

A BGES Civil War Field University Program:
**The Overland Campaign Part 2:
To the North Anna through the Crossing of
the James River**

Presented by Gordon Rhea
June 5-10, 2022; from Sandston, Virginia

U. S. Grant was brought to the East to confront and defeat the Confederates' legendary leader, Robert E. Lee. For nearly two years, Lee had out-marched, out-thought, and out-fought five commanders, having only been checked at Gettysburg in July 1863. Conversely, Grant had captured two Confederate armies and pushed the Confederates out of Mississippi and Tennessee. Elevated to the command of all the Union armies with the rank of lieutenant general, his mission was to win the war before the next presidential election. Commencing at the start of May 1864, Grant would batter and be battered by the aggressive Confederate commander. The proof is in the numbers, and in just two weeks more than 60,000 men were killed, wounded or captured. It had just begun.

Gordon Rhea is the nation's foremost authority on the decisive "Grant versus Lee" campaign. His immersion started with his Wilderness narrative more than 25 years ago. Each of the five volumes is an award winner—lucid, dynamic, and extremely readable. His field style is the same. He has private property access made available during his precise and comprehensive years of field research. Gordon is a practicing attorney, and he does few tours. Now that the series is complete, he agreed to do an incomparable "start to finish" 10-day study for BGES over two years. Part I in October was a tour de force. This could be even better.

PLEASE NOTE: YOU MUST BE PREPARED FOR EXTENSIVE WALKING, AS MANY SITES ARE AWAY FROM PAVED ROADS. IF YOU WALK IN, YOU MUST BE PREPARED TO WALK OUT.

Sunday, June 5, 2022

6:30 PM: Check in at our headquarters hotel for meet, greet, and to pick up your map packet and nametag. Gordon's opening lecture will talk about the status of the armies after more than two weeks of combat. We will have a variety of pizzas, snacks, and beverages starting at 6:45 PM. Gordon will speak at 7:15.

Monday, June 6, 2022

8:15 AM: We will pick up where we left off in October, exploring the movements of both armies to the North Anna River from Spotsylvania. Grant tried to lure Lee out from the security of his impregnable lines in front of Spotsylvania Court House, but Lee was too clever. We will start in the yard with U. S. Grant in front of Massaponax Church, and then follow the routes of the various Union Corps—Hancock through Guinea Station, Bowling Green, and Milford Station; Warren through Madison's Ordinary, paying particular attention to his lost opportunity at Nancy Wright's Corner; Burnside when he runs into Jubal Early at Stannard's Mill and Mud Tavern; with the convergence of the entire Federal force at Mt. Carmel Church.

From this point, we will explore the initial confrontations along the North Anna, including Henegan's Redoubt, Chesterfield Bridge, Parson Fox's house, and the fight at Jericho Mills. We will then return to the hotel.

Lunch is included, and dinner will be on your own.

Tuesday, June 7, 2022

8:15 AM: Yesterday, we followed the routes that Grant designed and initiated. Today we will see the plans that Lee and the Confederates implemented to thwart Grant's advance. Starting with the North Anna battlefield park and the inverted V, we'll admire the awesome earthworks—still imposing after 158 years. We will then follow some new trails through the Union camps and staging areas. We will finish with the park following Ledlie's misbegotten attack. Following a lunch in the park, we will again follow the aggressive Grant as he maneuvers from the North Anna to the crossing of the Pamunkey and Lee's responses. We will see engagements at Hanover Court House, Haw's Shop, Totopotomoy Creek, Pole Green Church, Bethesda Church, and other lesser but still deadly encounters.

This day may be the most misunderstood element of the two armies's deadly tango toward Richmond.

Lunch is included, but dinner is on your own.

Wednesday, June 8, 2022

8:15 AM: If Grant had one regret in the Overland Campaign, it would be his assaults at Cold Harbor. That is our focus today. Departing again at 8:15, we will quickly move out to examine the Union supply hub at White House Landing. Understanding that explains why Grant is fairly close to where McClellan was in 1862—indeed Cold Harbor overlaps portions of the bloody battlefield of Gaines Mill. Our first engagements this day will describe the cavalry actions that permitted Sheridan to take and hold the Cold Harbor intersection against Confederate efforts to deprive him of that pivotal position.

We will then find ourselves in the midst of a series of assaults that remind us of the terrible fighting at Spotsylvania. This day will be so much more than just the small NPS

parcel and, if all works well, we will visit sites such as the Adams Farm, the 18th Corps intrenchments, and Fletcher's Redoubt. These sites belong to the devoted preservationists of the ABT and the visit is a rare privilege. Be prepared for some walking and bushwhacking!

Lunch is included, but dinner is on your own.

Thursday, June 9, 2022

8:15 AM: Our journey with Grant continues this morning as we leave at 8:15 to slip out of the Federal entrenchments around Cold Harbor and move toward the James River. We will pass Moody's, where Grant spent the night before crossing the Chickahominy. We will also follow Warren's V Corps path and visit Riddell's Shop, where the army's movement was screened from prying Confederate eyes. We will also discuss the challenges and solutions of the VI and IX Corps crossings at Jones Bridge, culminating with a move with the II Corps to its bivouac at Willcox's Wharf—it is truly a military masterpiece—most all accomplished before Lee knew they were gone.

Of course, Lee does discover the movement, and we will track the Confederate deployments, finishing at Myer's Hill, where Lee took his new defensive position. The crossings of the James River were a period of high stress and risk. We will visit Charles City Court House and the Wyanoke Peninsula, where the Federal engineers constructed a massive pontoon bridge across the broad river.

Grant's efficiency and stealth created a singular opportunity to collapse the Confederate defenses and end the war. Lee's uncertainty about Grant's movements and center of gravity created an imbalance that would fall on the shoulders of General PGT Beauregard. We will examine that tomorrow.

Lunch included, but dinner is on your own.

Friday, June 10, 2022

8:15 AM: Our final day also starts at 8:15 as we focus on the June 15 assault on the Confederates' Dimmock line. Grant has significant forces on one side of the James River, and Lee does not because Lee is not precisely sure where the threat really is. We will start with a visit to Bermuda Hundred, where Baldy Smith has returned to his host command under Benjamin Butler—it is from here that the Federal assault begins.

We then travel to City Point, where Grant will establish his headquarters that will become the Civil War's epicenter until April 1865. The Federal attack track moves to Baylor's Farm, where Hincks' United States Colored Troops overran James Dearing's Confederates. We will examine the assault against the Dimmock Line as the life of the Confederacy hangs in the air, tethered by a thin line of Young Boys and Old Men commanded by General Beauregard. If time permits, we will finish by tracing Hancock's route from Windmill Point to the Petersburg lines.

You will have enjoyed an epic field study led by the nation's leading expert on the campaign—thank you for coming.

Lunch is included. We will release you by 5 PM to catch late flights or start home.

About the Faculty:

Gordon Rhea is a practicing attorney from Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina. He has completed seven books related to the Overland Campaign that pitted U. S. Grant against R. E. Lee. The award-winning series published by LSU Press has now been completed with the release of *On to Petersburg, Grant and Lee, June 4-15, 1864*. Rhea brings the same analytic skills so essential for good trial work to the analysis of military campaigns—exhaustive research, the lessons of precedent, and the logical outcomes from well-thought-out plans and the reaction to unexpected curveballs that are known in the military as friction. Personalities count in law and in leadership. Rhea recognizes both, bringing a delightful summary that both clients and juries appreciate and respect.

Hotel Information:

This program will be based at the Holiday Inn Express, 421 International Center Dr., Sandston, Virginia, 23150 (phone: 804-222-1499). We have secured a group rate of \$119 per night plus tax. The block has a cut-off date of May 6, 2022. After that, the rooms will go to their rack rate. Ask for the Blue and Gray Education Group rate. You may also go to www.hiexpress.com/richmondarpt. Enter your desired stay dates and click on “rate preference” and enter “BLE” in the Group field. The next screen will display the event name and the \$119 rate. The hotel has an airport shuttle.

Transportation:

The servicing airport is Richmond International (RIC). Amtrak services Richmond. With the airport located just off I-64 and I-295 east of Richmond, the program also is easily accessible by automobile.

Recommended Reading:

You will be provided with maps upon arrival. The following books are suggested to enhance your readiness for the program. Amazon.com has a program to support non-profits IF YOU SIGN UP to support Blue and Gray Education Society (EIN 54-1720582) at [AmazonSmile](https://www.amazon.com/AmazonSmile). When you sign up there rather than the normal Amazon site, one-half of one percent of your purchase price will be provided to BGES as a donation from Amazon. This will apply not only to this purchase but others you may make at other times. Thank you.

Bring your books along with you and have Gordon sign them.

Chris E. Heisey and Gordon Rhea: [*In the Footsteps of Grant and Lee: the Wilderness to Cold Harbor*](#) (A photographic essay of key and remote sites from the Overland Campaign—you will visit many of them.)

Gordon Rhea Ed.: [*Carrying the Flag: The Story of Private Charles Whilden, the Confederacy's Most Unlikely Hero*](#)

Gordon Rhea: [*Cold Harbor: Grant and Lee, May 26–June 3, 1864*](#)

Gordon Rhea: [*On to Petersburg, Grant and Lee, June 4–15, 1864*](#)

Gordon Rhea: [*To the North Anna River: Grant and Lee, May 13-25, 1864*](#)

Registration Form

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Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Registration includes five lunches, an opening reception, a reading book with maps, the academic program, support of a professional historian, a tour director, and transportation appropriate to the registration. We also will provide snacks, bottled water, and a limited selection of sodas.

_____ Registration \$1,275

_____ Current BGES member \$1,200

_____ I am not a member but would like to join so that I can get the member's rate; or I am a member who is past-due to renew. Please accept my donation of \$_____ (must be \$75 or more, which is tax-deductible).

_____ I am sending a deposit of \$300 plus full payment for any memberships. Total enclosed is \$_____.

_____ I will pay the balance due before the event.

_____ Check enclosed.

Charge my (circle one) MC VISA AMEXP Discover \$_____

Exp: _____ CVV: _____

Signature: _____

Mail to BGES Seminars, P.O. Box 1176, Chatham, VA 24531; or fax credit cards to 434-432-0596. You may also register online at www.blueandgrayeducation.org.