

Beyond the Village

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Appomattox Court House National
Historical Park

Driving Tour



The story of Appomattox Court House is broader than Robert E. Lee's surrender to Ulysses S. Grant in a sleepy village. Follow this route to explore the events surrounding April 9, 1865, and its complex legacy.

The tour begins in the visitor parking area and takes at least an hour to complete. It travels along busy state Highway 24. Use caution when driving, especially when turning into and out of pull offs. Download the Appomattox Battle App[®] from the App Store or the Play Store to enhance your experience with text, audio clips, and videos. To begin, turn left out of the parking lot and drive 3.9 miles to a right side pull off marked, "New Hope Church Trenches."

1. The Rear Guard

The Confederate Army of Northern Virginia's rearguard held this position. Here Confederate forces dug a small trench to protect against the Union Army of the Potomac, who nipped at

Lee's heels on the campaign's last day.

Return west on Highway 24, 2.1 miles toward Appomattox Court House for Tour Stop 2.

2. Lee's Headquarters

General Lee made his final headquarters here. On the evening of April 8, 1865, Lee held his final council of war here and decided to make one last attempt to break out before surrendering. He issued General Order No. 9 from this location to bid farewell to his men.

Walk 500 feet down a trail to a site marker.

Turn left out of the parking area, and drive approximately 0.8 miles to cross the Appomattox River Bridge, then turn into the pull off on the right side of the road.

3. The Appomattox River

Nearby flow the headwaters of the Appomattox River, the small river namesake of Appomattox County, formed in 1845.

Take the Sweeney Trail from this parking area to reach several tour stops.

C. The Artillery Field

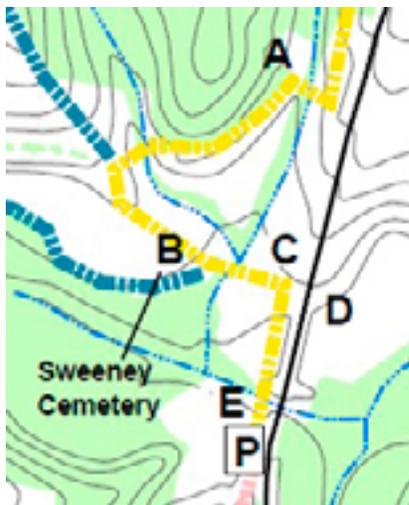
Here on April 11, 1865, the Army of Northern Virginia's artillery parked and surrendered along the Richmond-Lynchburg Stage Road.

D. Apple Tree Site

Lee rested here under an apple tree to await General Grant's response to his request for a meeting. Lt. Colonel Orville Babcock and 1st Lt. Dunn of Grant's staff delivered Grant's agreement. After the surrender, myth stated that Lee surrendered under the apple tree.

E. Richmond-Lynchburg Stage Road

In the 19th Century this dirt road was a major thoroughfare connecting key Virginia cities. The village of Appomattox Court House grew up along the Richmond-Lynchburg Stage Road, a portion of which still runs through the park today.



A. Sweeney Cabin

Charles and Martha Sweeney, part of the local musical Sweeney family, owned this cabin. The family hosted Confederate General Fitzhugh Lee for breakfast on the morning of April 9.

B. Joel Sweeney and the Banjo

In the 1820s, unknown enslaved African American musicians taught young Joel Sweeney to play an African instrument called the "banjar." Sweeney toured America and Europe, popularizing the instrument before his death in 1860.

Walk along the Sweeney Trail to visit his grave and the Sweeney Family Cemetery.

Turn right out of the parking lot and continue one mile to the Confederate Cemetery pull off.

4. The Confederate Cemetery & Lord's Battery

In this peaceful place, one Federal and eighteen Confederate soldiers are buried, casualties of the battles fought around Appomattox Court House. Seven of the men buried here remain unknown. The Ladies Memorial Association of Appomattox, one of many such organizations formed across the south to bury and memorialize Confederate dead, created the cemetery in 1866.

West of the Confederate Cemetery is a three inch ordnance rifled cannon which marks Lieutenant James Lord's two gun Union artillery battery. Confederate cavalry captured this battery on the morning of April 9, 1865.

Turn right out of the parking area and pull into the North Carolina Monument parking area immediately on the left.

5. North Carolina Monument & Raine Family Cemetery

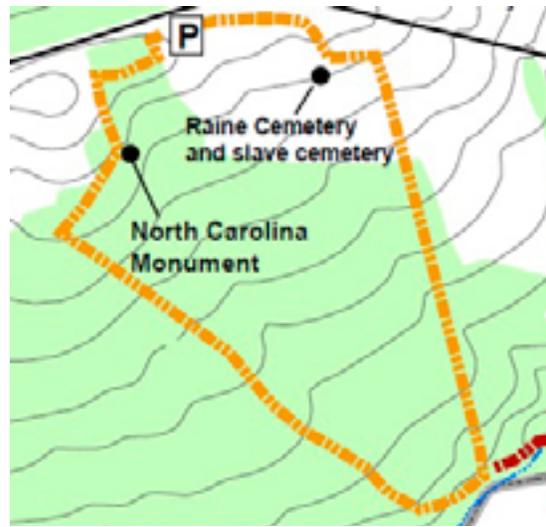
The North Carolina Monument is the only monument dedicated to a state or unit in the park. Follow the trail signs to the right to reach the monument and interpretive signs about the marker and the battles fought around Appomattox Court House.

Follow the trail to the left of the parking area (or take the full 1.4 mile loop) to reach the Raine family cemetery. The Raines constructed a tavern and guesthouse in the village of Appomattox Court House. Wilmer McLean later purchased the guesthouse and converted it into his home. In the parlor of

McLean's home, Grant set terms and accepted Lee's surrender.

Buried behind the monument more than sixty local enslaved people rest in unmarked graves. At the outbreak of the Civil War, over 4,600 enslaved people lived in Appomattox County. The April 9 surrender made emancipation a reality in Appomattox, but that freedom proved incomplete in the decades following.

Turn left out of the parking area and continue 0.8 miles to the Grant's Headquarters pull off on the left.



This obelisk stands as tribute to members of the Raine family and marks the family cemetery, which contains nine graves.

6. Grant's Headquarters & The Final Battle

In the early morning hours of April 9, 1865, the battle of Appomattox Court House stormed through these fields, and many soldiers perished just hours before Lee's surrender. Cloaked in the morning's dense fog, the Confederate Second Corps attempted to fight its way out of Appomattox Court House. After initial success, Federal infantry blocked the road and trapped Lee.

During the fighting in this area, a shell struck the only civilian casualty, an enslaved woman named Hannah Reynolds. A Federal surgeon

amputated her wounded arm, but she died of her wounds three days later, a free woman.

Following Lee's surrender, Grant established his headquarters here.

To reach the final tour stop, turn left out of the parking area and drive to the historic town of Appomattox. At the first traffic light, turn left, then make an immediate right at the next traffic light. Tour Stop 7 is at the town visitor center.

7. Battle of Appomattox Station

Between 4 and 5 p.m. on April 8, 1865, General George A. Custer's Union cavalry division captured Lee's supply trains located at the railroad station. The Federal cavalry then attacked the Confederate reserve artillery under the command of General

Reuben Lindsay Walker. After making several futile charges, the Federal cavalry broke the Confederate defenses, capturing 25 cannon and 1,000 prisoners. Some horsemen pushed into Appomattox Court House, where Confederate infantry repulsed their advance.

The historical village is open daily from 9 am to 5 pm and closed January 1, Thanksgiving Day, and December 25. The tour stops along Highway 24 are open during daylight hours only. Please use extreme caution when visiting these sites. Be mindful that these stops are in close proximity to the busy highway and visibility is limited due to hills and curves.

In case of emergency, call 911.

Learn more about the park at www.nps.gov/apco, or call 434-352-8987.