

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

Cold Harbor and the Advance to Petersburg

By Gordon C. Rhea

Resources

If you can read only one book

Author	<i>Title. City: Publisher, Year.</i>
Rhea, Gordon C.	<i>Cold Harbor: Grant and Lee, May 26 – June 3, 1864.</i> Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002. And <i>On To Petersburg: Grant and Lee, June 4-15, 1864.</i> Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2017.

Books and Articles

Author	<i>Title. City: Publisher, Year. “Title,” in Journal ##, no. # (Date): #.</i>
Baltz, Louis J.	<i>The Battle of Cold Harbor, May 27 - June 13, 1864.</i> Lynchburg, VA: H. E. Howard, 1994.
Bearss, Edwin C. and Bryce A. Suderow.	<i>The Petersburg Campaign, 2 vols., vol. 1. The Eastern Front Battles, June – August, 1864.</i> El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beattie, 2012.
Chick, Sean Michael	<i>The Battle of Petersburg, June 15 – 18, 1864.</i> Lincoln, NB: Potomac Books, 2015.

Duncan, Richard R.	<i>Lee's Endangered Left: The Civil War in Western Virginia Spring of 1864.</i> Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998.
Furgurson, Ernest B.	<i>Not War But Murder: Cold Harbor, 1864.</i> New York: Knopf, 2000.
Greene, A. Wilson	<i>A Campaign of Giants – The Battle for Petersburg: From the Crossing of the James to the Crater.</i> Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018.
Grimsley, Mark	<i>And Keep Moving On: The Virginia Campaign, May – June 1864.</i> Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002.
Horn, John	<i>The Petersburg Campaign.</i> Boston: De Capo Press, 1993.
Howe, Thomas	<i>The Petersburg Campaign: Wasted Valor June 15 -18, 1864.</i> Lynchburg, VA: H. E. Howard, 1988.
Humphreys, Andrew A.	<i>The Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65: the Army of the Potomac and the Army of the James.</i> New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1883.
Rhea, Gordon C.	"The Move to the James and the Battle of Riddell's Shop," in <i>North & South</i> , 10 (6), June 2008.
Ropes, John C.	"The Battle of Cold Harbor," in <i>Papers of the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts.</i> Boston, MA: Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, 1918.
Waldemer, Donald E.	<i>Triumph at the James: The Checkmate of General R. E. Lee.</i> Privately published, 1998.

Organizations

Organization Name	Description, Contact information including address, email
Richmond National Battlefield Park Virginia	Cold Harbor Battlefield Visitor Center is a small visitor contact station with maps and interpretive displays about the 1862 Battle of Gaines's Mill and the 1864 Battle of Cold Harbor. Located at 5515 Anderson Wright Dr., Mechanicsville, VA 23111.

	https://www.nps.gov/rich/planyourvisit/basicinfo.htm
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Web Resources

URL	Name and description
https://stonesentinels.com/cold-harbor/	Stone Sentinels page on Cold Harbor offers details of the battle and guidance on exploring the battlefield in the Richmond National Battlefield Park.

Other Sources

Scholars

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Topic Précis

In early May, 1864, Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant launched a campaign to crush General Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia and bring the American Civil War to a close. Grant attempted a series of turning movements to out flank Lee, each of which Lee blocked. On May 31, 1864 Grant again moved to outflank Lee and both armies raced to Cold Harbor. Grant attacked Lee’s entrenched positions at Cold Harbor on June 3. The assault was a disaster. Regarding the Confederate position as impregnable, Grant decided to move on Petersburg to cut off Confederate supply lines and force Lee out of the trenches at Cold Harbor. Grant set the night of June 12 for Meade to withdraw from Cold Harbor. Taken by surprise, Lee reacted on June 13 advancing to intercept the Federal advance and positioning his army to be able to block a federal advance on Richmond or Petersburg. On June 15 federal forces advanced on Petersburg where the Confederates had a series of strong entrenchments with formidable artillery but not many troops formed in a defensive position called the Dimmock Line. Although the federal assault was to have been carried out by a large force, only part of it was available when the attack began at 7:30 p.m. Much of the confusion that led to this was caused by communication failures between Grant and his senior commanders. Nevertheless, the federal assault was successful and more than a mile and a half of the Confederate line, Batteries 3 through 11, was in Union hands by darkness. The missing elements of the federal force arrived by 11:00 p.m. by which time

the generals judged it too late to advance towards Petersburg. By the morning of June 16, confederate troops occupied a new defensive line in front of Petersburg. The Overland Campaign was over, and the ten-month Petersburg Campaign was about to begin.
