

We have many exciting activities for families, couples and even the single person. Looking for tours? Check out our activity ideas to help you plan your day(s).

Civil War Tours – In the Heart of Virginia’s Battlefields

Gordonsville played a vital role during the Civil War as a key railroad crossroads, connecting the Shenandoah Valley and the Confederate Capital of Richmond. Produce, goods and ammunition all flowed along the rail lines. The railroad also transported the troops to the front lines. Lee’s Headquarters during December, 1863 to May, 1864 was located only 9 miles away in Orange. Gordonsville served as a major supply and storage depot during this time. Prominent Confederate Generals all stayed in town at various times. In addition to being a key supply link, Gordonsville also housed an important medical hospital. In 1862, the Exchange Hotel was converted into a receiving hospital, where over 70,000 Confederate and captured Union soldiers were treated. Of added intrigue is that Gordonsville was also known to have been frequented by both Confederate and Union Spies and that the Confederate Secret Service operated in this area.

Suggested Stops:



The Exchange Hotel and Civil War Medical Museum: Located at the southern end of Downtown Gordonsville, this landmark is on the National Register of Historic Places. Originally a thriving tavern and a Railroad Grand Hotel, the building became the Gordonsville Receiving Hospital during the Civil War. Experience rooms lined with Civil War medical instruments, field supplies, original documents and more.

Self-guided tours are available which take approximately 1+ hours to complete. Explore all three levels of the exhibits. During reconstruction, the hospital served as a Freedman’s Bureau Hospital. Today, the museum is dedicated to the Civil War era. Visit www.hgiexchange.com for hours of operation.

Trevilians Station: Only 8 miles from Downtown Gordonsville on US 33 East. One goal of General Grant's Overland Campaign was to disrupt the supply lines to General Lee and to the city of Richmond, Virginia by attacking the rail hub at Petersburg, Virginia. To cover this movement, Grant ordered a large cavalry raid aimed towards Charlottesville, Virginia. The goal of this effort was to destroy large portions of the Virginia Central Railroad. This would cut Lee off from vital food shipments coming in from the Shenandoah Valley. As the war went on, Gordonsville became a central supply hub, depot and storage area for the Confederates. The Union Army made several attempts to capture Gordonsville but all failed. The closest encounter was at Trevilians Station. Lt. General George Custer captured the confederate supply train and held it briefly before becoming surrounded and finally retreating.



Lee's Headquarters: Located 9 minutes away from Downtown Gordonsville just east of Orange, Virginia. Travel north on US 15 to Orange and then east on Virginia 20. Today, only an inscription marks the location of Lee's Headquarters. From December 1863 to May 1864, Lee kept a winter camp, while his army held the line of the Rapidan River. Across the river in Culpeper County, Union Generals Grant and Meade prepared for their 1864 spring campaign and in early May 1864, the Wilderness campaign started again.

Wilderness Battlefield: The Wilderness Battlefield National Park is located in Orange and Spotsylvania Counties, Virginia. The Battlefield site today allows visitors to walk the trails, view the miles of trench works, take a driving tour, and visit the battlefield. Located just 30 minutes east of Gordonsville on Virginia Highway 20. Travel north from Downtown Gordonsville to Orange and then east on Virginia 20 to Locust Grove, Virginia. The battlefield and exhibits are located on both sides of Virginia 20. Look for the National Park Shelter with exhibits that explains

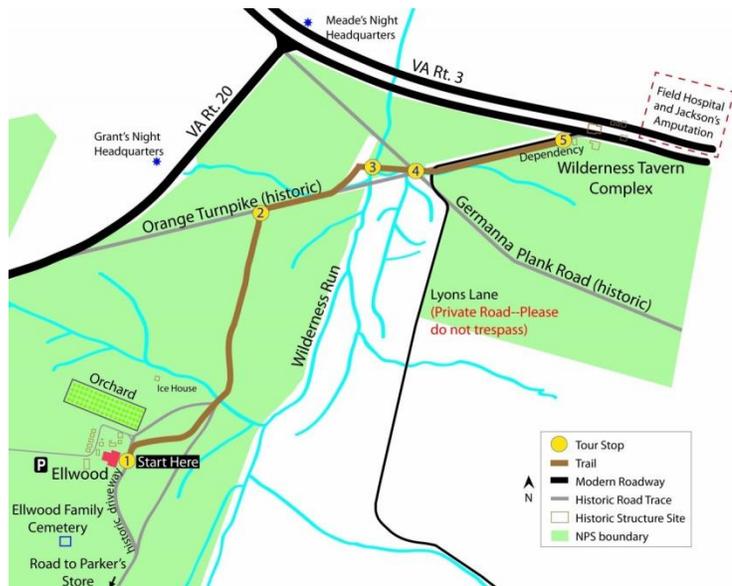


the Battle of the Wilderness. On weekends in the spring and fall and daily during the summer, the shelter is manned by a historian. The two-mile Gordon Flank Attack Trail begins at the Exhibit Shelter and follows the opening Union attack across Saunders Field. Upon reaching the Confederate lines, the path follows the Confederate earthworks before crossing over to the Union trenches, which it follows back to the Exhibit Shelter. The trail provides access to some of the best preserved earthworks in the park. Along the trail there are exhibits to explain the history.



Ellwood Manor: Ellwood Manor, a circa 1790 home is located on the Wilderness Battlefield in the Virginia counties of Spotsylvania and Orange. Much of the Battle of the Wilderness was fought on the plantation itself. In 1863, it served as a Confederate recovery hospital for six months following the Battle of Chancellorsville. Visit the family cemetery where you will find the burial site for General Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson’s amputated left arm. <http://www.fowb.org>.

Wilderness Cross Trail: A new walking trail, covering 1.4 miles, begins at Ellwood Manor and goes to the old Wilderness Tavern Site. The trail is a joint project between Friend of the Wilderness Battlefield and the National Park Service.





Civil War Encampments at Montpelier:

Just 12 minutes north of Downtown Gordonsville on Virginia Route 20. While no battle was fought on Montpelier property there are encampments located there. During the winter of 1863 and 1864, Montpelier was the location of a substantial set of winter encampments occupied by Confederate General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern

Virginia. At present, [an interpretive trail runs](#) from opposite the road of the Train Station, through the old McGowan Property's winter encampments to the reconstructed Civil War huts, and onto the restored Gilmore Farm. This is just one of the many trails that you can walk along during your visit to Montpelier. The Civil War Trail is open every day and is free of charge. Please park across from the Montpelier train station (near the Esso Building) to access the trailhead. View [Montpelier-paths](#) for a larger map.

Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania and

Chancellorsville Battlefields:

Located 57 minutes north and east of Downtown Gordonsville. Travel north on US 15 to Orange and then east on Virginia Route 20. Turn south east on Virginia Route 3 and head to the Chancellorsville Visitor Center. This will be the gateway to the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. There are two visitor centers located in the area. The area has four major Civil War Battlefields and several related historic buildings. Check the [Operating Hours and Seasons page](#) for building hours and guided tour offerings. There is so much to see! One hour, half-day and full day adventures wait. Self-guided driving tour CDs of the battlefields are available for rent or purchase and you can get the CD in one of the two park bookstores. Each CD will take about 2-3 hours to complete.

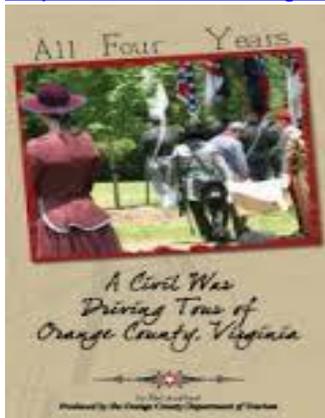


Mine Run Campaign: Looking for a short trip with lots of information? Travel north on US 15 from Downtown Gordonsville to Orange and then east on Virginia Route 20 to Locust Grove. In late November, following the conflict at Gettysburg, Union General Meade



crossed the Rapidan and headed west. Lee moved his troops out of their early winter camps and met the Union Army at Mine Run. Today, a series of 8 markers are located within 3 miles of the main Mine Run marker. [Click for map](#). Other markers include Face Off, Robinson's Tavern, Mine Run Campaign, and The Battle of Payne's Farm. [Click for a list](#) of all markers in Locust Grove.

All Four Years: Gordonsville is the starting point for this unique self-guided tour that mixes the Civil War with the scenery of Orange County. Tour Booklets are available at the Gordonsville Visitor Center. If you prefer to download the route, go to <http://www.visitorangevirginia.com/>.



You start your tour in Gordonsville at the Exchange Hotel and Civil War Museum. Gordonsville was an extremely important railroad crossroads that served as a supply and storage depot. The Union failed on several attempts to capture the town. The site was a tavern in the 1840s, and then was rebuilt as a grand hotel in 1860. During the Civil War, it was a receiving hospital. The large rooms with tall ceilings have original wood floors upstairs and are furnished with period antiques. Each room has a theme, with exhibits relating to the building's days as a train stop, tavern, hotel, Civil War hospital, and postwar Freedman's Bureau.

Next stop are the Montpelier encampments, where Confederate troops spent the winter of 1863-64, are near the Gilmore Cabin. There are several ways to get there. You can travel 9 miles north on US 15 to Orange and then 2 miles south on Virginia Route 20. A scenic drive through 6 miles of rolling farmland is to go north on Virginia Route 231 and then 7 miles north on Route 20 at Somerset.

From Montpelier, travel south on Virginia Route 20 to Orange. On Orange's Main Street, you can stand on the actual fighting ground of the Battle of Orange Courthouse. The courthouse, an 1859 building that features a Confederate monument outside. You also can visit St. Thomas Episcopal Church, on Caroline Street, where Lee attended services.

From Orange, travel north on Virginia Route 20 to Zoar Baptist Church. At the marker there is a short walking trail that leads to Payne's Farm, where the enemies clashed in the Mine Run Campaign.

Next stop is Saunders Field at the Wilderness Battlefield Shelter on Virginia Route 20. You can follow the earthworks for 3 miles.

Nearby is Ellwood Manor, a 1790 plantation home used as a Union headquarters and Confederate hospital; Jackson's amputated arm is in the cemetery.

For Even More Information, Click on the Following Links:



The Civil War Trails program has installed more than 1,500 interpretive markers at Civil War sites in Virginia, Maryland, Tennessee, West Virginia and North Carolina. Driving tours following major campaigns have been created, and a series of regional brochures is available.

Jump to [Virginia](#) for a complete listing of Trails sites. Pick up printed Trails information at the Gordonsville Visitor Center. You may want to download pdf versions of the Trails maps from CivilWarTraveler.com/maps. The following links are active for Virginia.

- **Central Virginia**
[Richmond](#) and Area | [Fredericksburg](#) [Spotsylvania, Chancellorsville, Wilderness] | [1864 Overland Campaign](#) | [Petersburg](#) | [Piedmont](#) [Culpeper, Orange, Madison] | [Charlottesville](#) | [Trevilian Station Driving Tour](#) | [South of the James](#) [Hopewell, Prince George County, Colonial Heights] | [Trails map](#) [PDF 645K] 
- **Southside & Lee's Retreat**
[Lee's Retreat to Appomattox](#) | [Lynchburg](#) | [Wilson-Kautz Raid](#) | [More Southside Sites](#) [includes Danville] | [Trails map](#) [PDF 592K] 
- **Valley & Mountains**
[Winchester to Port Republic](#) | [On to Lexington](#) | [The Route 250 Corridor](#) | [Front Royal](#) | [Hunter's Raid](#) | [More Valley Sites](#) | [Trails map](#) [PDF 1M] 
- **Northern Virginia**
[Manassas and Area](#) | [Inner Suburbs of Washington DC](#) [Alexandria, Arlington, Fall's Church, Fairfax, Vienna] | [More Sites](#) [Fauquier County, Warrenton, Loudoun County] | [The Route 50 Corridor: Mosby's Country](#) | [Timeline](#) of Events in Northern Virginia | [Trails map](#) [PDF 509K] 
- **Tidewater**
[Peninsula Campaign Tour](#) | [Museums & Visitor Centers](#) | [More Tidewater Sites](#) | [Feature: Showdown at Hampton Roads](#) | [Trails map](#) [PDF 924K] 