

INTRODUCTION

FLAGS OF HANOVER UNITS

HISTORIC HAPPENINGS & RECOGNITION



James Apostles Fields

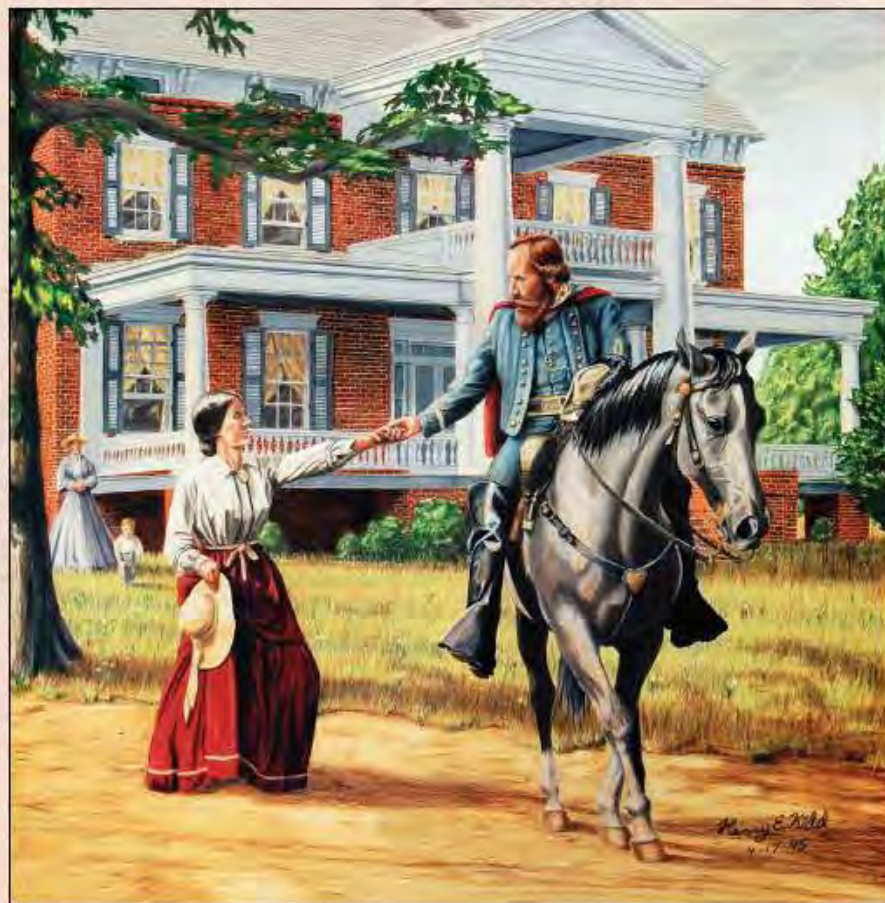
Born into slavery in 1844, James Fields served as caretaker of horses at Hanover Courthouse until he escaped to the Federal army in 1862. Being well acquainted with Hanover and all the surrounding counties, he served as a guide for the Union Army until the end of the war. In 1865, he reunited with this family at Fort Monroe, known by African Americans during the Civil War as the Freedom Fortress. After the war, he pursued his education at the new Hampton Institute and was part of the school's first graduating class. Eventually, Fields went on to graduate from Howard University Law School in 1881 and practiced law for six years before his appointment as Commonwealth's Attorney for Warwick County in 1887. He was elected to the House of Delegates in 1889.

Frances Coleman

Frances Coleman, a freewoman, owned property near Montpelier in Hanover County. In 1865, Union cavalry under General George Custer swept through the area. After the war, Ms. Coleman's claim with the Southern Claims Commission asserted that Union soldiers had appropriated "her food and supplies, her mule, and all of the rails that enclosed her twenty-six acres, which the soldiers used as firewood." She was awarded \$278.

William Henry Winston

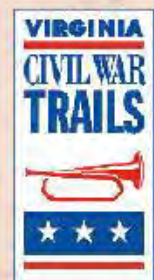
At the age of 15, Winston escaped from William Carter's Hanover plantation and followed the Union army to freedom. Enlisting at Norfolk, Virginia in Company E, 2nd United States Colored Cavalry, Winston was wounded in action near Fort Harrison. Despite his wound, he remained in the Union army until mustering out in 1866 and returned to Hanover County.



Used with permission from the artist Henry Kidd

"Farewell My Gallant Knight"

General J.E.B. Stuart visited his wife Flora at the Fontaine house near Beaver Dam on May 10, 1864. He kissed her for what was the last time, as he was mortally wounded the next day at the battle of Yellow Tavern. Their son, J.E.B. Stuart, Jr., is in the background.



Your Free Map and Guide to area museums, historic sites and Civil War Trails markers.



Every effort has been made to verify content, picture source and accreditation.

Hanover County felt the military and economic impact of the Civil War from the outset of the conflict. Many realized the county would become a target for Federal military operations because of its location just northeast of the Confederate capital. Two critical railroads—the Virginia Central and the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac—met at Hanover Junction. Both railroads were immensely valuable to the Confederate war effort. The Virginia Central connected Richmond with the fertile Shenandoah Valley whose crops and products fed the capital city. The same railroad gave Confederate leaders a flexible method of shuttling troops back and forth. The RF&P Railroad played a similar role, serving as the primary line of connection between Richmond and the front lines around Fredericksburg from 1862 until 1864. In combination, 35 miles of railroad tracks ran through Hanover, making the defense of the county a critical priority.

In the spring of 1862, General George B. McClellan's Peninsula Campaign brought the Union Army of the Potomac into Hanover for the first time. The county residents dealt with enemy soldiers who camped on their land as they conducted skirmishes, and battles that threatened lives and property. The prospect that Richmond could fall and the Confederacy with it loomed. However, on June 26th, General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia began a series of engagements known as the Seven Days that drove the Federal army away from the capital. The first two battles of Lee's offensive occurred in Hanover: Beaver Dam Creek and Gaines' Mill. Following these actions, nearby homes and outbuildings were turned into temporary hospitals for the wounded. The dead were hastily buried where they fell. Local families tried to repair their homes and property from the damage done by shot and shell.

While Federal raids threatened the county in 1863, it was not until the next year that major troop movements and engagements once again dominated life in Hanover. Earthworks scarred the landscape as the contending armies maneuvered and fought during the Overland Campaign. Battles at North Anna, Totopotomoy Creek, and Cold Harbor were read about with great interest in the papers in the north and south. For the residents who lived on the battlefields, these actions simply meant having to rebuild once again. By the end of the war, Hanover citizens had seen and overcome more military actions than almost any other county in Virginia.



56th Virginia Infantry

Harrison's Guards, Company K of the 56th Virginia Infantry, was raised in the Cold Harbor section of Hanover County. The 56th saw action in Hanover during the Seven Days' Battles and again in the Overland Campaign. The regiment, assigned to Pickett's Division, suffered terribly at Gettysburg.



4th Virginia Cavalry Flag

This regiment, at one time commanded by Williams Carter Wickham of the Hanover Dragoons, fought in most of the cavalry actions with the Army of Northern Virginia. This flag, captured by a Federal cavalryman at Williamsburg in 1862, belonged to the regiment.

15th Virginia Infantry Flag

Companies such as the Patrick Henry Rifles, Ashland Grays, and Hanover Grays were recruited in Hanover County and served in the 15th Virginia Infantry. The unit's flag, made from the bridal clothes of Mrs. Catherine Heth Morrison, was presented to the regiment in June 1861 following the action at Big Bethel.



Flag images courtesy of The Museum of the Confederacy



Used with permission from the Virginia Historical Society

During the four year Sesquicentennial commemoration, there will be numerous related events in Hanover County. For the latest information, please refer to www.vacivilwar.org and www.co.hanover.va.us/planning/hesc.htm.

This brochure was produced by the Hanover County Sesquicentennial Committee which is comprised of local citizens and the following organizations:

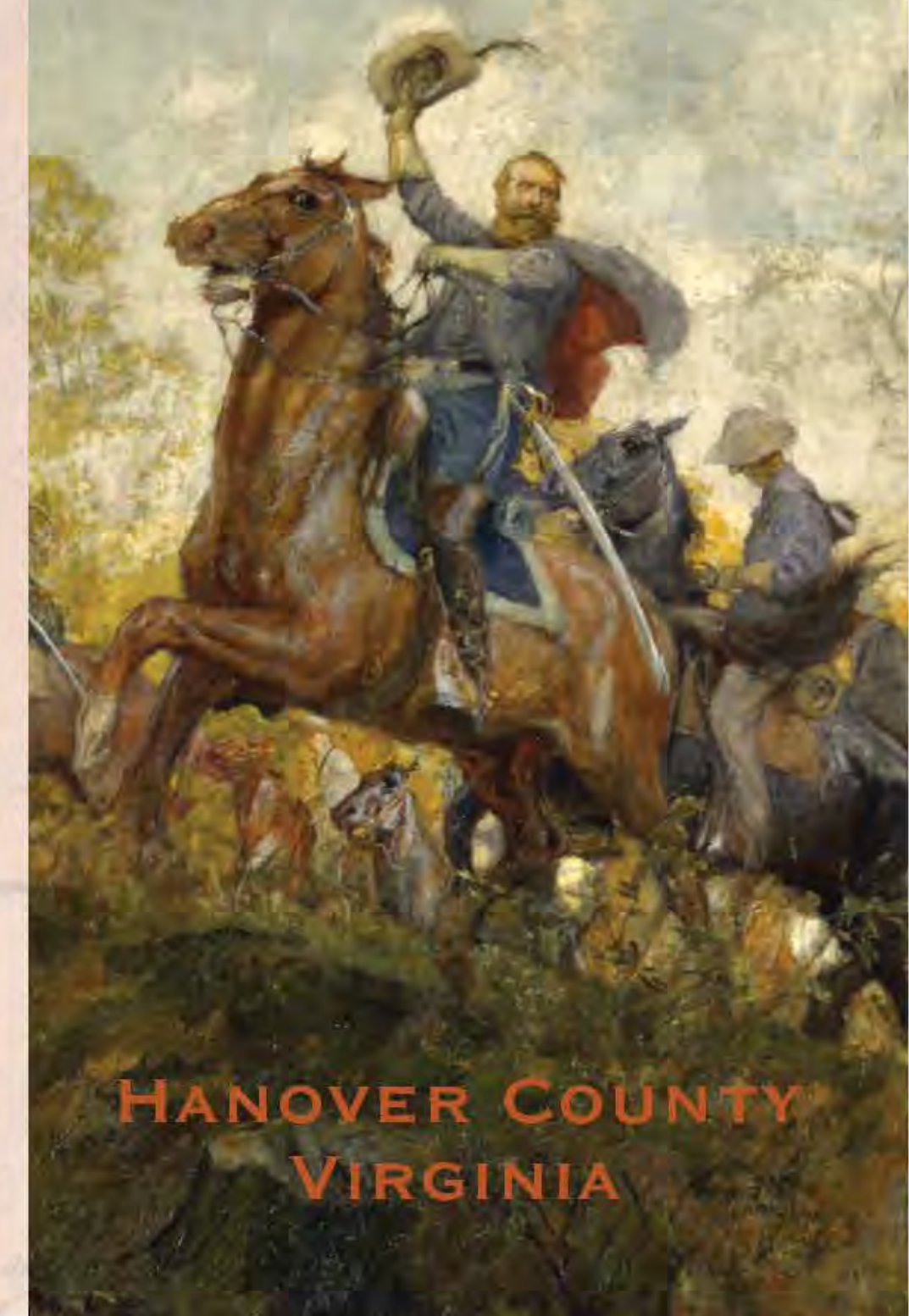
- Hanover Tavern Foundation: www.hanovertavern.org
- Hanover County Historical Society: www.hanoverhistorical.org
- Historic Polegreen Church Foundation: www.historicpolegreen.org
- Hanover County Historical Commission: www.co.hanover.va.us/planning/histresr.htm
- County of Hanover: www.co.hanover.va.us
- Town of Ashland: www.town.ashland.va.us
- Ashland Museum: www.ashlandmuseum.org
- Richmond National Battlefield Park: www.nps.gov/rich/index.htm

Other organizations:

- www.virginiacivilwar.org
- www.visitrichmondva.com
- www.ontorichmond.com

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WAR COMES TO HANOVER 1861-1865



HANOVER COUNTY VIRGINIA

Battle of Hanover Court House: May 27, 1862

Also known as Slash Church, the battle began when elements of Brigadier General Fitz John Porter's 5th Corps marched north to protect the right flank of the Army of the Potomac. In a sharp fight, General Porter defeated a smaller force under Confederate Brigadier General Lawrence Branch.



The Johnson Collection

The Burial of Latané

In mid-June, 1862, General J.E.B. Stuart led 1,200 Confederate cavalry through Hanover on a reconnaissance of the Union army outside Richmond. He turned the mission into a ride around the Union army and brought General Lee important information as he began the offensive to save the Confederate capital. The only Confederate fatality during Stuart's famous ride was Captain William Latané, killed in a skirmish with Federal cavalry. Artist William Washington painted the iconic scene of his burial in 1864.

General Williams Carter Wickham



Courtesy of The Hanover Historical Society

In 1858, Wickham received a commission in a Virginia militia cavalry unit, the Hanover Dragoons. Following secession, his unit entered Confederate service as Company G of the 4th Virginia Cavalry. He served under J.E.B. Stuart and eventually attained the rank of Brigadier General.



Hanover Tavern

In 1862 and 1864, it was the scene of spirited engagements as cavalry and soldiers of both armies regularly visited. During the war the Tavern became a home to refugees fleeing the occupying Union Army. One such boarder, Margaret Wight, kept a diary reporting on the news of the war, worries about her children, the price of food and occurrences at the Tavern.



The Battle of Cold Harbor: May 31 – June 12, 1864

General Grant maneuvered his army toward the Old Cold Harbor Crossroads, just nine miles from Richmond. Although Cold Harbor covered two weeks of fighting, the climactic moment occurred on June 3 when Grant ordered an army-wide assault against a well-entrenched Confederate army. General Lee's soldiers repulsed the attacks and inflicted one of the worst tactical defeats of the war on the Federal army. Following the setback, Grant made plans for his next target: Petersburg. The image above graphically depicts the cost of war as soldiers and workmen retrieve the dead on the Cold Harbor battlefield just after the war.

Cold Harbor National Cemetery

The final resting place for many of the Federal soldiers who died in Hanover County are located on a section of the Cold Harbor battlefield. Of the 1,923 Civil War interments only 676 are identified. There are three monuments in the cemetery: one for Pennsylvania units that fought at Cold Harbor; another for the 8th New York Heavy Artillery; and lastly a Sarcophagus style monument to 889 unknown soldiers.



1861

APRIL 17

Virginia secedes from the Union

1862

MAY 27

Battle of Hanover Court House

JUNE 12-15

Stuart's Ride Around the Union Army

JUNE 26

Battle of Beaver Dam Creek

JUNE 27

Battle of Gaines' Mill

1863

MAY

Stoneman's Raid

JUNE & JULY

Raids on South Anna River bridges

1864

MAY 12

Battle of Meadow Bridges

MAY 23-26

Battle of North Anna River

MAY 29 – JUNE 1

Battle of Totopotomoy Creek

MAY 31 – JUNE 12

Battle of Cold Harbor

JUNE 1

Battle of Ashland

1865

MARCH

Sheridan's raid through Hanover

1866

Cold Harbor National Cemetery established



Battle of Beaver Dam Creek: June 26, 1862

Confederate General Robert E. Lee's offensive to save Richmond in the summer of 1862 began when part of his army attacked the Union 5th Corps positioned behind Beaver Dam Creek. Although a tactical defeat for Lee's army, Union General George B. McClellan ordered the 5th Corps to retreat that evening to a new defensive position near Gaines' Mill.



The Watt House on the Gaines' Mill Battlefield

Battle of Gaines' Mill: June 27, 1862

In this battle, General Lee ordered the Army of Northern Virginia to make its largest assault of the war. The attack broke the strong Federal position and gave Lee his first victory as the army's commander. With nearly 100,000 soldiers engaged and 15,000 casualties, Gaines' Mill proved to be the largest and costliest battle of the Seven Days.

The Battle of North Anna: May 23 – 26, 1864

During the Overland Campaign the armies of generals Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee confronted each other along the North Anna River. Lee engineered a strong defensive position on the south side of the river placing his army in an inverted "V." Although Grant stepped into the trap by crossing on either side of the Confederate position, Lee was too ill at the critical moment and could not spring his trap.



"Even To Hell I Self" – Used with permission from the artist, Donna J. Neary

The Battle of Totopotomoy Creek: May 29 – June 1, 1864

Following the fighting along the North Anna River, General Lee fell back to the next defensible position at Totopotomoy Creek. Along this new line, engagements broke out at Bethesda Church, Polegreen Church, and Rural Plains. At Rural Plains, the Shelton family refused to leave despite the presence of the Federal army. The house was hit more than 50 times by Confederate artillery and they sought shelter in the basement.



"Four Seasons of the Confederacy (Autumn)" by Charles Hoffbauer



Credit the Virginia Historical Society



Confederate Soldiers Monument

Dedicated in 1914, the monument that stands on the Hanover Courthouse green lists each soldier and major militia recruited in Hanover County during the Civil War.

VISITOR INFORMATION

A. Historic Town of Ashland - Founded as Slash Cottage Hotel Co. by the RF & P Railroad Company in the 1840's, the town incorporated as Ashland in 1858. The Confederacy trained cavalry soldiers there, and refugees from fighting in Northern Virginia filled the town during the Civil War. Randolph - Macon College moved to the resort property after the war. Today, the town's National Historic District of more than 200 buildings includes a charming downtown business district, parts of the College, and homes. www.AshlandMuseum.org



B. Ashland - Hanover Visitor Center - The Visitor Center is located in the former RF & P passenger station in the center of Ashland's Historic District. Visitors can find information in the charming 1923 station on cultural and entertainment opportunities in Ashland and Hanover as well as relocation information. There are maps of the county and the town and two self-guided walking tours of the Ashland Historic District: one about Ashland homes and the other about Ashland's Civil War experience. 112 N. Railroad Ave., Ashland, VA, 23005, 804-752-6766, www.TownAshland.va.us



C. Hanover Courthouse - This was the seat of county government throughout the war. On his ride around McClellan, General J.E.B. Stuart moved through the county complex on June 13, 1862. The courthouse saw Confederate and Union troop movements, occupations, battles and skirmishes most notably on May 27, 1862, and May 31, 1864. 13182 Hanover Courthouse Rd., Hanover, VA 23069, 804-365-4691, www.co.hanover.va.us/planning/histresr.htm#cour

D. Hanover Tavern - Hanover Tavern has served as a refuge for weary travelers and courthouse users since the early 1700s. The Tavern offers tours, a Civil War exhibit, a full service restaurant, as well as professional theater. Open daily at 11:00, except Monday. 13181 Hanover Courthouse Rd., Hanover, VA 23069, 804-537-5050, www.HanoverTavern.org



E. Historic Polegreen Church - Historic Polegreen Church gained prominence in colonial Virginia as the cradle of religious freedom and place of worship for a young Patrick Henry. On June 1, 1864, as fighting advanced toward Cold Harbor, Confederate artillery fire destroyed the church in an attempt to drive out Union sharpshooters. 6411 Heatherwood Drive, Mechanicsville, VA 23116, 804-730-3837, www.HistoricPolegreen.org

F. Beaver Dam Station - This was a major Confederate supply point on the Virginia Central Railroad. En route to join Lee's army near Mechanicsville, General "Stonewall" Jackson unloaded his army here on June 25, 1862. The station was raided several times with major destruction of buildings, supplies and infrastructure. On July 20, 1862 "Gray Ghost" John S. Mosby was captured here. The station suffered an assault on February 29, 1864, by General Judson Kilpatrick and again on May 9, 1864 by Generals Philip Sheridan and George Custer. 16199 Beaverdam School Rd., Beaverdam, VA 23015, 804-449-6178, www.BeaverDamDepot.org



G. Cold Harbor Battlefield Visitor Center - Exhibits in the visitor center explore the two largest Civil War battles in Hanover County: Gaines' Mill (1862) and Cold Harbor (1864). An electric battle map covers each battle, illustrating how that part of Hanover was fought over twice. A 1/4-mile tour road or a one-mile walking trail reveal fine examples of Civil War field fortifications that defined the fighting at Cold Harbor. 3515 Anderson-Wright Drive, Mechanicsville, VA 23111, (804) 730-5025, www.nps.gov/rich



BATTLEFIELD PARKS & HISTORIC SITES



H. Beaver Dam Creek Battlefield (National Park Service) - General Robert E. Lee's offensive to save Richmond in the summer of 1862 began at Beaver Dam Creek. A section of the battlefield is preserved by the National Park Service. A pedestrian bridge takes you over the creek to see the site of the heaviest fighting. 7423 Cold Harbor Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23111, www.nps.gov/rich



Watt House

I. Gaines' Mill Battlefield (National Park Service) - An interpretive trail begins near the parking area allowing you to walk the ground where Confederate General Robert E. Lee achieved his first victory as commander of the Army of Northern Virginia. As you walk the ground, you will see how terrain aided the Federal army's defense. Finally, the trail leads you to the site where Texas and Georgia troops broke through the line and precipitated the Union withdrawal. A monument honors members of an Alabama brigade who fought valiantly in the closing hours of the battle. Also, see the Watt House (not open to the public) that served as Union General Fitz John Porter's headquarters. 6283 Watt House Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23111, www.nps.gov/rich

BATTLEFIELD PARKS & HISTORIC SITES

J. North Anna Battlefield - (Hanover County Park) The Ox Ford portion of the North Anna Battlefield, May 23-26, 1864, contains well preserved trenches of General Robert E. Lee's renowned "Inverted V" defensive position. Attempting to attack the Confederates, Union General Ulysses S. Grant found his army on either side of Lee's works and divided into three parts. With each part of his army separated by the river, Grant realized the dangerous situation and entrenched before the Confederates could attack an isolated part of his army. Eventually, the Federals withdrew and moved to the east. The 80-acre park has several miles of walking trails with interpretive signs and a breathtaking view of the North Anna River. Open dawn to dusk. 12075 Verdon Road, Doswell, VA 23047, 804-365-7150 or 365-4695, http://www.co.hanover.va.us/parksrec/parkinfo_nabp.htm or www.blueandgraveducation.org/projects/north-anna/



K. Totopotomoy Creek Battlefield at Rural Plains (National Park Service) - One of the battlefields of the Overland Campaign, today Richmond National Battlefield Park owns and maintains 124 acres at Rural Plains, including the historic Shelton House and down to the banks of Totopotomoy Creek. This includes much of the ground over which Union General Winfield Scott Hancock's men launched attacks on May 30 and May 31, 1864, against Confederate positions across the creek. 7273 Studley Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23116, www.nps.gov/rich



36th Wisconsin Monument



Confederate Seal



Confederate Monument at Hanover Court House



Civil War Medal of Honor



Wilcox Monument at Gaines' Mill



2nd Connecticut Heavy Artillery Monument at Cold Harbor Battlefield

★ J.E.B. Stuart's ride around McClellan



Garthright House

E. Polegreen Church - In 1864, Union troops made an attempt to break through Southern lines along Totopotomoy Creek. Polegreen Church rested squarely in the center as the two armies faced each other. The Union forces overran the Confederate outer positions and occupied the church. In an effort to dislodge Union sharpshooters, Confederate artillery fired on the church. According to the diary of William S. White, a gunner with the Richmond Howitzers, his gun fired the shot that set the church ablaze, burning it to the ground. Ironically, his diary notes that his own father had been baptized at Polegreen Church.

N. Garthright House (National Park Service) - This restored house served as a field hospital during the Battle of Cold Harbor and afterward became a Confederate hospital. The earliest part of the house dates to the 1700s. (Exterior exhibit only. Not open to the public.) 6005 Cold Harbor Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23111, www.nps.gov/rich

BATTLEFIELD PARKS & HISTORIC SITES

O. Cold Harbor Park (Hanover County) - This 50-acre park, maintained and groomed with the help of the Cold Harbor Ruritans, surrounds the historically significant Garthright House. The property has numerous Civil War trenches and rifle pits as well as some picnic tables. This park features a paved, wheelchair-accessible one-mile trail system with interpretive signage regarding the Civil War. Park is open dawn to dusk year round. 6005 Cold Harbor Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23111.

S. Cold Harbor National Cemetery - See timeline opposite side.



Medal of Honor recipient at Cold Harbor National Cemetery



8th New York Heavy Artillery Monument at Cold Harbor National Cemetery



Monument to 889 unknown soldiers buried at Cold Harbor National Cemetery



Civil War Monument to Pennsylvania Troops at Cold Harbor National Cemetery

MONUMENTS & HISTORICAL MARKERS

P. Confederate Monument at Hanover Court House - Dedicated on the courthouse green in August 1914, the obelisk shaped monument lists the names of 1,464 men who served in Hanover infantry regiments, cavalry companies, artillery batteries, and home guards during the Civil War. The monument's inscription touches all: "Hanover: To Her Confederate Soldiers and to Her Noble Women Who Loved Them."

Q. 36th Wisconsin Monument - The monument was erected in 1924 by Charles A. Stokes in memory of the members of Companies B, E, F and G of the 36th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry who fought here on June 1, 1864. Marker is near Mechanicsville, located on Pole Green Road 0.2 miles east of Rural Point Road, on the left when traveling east.



Haw's Shop Confederate Monument at Enon Church

R. Confederate Monument at Haw's Shop - The marker was erected in 1959 by the Virginia State Library in cooperation of the Hanover Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. "In memory of 27 unknown Confederate Soldiers killed at the Battle of Haws Shop, May 28, 1864 and buried in this churchyard."

CIVIL WAR TRAILS MARKERS

1. Salem Church/Haw's Shop - The marker is located on Studley Road (Route 606), on the west side of the Salem Presbyterian Church parking lot. On May 28, 1864, while Federal infantry dug in near this church, an intense dismounted cavalry battle was fought west of here near Enon Church. The nearby machine shop owned by the Haw family gave name to this important crossroads. During the cavalry battle at Enon Church, Salem saw service as a temporary hospital. On June 3rd another cavalry action took place here with Confederates manning previously constructed Union earthworks. The church was struck by a Confederate shell.



Salem Church Photo by Bernard Fisher

2. Enon Church - Marker is located at the intersection of Studley Road (Route 606) and Buckeye Road. Confederate cavalry under General Wade Hampton arrived here May 28, 1864, hoping to determine if the Federal army had crossed the Pamunkey River. His horsemen collided with Union cavalry under General David Gregg near the Haw's home, Oak Grove. The Confederates dismounted, and built a line of protective works on both sides of the road behind this church. After nearly seven hours of combat, Hampton had the information he was looking for and ordered his men to withdraw. This was one of the most severe cavalry battles of the war with approximately 365 Union and 380 Confederate casualties.

3. Hanover Tavern - The marker is in the center of the parking lot south of Hanover Tavern on U.S. Route 301. Part of the county court house complex, the tavern area experienced cavalry skirmishing on several occasions. On May 27, 1862, Union General George B. McClellan's Union army reconnoitered the Hanover Courthouse area and engaged the Confederates four miles southwest of here around Peake's Turnout on the Virginia Central Railroad. On June 13, 1862, Confederate General J.E.B. Stuart led his men past Hanover Tavern on his famous ride around the Union army.

4. Totopotomoy/Rural Plains - The marker can be reached from Studley Road (Route 606) 0.1 miles west of Shelton Pointe Drive. Between May 29 & June 1, 1864, the two armies confronted each other from behind powerful entrenchments. The Shelton House, "Rural Plains," was the most prominent landmark on the Totopotomoy Creek battlefield. General Winfield Hancock of the Union 2nd Corps established his headquarters there. Both cannon and mortars were positioned in the yard of the house. A signal station on the roof attracted Confederate artilleryists who hit the house at least 50 times.

5. Hanover Junction - The marker is located on Route 30 north of Ashland, just east of Route 1 at railroad junction. Hanover Junction was the intersection of two important railroads, The Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad (RF&P) and the Virginia Central Railroad. During all the famous campaigns of 1862-64, Lee's army relied on these railroads for supplies. In May 1864, during the battle at the North Anna River, most of the RF&P was in Federal hands. Much of Grant's army stood on the south bank of the river barely more than one mile from here. Lee's headquarters was in a tent in the southwest angle of the railroad intersection.

6. Polegreen Church - The marker is at the intersection of Rural Point Road (Route 643) and Heatherwood Drive. This historic church was the place of worship of young Patrick Henry and was caught in the cross-fire of the Civil War. On May 30, 1864, General Winfield Hancock's Second Corps captured a small section of Southern trenches. During a Federal assault on June 1, a lively artillery duel at this site resulted in shells being fired by the Richmond Howitzers at Union sharpshooters in the church, hitting the building and causing it to catch fire and burn to the ground.

7. Ashland - The marker is on North Center Street north of England Street (Route 54) at the Ashland Amtrak Station/Visitor's Center. Prior to the war, Ashland was a quiet stop on the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac railroad with about 150 residents. Militias were trained here at Camp Robinson. As the war began, additional camps were set up for training new recruits and by 1862, homes and churches filled with battle casualties. On three occasions cavalry raids destroyed railroad track and burned nearby bridges. In June 1864, a brisk cavalry skirmish swept through town.



Camp Robinson