



THUNDER IN THE VALLEY:

U. S. Grant's 1864 Campaign in Western Virginia
and His War on the Virginia Railroads – A Field & Walking Tour of
New Market, Piedmont, Staunton, Trevilian Station. Sheridan's Raid on the Virginia
Central Railroad, Lexington, Buchanan, the Peaks of Otter, Hunter's Retreat, the Battle
of Hanging Rock and the Battle of Cloyd's Mountain,

August 1-5 – based in Staunton, Virginia

with Scott C. Patchan, Gary Ecelbarger and Eric J. Wittenberg

In 1864, Gen. U.S. Grant, the newly appointed overall U. S. Commander, developed a plan to put all of the Union armies on the offensive across the South. The Shenandoah Valley and Western Virginia played a key role in Grant's plan, which was designed to deprive Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia (ANV) of supporting railroads, fodder and supplies from that region. It was a well thought out plan, but one question remained: Did Grant have the right men in position to execute it successfully.

Join CWEA as we present **Scott Patchan, Gary Ecelbarger and Eric Wittenberg** – three of the top-tier Civil War battlefield historians at work today – in a four-day extravaganza in the Shenandoah Valley, Southwest Virginia and the Virginia Piedmont region for an unprecedented tour of Grant's campaign to rob the Army of Northern Virginia of its lifeline. This unique excursion and all-star line-up will take us through the bucolic valleys of the Shenandoah and New Rivers, from the Alleghanies to the Blue Ridge and beyond into the verdant Virginia Piedmont, offering some of the most splendid natural scenery of any tour CWEA has ever presented.

We will base in **Staunton** in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley, and after a **Wednesday PM orientation**, our first day of touring (**Thursday**) will cover the Union effort under General George Crook of Geronimo fame and General William Averell to extinguish Lee's lifeline from Southwest Virginia, the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad and the vital lead and salt it provided to the ANV. We will visit the bloody May 8, 1864 battle of **Cloyd's Mountain**, where Crook overcame heroic resistance from Southern General Alfred G. Jenkins and Col. John McCausland. Although outnumbered, they put up a stellar defense until overwhelmed by Crook and his force. The ensuing action cost over 1,000 casualties including the life of General Jenkins. We will also visit the site where Patrick Cleburne's younger brother gave his life leading Kentucky cavalry in a gallant rear guard action – and we'll visit the sight of the New River Railroad Bridge, which Crook destroyed after a small battle with McCausland. We will then march further into Southwest Virginia to Cove Mountain Gap, where Gen. William E. Grumble Jones stopped Averell's advance on the outskirts of **Wytheville**, preventing any damage to Confederate resources in the area.

On **Friday**, we will focus on the actions in the Shenandoah Valley that were initially designed to complement Crook's efforts in Southwest Virginia, where the affable but bungling General Franz Sigel squandered an opportunity for success and allowed Kentuckian John C. Breckinridge to defeat him at the battle of New Market with a hastily assembled force on May 15. Grant promptly relieved Sigel of command and replaced him with Lincoln's "Abolitionist General" David Hunter, who is much maligned and misrepresented in common treatises on the Civil War. We will explore how Hunter quickly rebuilt the U. S. Army of the Shenandoah, restored its morale and achieved a smashing victory over Grumble Jones at the **Battle of Piedmont**, fought June 5, only three weeks after the debacle at New Market. After a daylong slugfest, a Union flanking attack routed the Confederates from the battlefield in a battle that saw more men killed and wounded than any battle fought in Stonewall Jackson's 1862 Valley Campaign. The victory opened the door to the first Union occupation of Staunton and the destruction of vital support industries for the Southern War Effort. It also cost the South 1,500 men, including Jones who gave his life trying to assemble a last-ditch effort to stave off defeat. We will visit sites in **Staunton** related to Hunter's brief occupation.

Saturday will bring us to the beginning of Grant's revised campaign plans that Hunter's victory at Piedmont seemed to have placed well on the way to success. Grant hoped that Hunter would pass through the Blue Ridge near Waynesboro and head east to Gordonsville, the vital railroad junction where the Virginia Central line from the Shenandoah Valley linked with the Orange and Alexandria line. Grant had dispatched two divisions under General Philip H. Sheridan to link up with Hunter at Gordonsville and destroy the junction and then move on to an even bigger prize, Lynchburg, the "vitals" of the Confederacy. There the Orange and Alexandria linked with the Virginia and Tennessee RR and the Southside RR, a line that ran east toward a small town south Richmond called Petersburg that Grant would soon be setting his sights on. But Hunter opted to go it alone, and moved directly on Lynchburg. Hunter and his staff thought they had Lynchburg in their grasp, and one quipped, "Nothing less than a corps from Lee's army can save them now." Providentially that is exactly what happened. Lee dispatched his "Bad Old Man," Jubal Early, to do the job.

We will follow Hunter's route through the Valley stopping at **Lexington** where he burned VMI and the home of former Virginia Gov. Letcher. We will focus on the critical delaying tactics of newly minted cavalry brigadier John C. McCausland and the critical role he played in saving Lynchburg from Hunter's grasp, such as the small battle at **Buchanan** where he delayed Averell's crossing of the James River and the heroic actions of Union troopers under Averell in saving the town from destruction when fires that McCausland had set to burn the bridge spread to buildings. Then we will cross the Blue Ridge at the beautiful **Peaks of Otter** and move on to Lynchburg where McCausland teamed up with Early to save that vital logistical center from falling into Union hands. As Grant was at that very time launching his opening attacks on Petersburg, the loss of Lynchburg would have been fatal to Lee's efforts to defend Richmond and hold Virginia. In all likelihood, the loss of Petersburg may have forced Lee to abandon Virginia, and lead to an early Union victory in the war. We will visit several key areas of the series of engagements around **Lynchburg** including **Sandusky**, where Hunter and his staff established their HQ and the old Quaker Church, scene of much fighting on June 17. We will then follow Early's pursuit of Hunter's retreating army which culminated in the **Battle of Hanging Rock in Roanoke**, where McCausland and his cavalry captured ten pieces of Union artillery and Hunter turned west to retreat into the mountains of West Virginia, opening the Shenandoah Valley for Jubal Early to launch his famed raid on Washington, D.C.

On **Sunday**, we will be joined by the dean of Eastern Theater cavalry historians, **Eric Wittenberg**, author of numerous books and articles on cavalry operations including the definitive work on the **Trevillian Station Raid**. Eric will lead us as we focus on Sheridan's expedition that was intended to reach Gordonsville and join forces with Hunter. Eric will show us how and why Sheridan never made it to Gordonsville, regardless of Hunter's unanticipated change of plans. Instead, CSA General Wade Hampton intervened and stopped "Little Phil" cold in a two-day battle at **Trevillian Station** on June 11-12, 1864. Eric will unveil the battle in detail and lead us in the exploration of this seldom visited battlefield in the heart of Virginia to wrap up our exciting four-day adventure.

- An Excursion to Places Rarely Visited but teeming with Important History
 - What a Faculty!
 - Don't miss this one!

ABOUT OUR TOUR LEADERS

Scott C. Patchan is widely regarded as the leading authority and tour guide of the 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign. He is the author of *Shenandoah Summer: The 1864 Valley Campaign*; *Second Manassas: Longstreet's Attack and the Struggle for Chinn Ridge*; *The Battle of Piedmont and Hunter's Campaign for Staunton*; *The Forgotten Fury: The Battle of Piedmont*; and most recently, *The Last Battle of Winchester: Phil Sheridan, Jubal Early, and the Shenandoah Valley Campaign, August 7 - September 19, 1864*.

Gary Ecelbarger is a leading authority of the Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley. He has written or co-written eight books, including *We Are In For It!: The First Battle of Kernstown*; *Three Days in the Shenandoah: Stonewall Jackson at Front Royal & Winchester*; & *The Day Dixie Died*, along with biographies of Civil War generals "Black Jack" Logan & Frederick W. Lander.

Eric J. Wittenberg is the author of 18 books on the Civil War, and his specialty is Federal cavalry operations. He is considered the leading authority on the Battle of Trevilian Station, and his book on that subject is *Glory Enough for All: Sheridan's Second Raid and the Battle of Trevilian Station*.

Wednesday, August 1

7:30 PM – 8:30 PM Program Overview – Hotel in Staunton. VA soon TBA

Thursday, August 2

8:00 AM Depart from Staunton Hotel; Arrive Back at about 5:00 PM

Friday, August 3

8:00 AM Depart from Staunton Hotel; Arrive Back at about 5:00 PM

Saturday, August 4

8:00 AM Depart from Staunton Hotel; Arrive Back at about 5:00 PM

Sunday, August 5

8:30 AM Depart from Staunton Hotel; Arrive Back at about **3:00 PM**

Lodging: We will be based at a hotel in Staunton, Virginia – details of which will soon be announced.

REGISTRATION FEE: \$595.00 - If You Must Cancel we will refund 100% of your fees paid. Registration includes:

- the services of three expert historians chosen for their knowledge and experience
- transportation to sites as indicated * Thursday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday lunches
- refreshments and snacks during the tour * map package

- To Enroll **Call 800-298-1861**, or **Mail or Fax in the form below:**

Name _____ Name _____

Address _____

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- Enclosed is Payment in amount of \$ _____ Check Payable to CWEA, or
 Charge my MasterCard, VISA, Discover or AMEX

Card # _____ Ex Date _____

Security# (3 digit # on back of VISA, MC or DISC or 4 digit # on front of AMEX) _____

Signature _____