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GUIDE TO  
**VIRGINIA'S CIVIL WAR**

BATTLEFIELDS & SITES



Living history at Hillsman House on the Sailor's Creek battlefield.

## Lee's Retreat tour gets updates

New additions along the route of Lee's Retreat are making it easier to explore one of American history's most dramatic chapters.

The driving tour from Petersburg to Appomattox, opened 15 years ago to rave reviews, tells the story of the final days of Robert E. Lee's famed Army of Northern Virginia as it marched to eventual surrender the first week of April 1865.

That tour is now benefiting from a newly opened site and upgrades to some important "old" ones. Here's what's happening:

### Five Forks battlefield

This was the battle west of Petersburg that precipitated the retreat. Since settling into a semi-siege at Petersburg in June 1864, the Union army had extended its lines south and west, cutting off supply routes into the Confederate-held city. Lee was forced to match every move. By the end of March 1865, the end of the line (the far Confeder-

ate right) was anchored at this junction of roadways. Confederates here (commanded by Gen. George Pickett of Gettysburg fame) protected the South Side Railroad, the last major supply line open to the city. When a determined Union attack, led by the aggressive Gen. Philip Sheridan, scattered Southern defenders here April 1, Confederate Petersburg was doomed. Lee's army was forced to hit the road the next day.

The Petersburg National Battlefield has opened a new visitor contact station at its Five Forks unit. The new center features ranger help, new exhibits, a bookstore area and rest rooms. A 0.45-mile walking trail from here follows the route of Union cavalry to the Confederate lines at the forks.

### Sailor's Creek battlefield

Five days after the battle at Five Forks, Lee was in deep trouble again. After reuniting the various threads of his army April 5 in Amelia, the Confederate commander found

his preferred path (south toward North Carolina) blocked by Union troops at Jetersville.

The enthusiastic Union army, pressed by its commander Gen. U.S. Grant, now nipped at the heels and flanks of the hungry Confederates. On April 6, the Union pursuit overtook the tail end of Lee's army as it struggled through the valley of Sailor's Creek.

The battle that day over rolling hills and creek beds routed the Southerners, prompting Lee to exclaim while observing the aftermath, "My God! Has the army been dissolved?"

The Sailor's Creek Battlefield Historical State Park has new life under new manager Chris Calkins, long-time Petersburg National Battlefield historian and author of eight books and countless articles on the Appomattox Campaign. Under his direction the Hillsman House, a landmark that served as a hospital after the battle, has

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Map of Virginia, pages 20-21

## Lee's Retreat Tour Updates, cont'd from page 1

been restored. The house is open most days April-October and by appointment. Construction of a visitor center at Sailor's Creek is underway. An opening date is not yet scheduled.



High Bridge in 1865.

### High Bridge

While the fighting at Sailor's Creek was going on April 6, Union cavalry dashed ahead, ordered to destroy this imposing bridge across the Appomattox River. Built in 1854, the structure is about 2,400 feet long and stands about 160 feet above the river. The South Side Railroad crossed here as did a wagon bridge built just above river level. Confederate defenders held off the Union cavalry in a sharp battle for the bridge that day, and part of the Confederate army crossed here and marched into Farmville. Hoping to buy time, Lee ordered the bridge burned after his army crossed, but that mission was only partially successful. Union soldiers clambered over the bridges the next day, continuing their pursuit. The Army of Northern Virginia had only two days to live.

Long inaccessible to any kind of (legal) visitation, the site of the historic High Bridge is now accessible via the



New visitor station at Five Forks.

new High Bridge Trail, a state park. About two-thirds of this new rails-to-trails park is open to walkers, cyclists and horseback riders. Plans call for the rest of the trail, including a walk across the bridge itself, to be completed sometime next year.

### New Trails Map

In addition to these site updates, a new version of the Lee's Retreat Civil War Trails driving tour map is now available. Call 800-6-RETREAT for a free copy or download a copy from [www.CivilWarTraveler.com/maps](http://www.CivilWarTraveler.com/maps).

### At a glance

Locate these sites on a new google map at [CivilWarTraveler.com/inprint](http://CivilWarTraveler.com/inprint).

#### Five Forks

9840 Courthouse Road  
Dinwiddie VA 23841  
[www.nps.gov/pete](http://www.nps.gov/pete)  
804-469-4093

The new visitor contact station is open 9 am–5 pm daily. Petersburg National Battlefield fees apply.

#### Sailor's Creek Battlefield Historical State Park

6541 Sayers Creek Road  
Rice VA 23966  
[www.dcr.virginia.gov/state\\_parks/sai.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/sai.shtml)  
804-561-7510

Hillsman House is open April–October 10 am–5 pm Wednesday–Saturday and noon–5 pm Sunday. Open other times by "chance or appointment." Free.

#### High Bridge Trail

[www.dcr.virginia.gov/state\\_parks/hig.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/hig.shtml)

Parking area located 3 miles east of Route 45 on River Road just north of Farmville. High Bridge site is a mile walk south from parking area. Civil War Trails interpretive sign in the parking area. More signs located at the bridge site. Free.

#### 145th Anniversary Events

Parks and historic sites along the route of Lee's Retreat are commemorating the 145th anniversary of the event from late March through mid April. See the calendar on page 14 for highlights and [CivilWarTraveler.com/events](http://CivilWarTraveler.com/events) for details.

## NEWS

### May is Civil War reenactment month in Virginia

If you are a fan of Civil War reenactments, May is the month for you. Three events are scheduled in Virginia in different parts of the state: New Market in the Shenandoah Valley May 15–16, Fort Pocahontas in Tidewater May 22–23 and Spotsylvania near Fredericksburg May 22–23.

See the events calendar, page 14, for details and the event websites. See [www.CivilWarTraveler.com](http://www.CivilWarTraveler.com) for much more on all the Civil War events in the state throughout the year.

### Roots of Civil War topic of seminar in Richmond

What did George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson and John Tyler have to do with the Civil War? That question will be tackled during a seminar Feb. 20 in Richmond.

"Four American Presidents and the Civil War" is sponsored by the Museum of the Confederacy and the Library of Virginia and will be held at the library, 800 E. Broad St., Richmond. Cost is \$50 for the day-long event and includes a box lunch. Details: [www.moc.org](http://www.moc.org) or call 804-649-1861 extension 31 to register.

### Tour schedule set for First Kernstown site near Winchester

Rose Hill near Winchester was the site of vicious fighting during the March 1862 Battle of Kernstown that most historians believe kicked off Stonewall Jackson's famous Valley Campaign. The site at 1850 Jones Road will be open for self-guided tours 1–4 pm on the following dates: April 17, May 15, June 19, July 17, Aug. 21, Sept. 18 and Oct. 16. Cost is \$5. For more information, see [www.shenadahmuseum.org](http://www.shenadahmuseum.org) or call 540-662-1473 extension 235.

### Battlefield cleanup set April 10

Clean up or restore your local Civil War battlefield or site April 10 during the annual Park Day sponsored by the Civil War Preservation Trust. For a participating site near you, see [www.CivilWar.org](http://www.CivilWar.org).

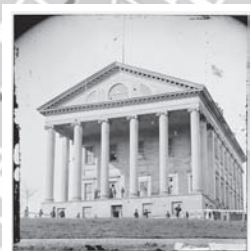
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James River



[CIVILWARTRAVELER.COM](http://CIVILWARTRAVELER.COM) / RICHMONDTOURS

## GUIDE TO VIRGINIA'S CIVIL WAR

BATTLEFIELDS & SITES

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### PAGE ONE HISTORY PUBLICATIONS

The *Guide to Virginia's Civil War* is published three times yearly. Editions are printed in early February, late May and early September. Free copies are available at Virginia State Welcome Centers, most Virginia Civil War sites and selected local/regional visitor centers. For a free copy by mail, visit [www.CivilWarTraveler.com](http://www.CivilWarTraveler.com), click on the "Free Info" button, and fill out the form (check Virginia). A copy of the newspaper and other related Civil War travel information will be sent to you.

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