



Union supply wagons crossing the Rappahannock River. Courtesy Library of Congress



One of a series of photographs by Timothy O'Sullivan showing a conference at Massaponax Church, Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant is leaning over a church pew in the yard, conferring with his subordinates. Courtesy Library of Congress



FREDERICKSBURG

JOHN WILKES BOOTH  
CHASING LINCOLN'S ASSASSIN



Watch history come alive at historic sites and parks across Virginia. Courtesy MAG the Historian

1862 PENINSULA CAMPAIGN  
CIVIL WAR IN VIRGINIA



1861-1865  
NORTHERN VIRGINIA  
CORRIDOR OF CONTACT



Confederate soldiers beg Gen. Robert E. Lee to return to the rear as fighting grows intense in the Wilderness. Courtesy New York Public Library



Confederate Gen. J.E.B. Stuart was mortally wounded during the Battle of Yellow Tavern, May 11, 1864. Courtesy Library of Congress



Forage cap worn by Pvt. G. Washington, 23rd U.S. Colored Troops. Courtesy The State Museum of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission



Lt. Col. Charles L. Chandler rallying the 57th Massachusetts Infantry at Ox Ford, May 24, 1864. "Even to Hell Itself" Courtesy Donna J. Neary



The first Union attacks on thinly held Confederate lines met with stiffening resistance and resulted in a long siege.



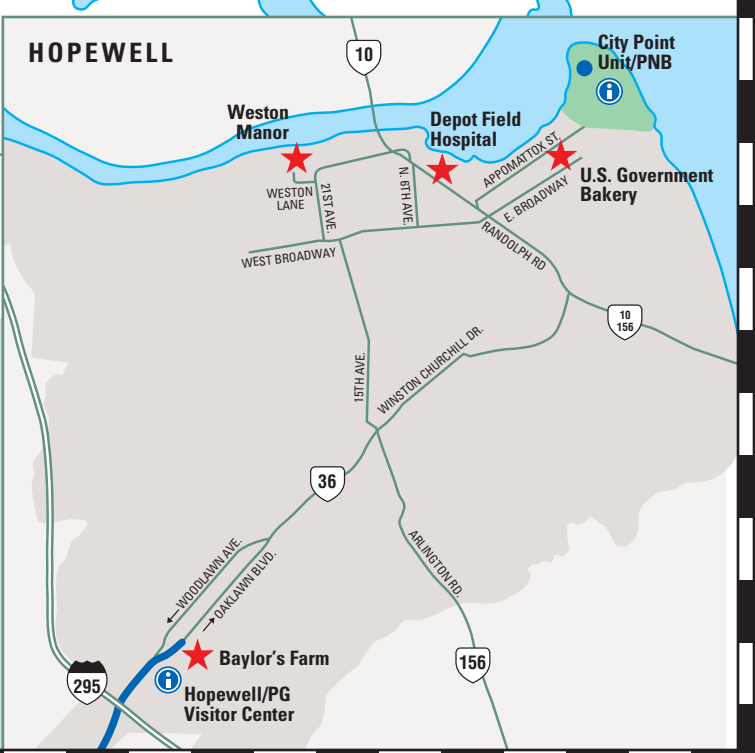
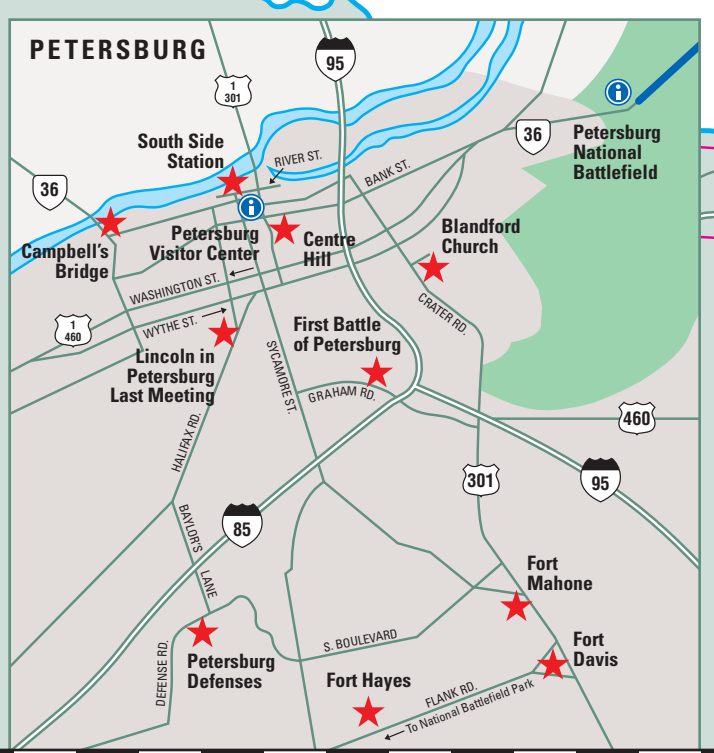
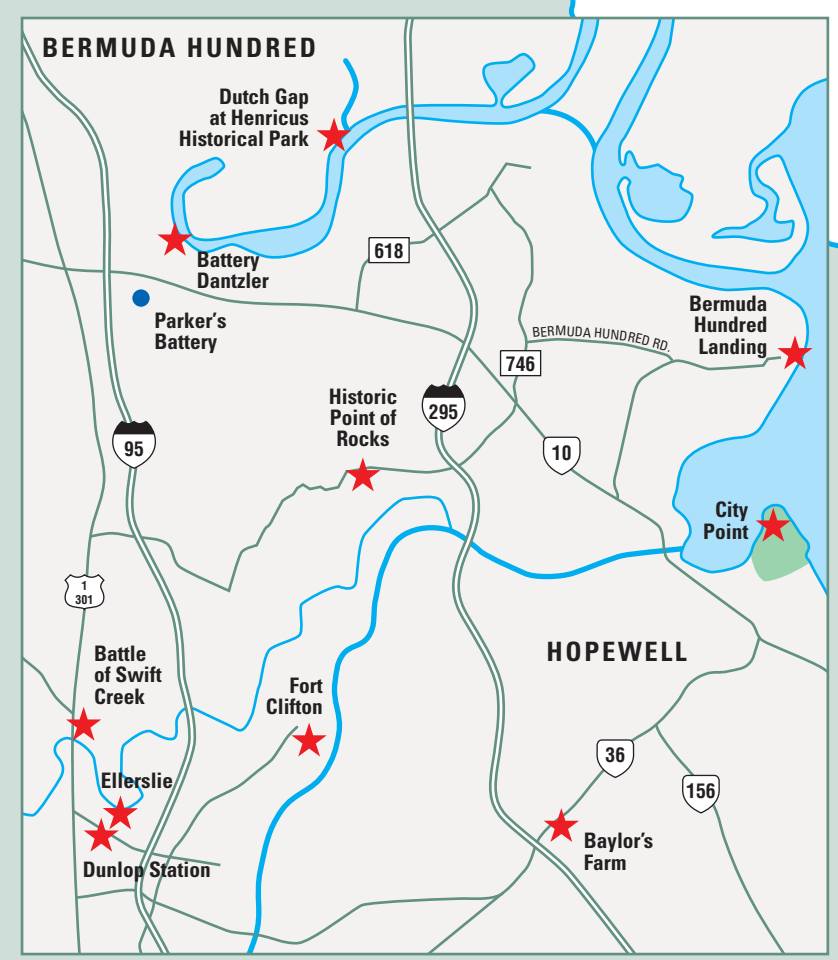
Enfield musket butt recovered from the Crater battlefield. Courtesy National Park Service, Petersburg National Battlefield



# CIVIL WAR IN CENTRAL VIRGINIA

## ON TO RICHMOND

- 1864 Overland Campaign Driving Tour
- Confederate Troop Movements from Camps
- Union Troop Movements from Camps
- Civil War Trails Site
- Other Civil War Site
- National, State, or County Park
- Information or Welcome Center



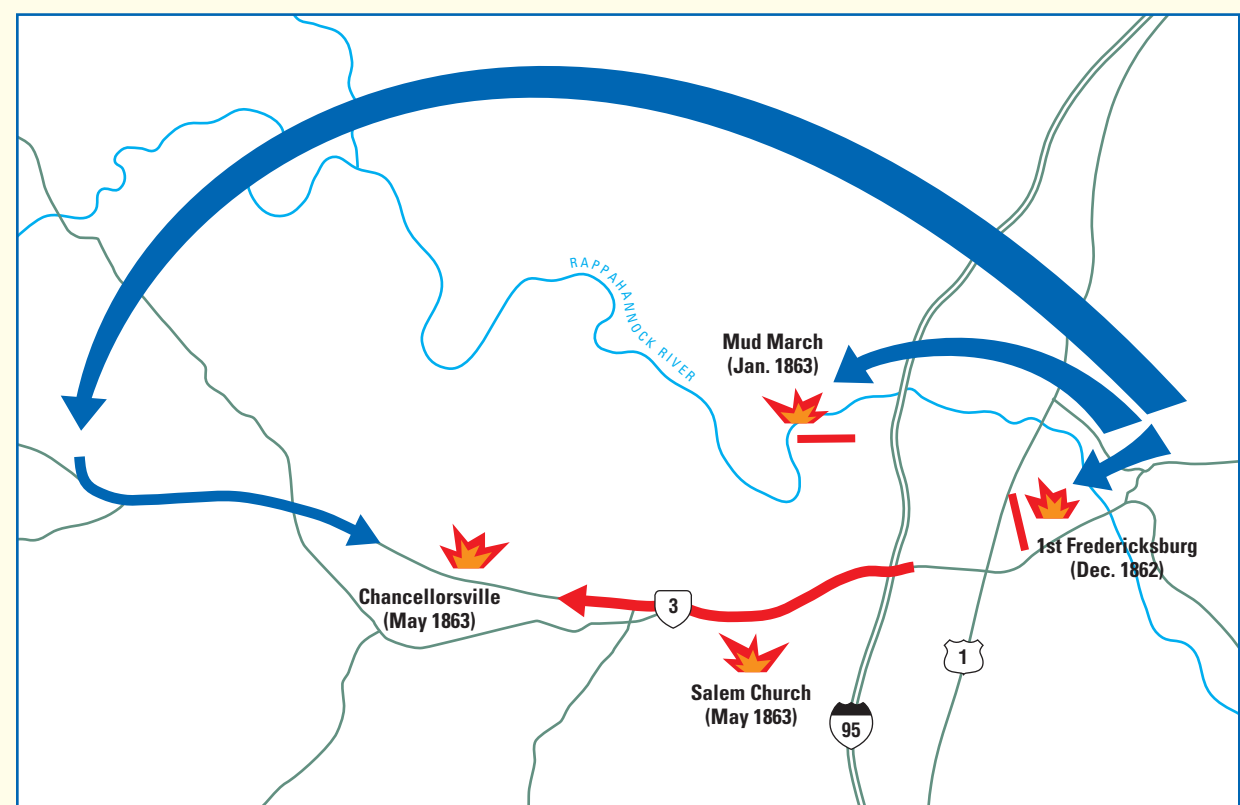
LEE'S RETREAT  
THE FINAL CAMPAIGN

WILSON + KAUTZ  
RAID

FRUSTRATED AMBITION

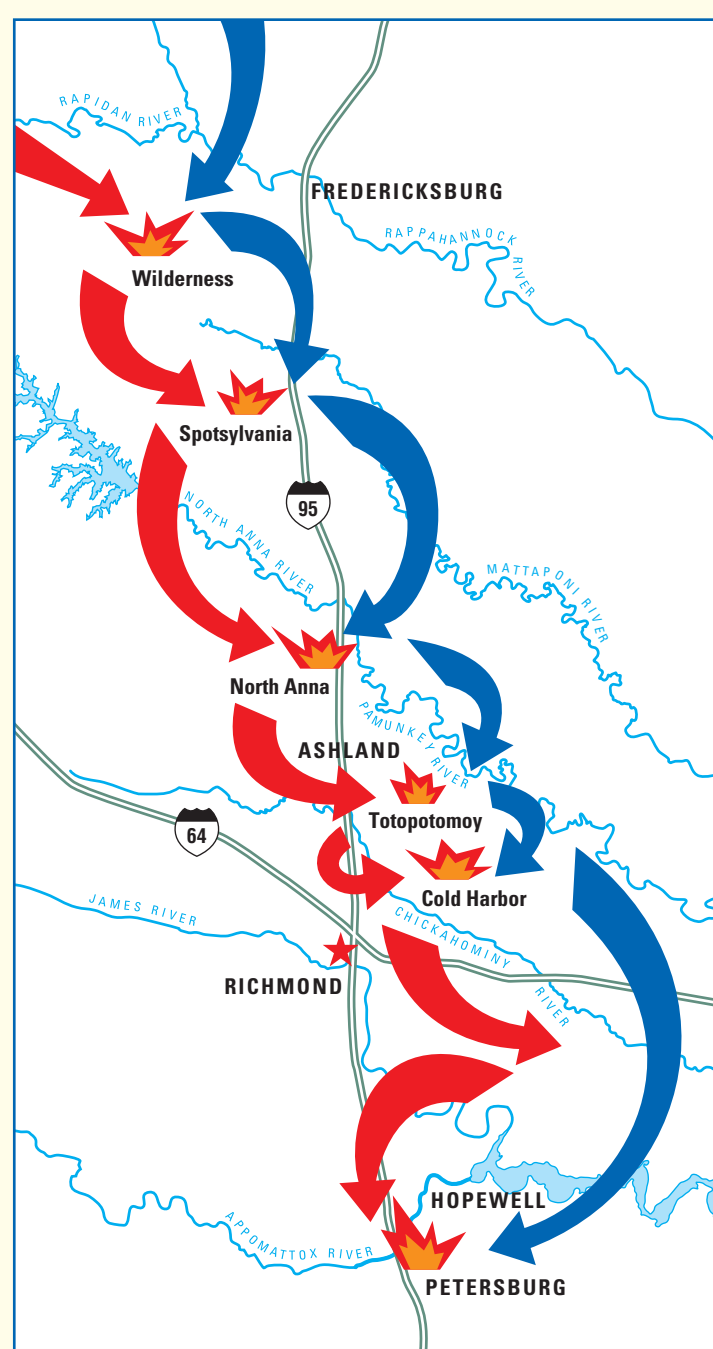
On to Richmond! This cry of the Union arose soon after the war began, calling for the capture of the Confederate capital and speedy victory to end the war. Defeat at the First Battle of Manassas in July 1861, and then by the failed Peninsula Campaign, May–July 1862, dashed that dream. In September, Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee took the Army of Northern Virginia north into Maryland, but then retreated after the Battle of Antietam. U.S. President Abraham Lincoln ordered Gen. George B. McClellan to get between Lee and Richmond, then fired him when he failed to do so. Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside took command and led the Army of the Potomac to Fredericksburg. He crossed

the Rappahannock River and attacked Lee's army in December but withdrew with heavy losses. In January 1863, Burnside tried again, but unseasonably warm weather and a heavy rainstorm halted his "Mud March" on the river's bank. Lincoln replaced him with Gen. Joseph Hooker, inspiring the Union soldiers camped near Fredericksburg. On May 1, Hooker met Lee's army as he attempted to go around the Confederates. Hooker failed spectacularly when Lee and Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson outmaneuvered him at Chancellorsville. Once more, "On to Richmond" proved an illusory aspiration as Lee headed north again, to Gettysburg.



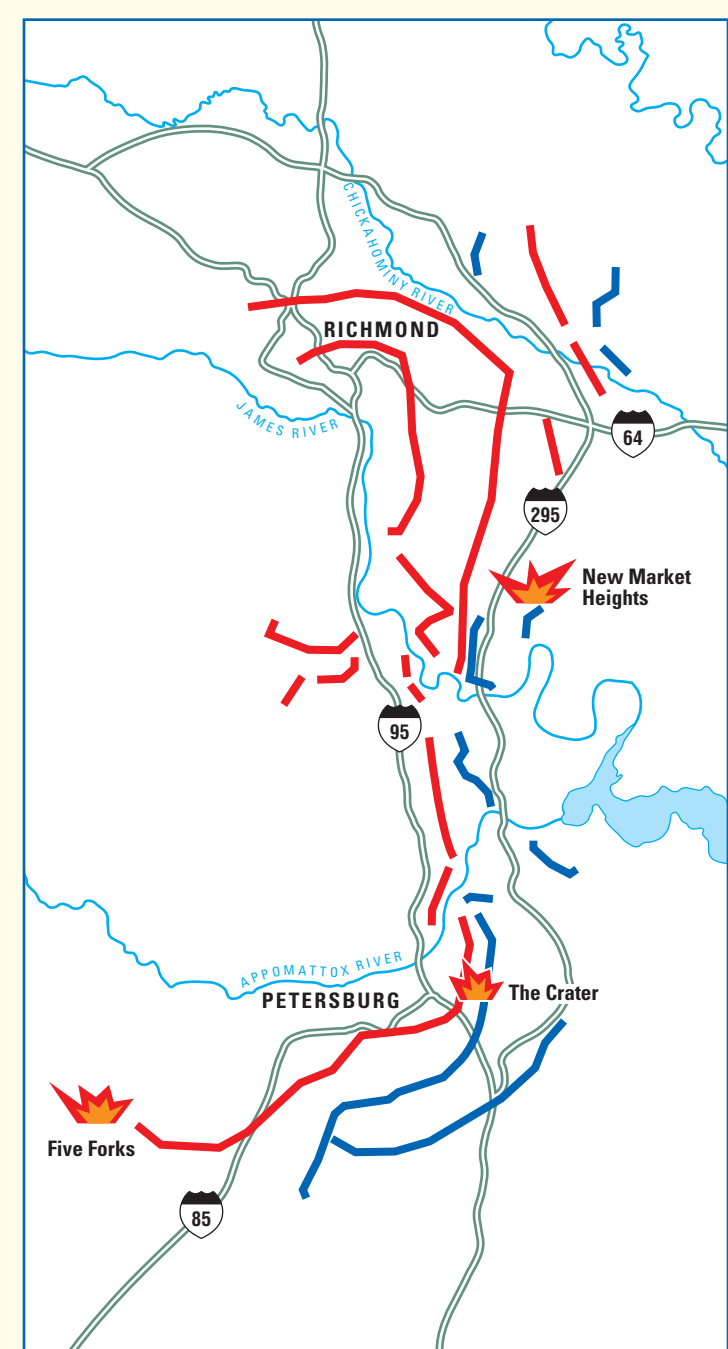
OVERLAND CAMPAIGN

In March 1864, Lincoln appointed a new commander in chief of all the Union armies, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, who decided to accompany Gen. George G. Meade and the Army of the Potomac in the field. Grant ordered all Union armies to advance simultaneously at the beginning of May, in what he envisioned as a relentless fight to the death of the Confederate forces. The battles across Central Virginia that summer are now known as the Overland Campaign. On May 4, Meade's men began crossing the Rapidan River, and the next day the Battle of the Wilderness began, followed by the Battles of Spotsylvania Court House, North Anna River, Totopotomoy Creek, and Cold Harbor. Dwindling manpower in the South meant that the enormous casualties had a greater effect on the Confederates. While Meade's army headed south toward Richmond, Gen. Benjamin F. Butler's Army of the James sailed up the James River from Fort Monroe and occupied the Bermuda Hundred peninsula east of Petersburg. On June 9, Butler attacked Petersburg but was repulsed. Meade maneuvered around Lee's flank after Cold Harbor and crossed the James River a few miles east of Richmond. Both sides dug in, and a siege began that lasted almost 10 months.



SIEGE OF PETERSBURG AND RICHMOND

Between June 1864 and April 1865, the Army of the Potomac probed the Confederate defenses at Richmond and Petersburg continuously while extending its entrenchments south and west of Petersburg, stretching Gen. Robert E. Lee's thin gray lines to the breaking point. Heavy fighting took place outside both cities, including the fight at the Crater at Petersburg on July 30, when a tunnel was dug under Confederate lines, packed with gunpowder, and exploded. U.S. Colored Troops, former slaves and free African Americans whose regiments had been authorized by the Emancipation Proclamation, charged into the Crater but were cut down. They had more success on September 29 at New Market Heights near Richmond; 14 soldiers earned the Medal of Honor for heroism there. Federal attacks continued through the winter and into the spring of 1865. The literal turning point came on April 1, 14 miles southwest of Petersburg at Five Forks, where Union forces "turned" or broke the western end of the Confederate defenses. On April 2–3, 1865, Meade's men drove through the defensive line at Petersburg, the Confederate army and government fled west, and Union troops marched into Richmond. The cry "On to Richmond!" was fulfilled at last. And the war was almost over.



FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM

Soon after the Civil War began, Virginia's enslaved population began self-liberating by fleeing to Union lines. Union Gen. Benjamin F. Butler, commanding at Fort Monroe in Hampton in May 1861, refused to return three escaped male slaves who had been laboring on Confederate fortifications. Butler declared them "contraband of war": in effect, tools used to support the rebellion and therefore subject to seizure. This eventually became official policy.

The trickle of escaping slaves soon became a flood. Some slaveholders refused to believe that their "loyal servants" had fled and accused the Union of "stealing" them. Many owners moved their excess slaves deeper into Confederate territory to maintain possession. Despite their efforts,



"Contraband of War," from Benjamin F. Butler, Autobiography (1892).

Confederate authorities estimated 61 to 70 percent of Virginia's mature male slaves had fled by early 1865.

Both free and enslaved African Americans contributed to Union victory. They provided Union commanders with information about Confederate troop movements during the 1862 Peninsula Campaign and the 1864–1865 Petersburg-Richmond Campaign. After the release of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, the federal government authorized United States Colored Troops (USCT)—infantry, cavalry, and artillery regiments under white officers. By war's end, an estimated 200,000 African Americans had served. USCT fought in battles around Petersburg and Richmond in 1864–1865. They also had to fight for equal pay with white soldiers. One USCT soldier in the Battle of the Crater at Petersburg and 14 at the Battle of New Market Heights east of Richmond earned the Medal of Honor for heroism. USCT were among the first troops to enter Richmond after Confederate forces evacuated it April 2–3, 1865.



RICHMOND WOMEN AND WARTIME INDUSTRY

Richmond was an important industrial center, one of the reasons it became the Confederacy's capital. As wartime demands for manpower increased, many women found their husbands, fathers, and brothers called into military service. At a time when working outside the home was unusual for women, many women worked in various industries to support their families. Most of those who did were from the laboring class, many of whom were immigrants.



"Sowing and Reaping," Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, May 23, 1863.

One of the larger employers was the Confederate Laboratory on Brown's Island, which produced ammunition. By 1863, more than 300 women and girls labored there and were paid \$1–\$2 a day (more than a soldier earned). On March 13, 1863, a tremendous blast ripped through the facility. Mary Ryan, who previously had been chastised for carelessness, set off the explosion. Ten workers were killed instantly, and another 40 were wounded.

In the next 11 days, at least one more victim died, including Ryan.

A few weeks later, on April 2, working-class women rampaged through downtown Richmond in what was called the Bread Riot. Organized by market worker Mary Jackson, hundreds of women broke into stores and stole food, clothing, and supplies. Victims of the tough economic times, shortages, rising prices, and lack of a political voice, the women expressed their rage in the riot. Confederate President Jefferson Davis personally came and pleaded with the women to stop and go home. The authorities responded quickly when they failed to comply, arresting and imprisoning several ringleaders. Eventually, aid was established for the wives of soldiers, but tension lingered beneath the surface.

Besides the Confederate Laboratory, women labored in other factories that produced ammunition. They also worked in the city's many hospitals, which employed cooks, laundresses, and matrons. Class and ethnic identities were strong, and the experiences of upper-class women differed from working-class women, who faced greater financial challenges as well as social discrimination. More-affluent women organized relief efforts: raising money and collecting food for soldiers. One group even organized a Gunboat Society, raising funds to purchase and outfit a naval warship.

A HISTORIC ROAD TRIP

As you pile in the car, ready to visit these historic sites across Central Virginia, you will need to consider where to refuel or stay overnight. You'll experience traffic and want to stop for a bite to eat. The armies who were battling for control of this region during the Civil War experienced those same challenges.

Both armies utilized horses and mules to move their wagons, artillery, ambulances, and other vehicles. To keep those wheels turning in the spring of 1864, the Army of the Potomac's animals drank about 560,000 gallons of water per day. They needed fuel, too. Over seven months those animals would eat almost 6 million bushels of corn, oats, hay, and straw.

All of those wagons, cannons, and animals created traffic. During the summer of 1863, one wagon train was about 80 miles long. By the following year, both armies

tried to reduce the number of vehicles. The wagons and artillery pieces had iron tires on their wheels, and the animals needed shoes, which required the services of wheelwrights, blacksmiths, and farriers to keep the Civil War horse-power moving. One contractor alone made 70 million horseshoes for the Union army during the war—almost 50,000 per day.

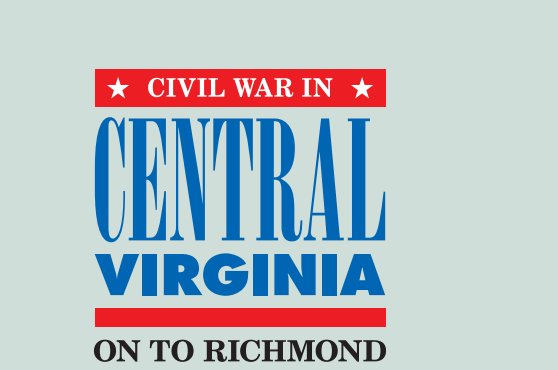
The soldiers got hungry, too. Both armies did their best to meet similar standards for rations. When the armies fought or the wagons were delayed, however, the frequency, quantity, and quality of the food varied greatly. The ration per man per day was 3/4 lb. of pork and 1 lb. of hardtack bread. How does this compare to your road trip meals?

The complexity of procuring supplies, moving them, and sustaining men and animals during the war was an incredible task that is often forgotten today.



There are about 5 million pieces of hardtack in these boxes, photographed in 1864, enough to feed the Army of the Potomac for about 6 days.

All historic photos courtesy Library of Congress



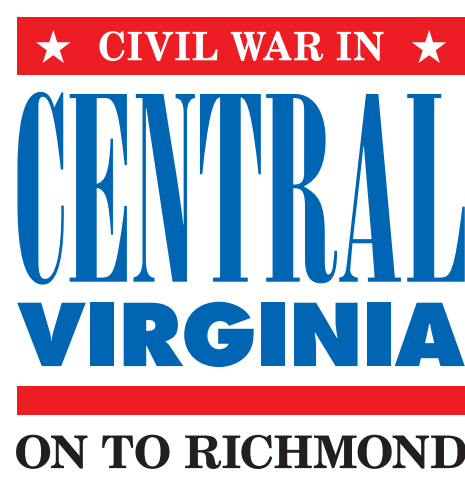
For more information visit: [CivilWarTrails.org](http://CivilWarTrails.org)

Check in on Twitter or Facebook, and snap a photo for Instagram and use our hashtags:

#civilwartrails  
#openairmuseum



VIRGINIA CIVIL WAR TRAILS



Stand in the footsteps of history when you visit Stafford County. Courtesy Stafford County Economic Development & Tourism Office



Create Some History of Your Own

Armed with this map, you'll find our nation's story unfolding before you. As you travel rural byways through fields where thundering cavalry charges took place or downtowns where the enslaved became freedom seekers. Each place, each sign will fuel your imagination.

This map-guide suggests a driving trail that follows one of the bloodiest campaigns in American history. In the spring of 1864, two armies slugged it out for more than a month, battling across 100 miles of Central Virginia. You can follow in the footsteps of these soldiers by taking the Blue Line tour from the Rapidan River at Germanna to the gates of Petersburg.

While you're "on the Trails" off the interstate, you'll find more than historic sites. You will experience Virginia as it is today. Passing by local wineries and breweries, you'll stumble across the state's best BBQ, live music, antiques, and vistas. You'll find places to hike, bike, and launch your kayak.

Planning your own "campaign"? For additional information check out the "Plan Your Trip" section of this map-guide. Stop by any Virginia Welcome Center or local visitor center for additional information on where to stop, shop, and stay.

Follow Civil War Trails to more than 1,400 sites across six states. For more information visit us at [civilwartrails.org](http://civilwartrails.org).



Follow these signs to more than 1,400 Civil War sites.

PLAN YOUR TRIP

Find out where to eat, drink, shop, and stay by using these websites, or call to get the inside scoop on how to travel like a local.

- Caroline County Tourism & Visitor Center**  
VisitCaroline.com  
804-633-3492
- Visit Culpeper Virginia**  
VisitCulpeperVA.com  
540-727-0611
- Visit Fredericksburg**  
VisitFred.com  
540-373-1776
- Visit Henrico County**  
VisitHenrico.com  
804-652-3406
- Visit King George**  
VisitKingGeorge.com  
540-775-9181
- Visit Loudoun County**  
VisitLoudoun.com  
540-967-4420
- Visit Orange Virginia**  
VisitOrangeVirginia.com  
540-672-1653
- Petersburg Area Regional Tourism**  
PetersburgArea.org  
804-861-1666
- Visit Richmond, VA**  
VisitRichmondVA.com  
804-783-7450
- Spotsylvania Tourism**  
VisitSpotsy.com  
540-507-7090
- Tour Stafford Virginia**  
TourStaffordVA.com  
540-658-8681



Join the effort to help preserve Virginia's hallowed battlefields.



AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD TRUST PRESERVE. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.

[battlefields.org](http://battlefields.org)

PHOTOGRAPHY



Imagine capturing battlefield scenes like Samuel A. Cooley (standing, far right) did, before the invention of modern cameras and smartphones. He followed the Union armies with helpers and a darkroom on wheels to store large glass plates like the one the assistant holds in the photo. Coated in the darkroom with light-sensitive liquid collodion, the plate was covered and rushed to the camera, exposed, and then hustled back inside and developed while still wet. Exposure times lasted a few seconds to a few minutes depending on the light, so most pictures were posed.

Central Virginia's proximity to Washington and New York, made it probably the most-photographed battleground of the war. Below, Timothy O'Sullivan photographed troops and wagons slowly crossing the Rappahannock River at Germanna Ford on wobbly pontoon bridges on May 4, 1864, early in the Overland Campaign—a rare action photo.

