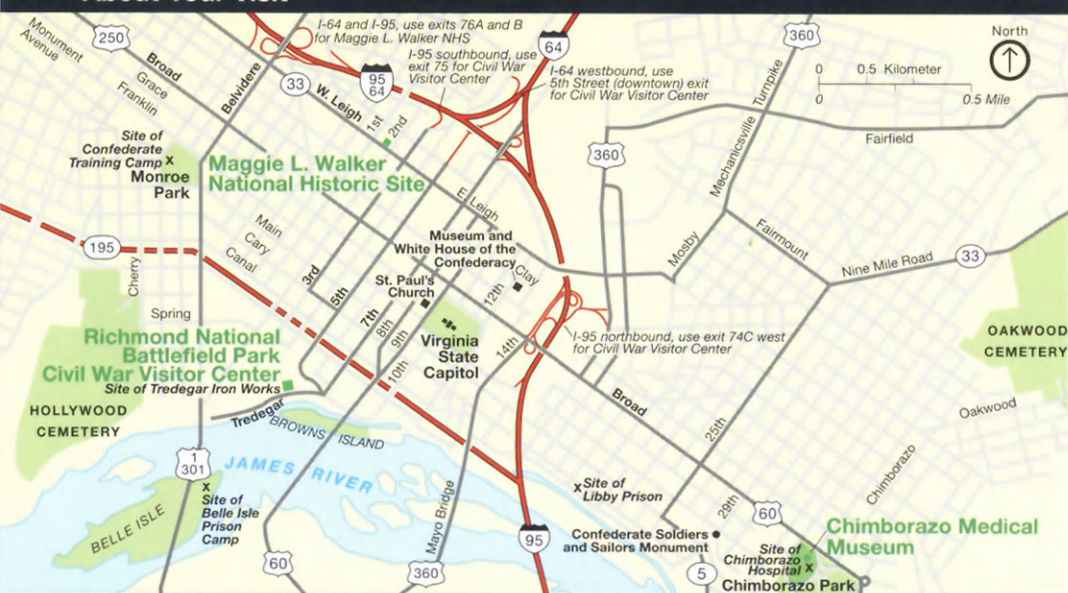
Tour stop for 1864 battle site (within park):
Cold Harbor

Other 1862 battle site (not part of park):
Fair Oaks

Other 1864 battle site (not part of park):
Deep Bottom

Interpretive trail
Picnic area

About Your Visit



Begin your visit at the Richmond National Battlefield Park Visitor Center at 490 Tredegar Street. Here exhibits and audio-visual programs introduce you to the story of Richmond during the Civil War and the battlefields that surround the city. National Park Service staff will answer your questions and provide historical information. Schedules of Living History programs and other events are available. Additional exhibits can be found at the Cold Harbor Visitor Center (open year round), Chimborazo Medical Museum (open year round), Glendale Visitor Center (open seasonally), and Fort Harrison Visitor Center (open seasonally).

Information about the park and its history can also be found on the Internet at www.nps.gov/rich.

The park's main visitor center is on the site of Tredegar Iron Works, the Confederacy's most important iron foundry and rolling mill. Under the direction of Joseph R. Anderson, Tredegar produced nearly half of all artillery pieces manufactured for Southern armies. Tredegar also made iron plating to protect warships, most notably the South's first ironclad — C.S.S. Virginia.

Each unit of the park is identified by distinctive brown signs, and each is

interpreted by National Park Service historical markers. Chickahominy Bluff, Malvern Hill, Fort Harrison, and Drewry's Bluff have interpretive facilities featuring an audio station and exhibits. Whenever possible, spend some time walking in each area; it is the best way to understand the battlefields. Gaines' Mill, Malvern Hill, Cold Harbor, Fort Harrison, Fort Brady, and Drewry's Bluff have short self-guided trails that take you past historical features. Picnic facilities are available only at Fort Harrison and the Garthright House.

Richmond National Battlefield Park is one of

more than 370 parks representing important examples of our country's natural and cultural heritage. Address all inquiries to the Superintendent, 3215 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23223.

For Your Safety While every effort is made to provide for your safety, you must remain alert and cautious. Drive carefully: the park roads are narrow, winding, and intended for leisurely enjoyment. Pay particular attention to speed limits and warning signs on park roads. Park only in paved areas. Stay on designated trails. Do not stray into woods where you may encounter poisonous ivy and ticks. Be alert

for poisonous snakes. First aid is available at the visitor centers or from park staff.

Remember All historic artifacts within National Park Service areas are protected under Federal law. The possession or use of metal detectors on park land is punishable by a fine and/or imprisonment and possible loss of equipment. Picnicking is permitted only in designated areas. The possession and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages in the park is prohibited. So, too, are athletic or recreational activities that intrude on or interfere with visitors in historic areas. If in doubt, ask a ranger or call 804-226-1981.



Fort Harrison was one of Richmond's principal defense works. Its remains (left) are well-preserved. Help us maintain them, as well as other historic earthworks in the park, by staying on the designated walking trails.

Your cooperation is essential in protecting and preserving the park for your continuing enjoyment and for the enjoyment of future generations.

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