



Cultural Landscape Report for Five Forks Battlefield

Petersburg National Battlefield

Site History, Existing Conditions, and Analysis & Evaluation

Five Forks Battlefield

Petersburg National Battlefield

Cultural Landscape Report

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About the front cover: Five Forks intersection, view looking east. (Source: Liz Sargent HLA, February 2023)

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Foreword

Petersburg National Battlefield welcomes the completion of this first volume of the Cultural Landscape Report for Five Forks Battlefield and thanks the entire project team for both their efforts and for an excellent final product. At Five Forks, Petersburg National Battlefield literally and figuratively stands at a crossroads. Here, with this report in hand, we might stand with our friends and partners at an intersection of memory and anticipation. With this document one can read and understand how the present circumstances have come to pass. We anticipate our careful responses to pressures for change that press in on all sides. This report, which is to be followed by a subsequent volume focused on landscape treatment, will serve as an important resource guiding the National Park Service's future participation in county and regional planning efforts.

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Introduction



FIGURE 1. The Battle of Five Forks as depicted by Paul Dominique Philippoteaux (1846–1923). The painting is an illustration of a flag-waving Gen. Philip H. Sheridan, confronting a wall of Confederate defenders near the crossroads of Five Forks. (Source: Virginia Historical Society)

Management Summary

The Five Forks Battlefield, located 17 miles southwest of the City of Petersburg in Dinwiddie County, Virginia, is nationally significant as the location of one of the last battles of the Civil War on April 1, 1865 (Figure 1). A unit of the Petersburg National Battlefield since 1990, Five Forks encompasses just over 1,115 acres of land associated with the battle, with almost 450 acres of adjacent battlefield land protected under a conservation easement. The gently rolling landscape is a patchwork of farm fields and swaths of pine and deciduous woodlands, punctuated by occasional rock outcrops. The park is centered on the five-way country crossroads of Courthouse Road (Route 627), White Oak Road (Route 613), and Wheelers Pond Road (Route 645). The crossroads was in the core area of fighting and gave the Battle of Five Forks its name. The rural

character of the landscape surrounding this country crossroads gives the impression that little has changed at Five Forks since 1865.¹

The Five Forks Battlefield cultural landscape is in what once was a sparsely settled region of the Virginia Piedmont and Coastal Plain. Rich soil, vast timber, and abundant water resources brought most of the Euro-Americans to what would become Dinwiddie County. By the late seventeenth century, the fresh soil of Dinwiddie County brought planters from the Tidewater area who sought to relocate their agricultural endeavors. Euro-Americans of Dinwiddie County followed traditional settlement patterns of the American Indians, using major rivers and their tributaries as anchors for their settlements. Farms were composed of a pattern of woodlots, pastures, and crop fields divided by steep wooded drainageways, hedgerows, or fences. Farmsteads were isolated from each other by natural systems such as streams, woods, and topography, but connected by roads and farm lanes. The first settlers were mostly English and their African American slaves. In the first half of the eighteenth century, the region became even more desirable to planters when Petersburg and nearby Richmond were established as inspection stations for tobacco before it could be exported. During the late eighteenth century and first half of the nineteenth century, a mixture of tobacco plantations surrounded the “Five Forks” junction of three roadways.²

The Five Forks intersection is described in many accounts of the history of the area, as it was a primary landmark and point of orientation. White Oak Road played a significant role before and during the battle as a principal axis of the Confederate defensive line that extended westward from Petersburg. Other significant transportation routes influenced strategic and tactical military decisions, as did topography, and forest and field vegetation. The Southside Railroad formed an important connection between more rural areas and the city of Petersburg, running on an east-west alignment between Hatcher’s Run and the Appomattox River. It represented the last supply link that had not been captured by Union forces. Fords or Church Road provided direct access to the Southside Railroad. Most of the battle of April 1, 1865, was fought on the fields of Burnt Quarter, a property owned by the Gilliam family. Union Gen. Wesley Merritt used the big house as his headquarters and as a military hospital. Confederates occupied the peach orchard to the rear of the house during the battle, and Federals were in the fields in front, with the dwelling in the line of fire as is indicated by bullet holes and eyewitness accounts.³

According to the National Register nomination form for Five Forks Battlefield, the scene in 1865 was described by a Confederate soldier as typically Southern, with orchards and rolling meadows. Other scattered farmsteads stood amid agricultural fields and woodlots, including those of the Sydnor (Sidney), Boisseau, and Bass (Barnes) families.⁴ The larger landscape as recorded on maps dating from 1866 and 1867 was composed of open fields and pine forest with dense understory.

Named for the distinctive intersection of three road corridors, the Battle of Five Forks came ten months after the initial assault on Petersburg in June 1864, when Union forces led by Maj. Gen. Phillip Sheridan defeated a Confederate force from Gen. Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia commanded by Maj. Gen. George Pickett. The Battle of Five Forks ushered in the final moments of the months-long siege of Petersburg. The battle marked the largest single engagement in the last offensive (March 29–April 2, 1865) of the Petersburg Campaign. It intruded upon the rural landscape of Five Forks for only one day but resulted in a significant loss of lives and the ultimate retreat of the Confederate forces. The Union cavalry under the command of Sheridan reached the Southside Railroad unopposed on April 2, 1865. With his last supply line cut, Lee had no hope of maintaining his position around Petersburg and Richmond and started evacuating both cities. This action began the retreat that would end with Lee’s surrender of his army at Appomattox Court House just a week later, on April 9, 1865. Several other engagements were fought in Dinwiddie County, including the Battle of Dinwiddie Court House, the Battle of Sutherland’s Station, and the Battle of White Oak Road.

The character of the landscape of Five Forks Battlefield experienced remarkably little change between the end of the Civil War and the present day. After the war, residents remaining in the rural landscape of Five Forks within Dinwiddie County sought to survive by rebuilding and maintaining their rural agricultural economy,

despite social changes after the war. The Five Forks intersection and surrounding landscape faded back into a quiet rural agricultural setting. There is scant information about the cultural landscape of Five Forks Battlefield between 1865 and the beginning of National Park Service stewardship in 1991. Although agricultural land use patterns changed over time, and successional forest covers the once open agricultural fields and pastures, Five Forks has retained its overall historical rural character. (Figure 2 and Figure 3).



FIGURE 2. The rural character survives in and around the Five Forks intersection and the surrounding landscape. (Source: All photographs by the authors, February 2023, unless otherwise noted)



FIGURE 3. Vegetation patterns including stands of pine trees are visible along the loop roadway leading north of White Oak Road to a trailhead and comfort station.

Battlefield Preservation Management

Following the conclusion of the Civil War in 1865, battlefield preservationists struggled to find a balance between saving the battle landscapes and the growth in and around the former fighting fields. Farmers dismantled earthworks and forts, plowed and planted the battlefields, and rebuilt homes and farm buildings on sites of intense combat and human loss. By 1900, less than 10 percent of these lands were protected by Congress as national military parks. Most of the battlefields reverted to agricultural uses and the threat of landscape change was considered low.⁵

The first national battlefield parks designated by Congress were Antietam (1890), Chickamauga and Chattanooga (1890), Shiloh (1894), and Gettysburg (1895). Petersburg National Battlefield Association was organized in 1898 with Stith Bolling, a Confederate veteran, as its president. The goal of this group was to establish a park that would commemorate the Petersburg Campaign. Although many early Congressional bills failed, in 1925 Congress appointed a Petersburg National Battlefield Commission of the War Department to study the feasibility of preserving and marking the battlefields at Petersburg for historical and professional military study. In 1926, Congress recognized the importance of preserving elements of Petersburg and established the Petersburg National Military Park commission. In 1933, when all national military parks were transferred from the Department of War to the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Petersburg National Military Park's boundary encompassed 346 acres. The US Army transferred Poplar Grove National Cemetery to the National Park Service in 1933. Since then, the park has grown as a result of a number of congressional and presidential actions. In 1949, park boundaries were expanded by 206 acres in a transfer from the Department of the Army authorized by Congress. By 1950, the park encompassed approximately

1,230 acres. In 1962, Congress enacted legislation to change the name of the park from “national military park” to “national battlefield” and authorized the acquisition of land at the site of the Battle of Five Forks. ⁶

By the late 1980s, the proposed boundaries of the Five Forks Unit changed considerably as progress on acquiring lands began moving forward. In 1989 a private foundation, the Conservation Fund, purchased 930 acres of the battlefield from the Gilliam family, with financial support from the Carnegie-Mellon Foundation. In 1990 these lands were donated to the National Park Service. A similar transaction by the Conservation Fund purchased 185 acres that included the former “Chimneys” site from the Bear Island Timberlands Company. This land was donated to the National Park Service in 1991, bringing the total acreage to 1,115 acres, which represented much of the battlefield around the Five Forks intersection. Land bordering the unit’s southwestern boundary, which included the “Burnt Quarter,” remained in possession of the Gilliam family, but was protected in an easement of 438 acres monitored by the Izaak Walton League of America. None of the land bordering the unit’s southeastern boundary adjacent to Route 628 was acquired. ⁷

National Park Service Management (1990–2023)

The donation of Five Forks Battlefield by the Conservation Fund to the National Park Service necessitated the development of an interim plan for management and development of the Five Forks Unit that would inform a future park-wide General Management Plan. In 1990 a Development Concept Plan identified and prioritized management issues and research needs. One of the first proposals was to convert the circa 1950 store, which by this time was used as a hunt club, into a temporary visitor contact station. The plan reported that there were three historic sites or ruins associated directly with the Battle of Five Forks, and approximately fifteen structures in the unit, including one occupied house and other vacant structures in various states of disrepair. Land use was described as open fields and woodlands, with uses similar to those of 1865, though the configuration had changed. ⁸

National Park Service management of the Five Forks Battlefield continued with the introduction of various improvements, interpretive installations, and new construction over the next decade. These efforts included:

- 1998: Proposal to add nine wayside exhibits at Five Forks, two bus/automobile pull-offs, and two additional pull-offs with concrete culverts to be installed by the Dinwiddie County
- 2001: Removal of the abandoned tenant house on the southside of the Five Forks intersection, as well as the privy, shed, and chicken house
- 2003: Completion of improvements to make the visitor contact station more functional and attractive
- 2008: Improvement of an existing farm road east of the Five Forks intersection, on the north side of White Oak Road, to accommodate demolition of the Martin House and improvement of the road to the entrance of a trail system for hikers and equestrians
- 2009: Construction of a new visitor contact station south of Courthouse Road and associated entrance road, parking, site amenities, and a Butler-style metal maintenance building
- 2010: Demolition of the former store/temporary contact station and installation of new and relocated interpretive signs
- 2011: Removal of trees damaged by a tornado
- 2012: Removal of dilapidated modern frame crib barn near the intersection between Wheelers Pond Road and White Oak Road, also damaged in a tornado

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- 2014: Construction of a six-car and two-bus parking lot southwest of intersection between White Oak Road and Wheelers Pond Road
- 2018: Installation of a wayside memorial to Confederate Capt. James Breckinridge at the Five Forks Visitor Contact Station
- 2019: Closure of the visitor contact station at Five Forks Battlefield due to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 in early 2020. The contact station has never re-opened.

Additional management and planning issues were articulated in the updated *Dinwiddie County Comprehensive Plan*, issued in 2014. The plan referred to a “Tri-Cities 2023 Long Range Transportation Plan,” which recommended the reclassification of SR 613 (White Oak Road) into a “Minor Collector” to facilitate roadway improvements within a 60-foot-wide right of way. Additionally, the reclassification of SR 627 (Courthouse Rd) into a “Minor Arterial” will facilitate 100-foot-wide right of way improvements. Conversion of SR 627 (Courthouse Road) to a four-lane highway is in the beginning stages. The National Park Service has raised concerns that the roadway development threatens the integrity of the road junction at Five Forks.⁹

Since the release of the updated comprehensive plan in 2014, park staff have actively worked with Dinwiddie County during the process of the development of the *Draft Dinwiddie County Comprehensive Plan-2043*, released for public consumption in July 2023. Potential change in strategic roadways within Five Forks Battlefield remains an issue of great concern for the management of the battlefield. Also in 2023, management issues associated with a lack of dedicated maintenance staff for Five Forks Battlefield is a concern. The closure of the visitor contact station does not impact maintenance operations for Five Forks Battlefield. The closure is now at a point where interpretive staff cannot open every visitor center/contact station in the park. Maintenance currently focuses on mowing as necessary at the Five Forks intersection and around the visitor contact station. Lack of maintenance staff impacts the maintenance and management of the extensive trail system within the battlefield, but the trails remain open to the public. Currently there are no seasonal staff, and it is hard to retain them due to a lack of park housing or affordable temporary housing.

A new superintendent for Petersburg National Battlefield was announced in July 2023 and her tour of duty began in mid-August 2023, but additional park positions critical to the preservation and management of Five Forks Battlefield remain open.

In response to the ongoing planning issues associated with proposed road alterations that could diminish the integrity of the road junction and surrounding cultural landscape, and in support of park goals and management objectives for all the natural and cultural resources at Five Forks Battlefield, the National Park Service engaged a consultant team of preservation professionals to prepare this Cultural Landscape Report for the battlefield. The consultant team engaged to prepare the document was led by Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates (WJE) of Northbrook, Illinois, and included Liz Sargent HLA, of Charlottesville, Virginia, and Historical Research Associates (HRA), of Seattle, Washington.

In preparing the Cultural Landscape Report, the team conducted an in-depth review of available management guidance and documentary sources related to the history and administration of the property, its place within the context of the battlefields of Virginia in 1865, and changes to the physical landscape of the battlefield after the Civil War and extending to its current condition. The team also documented existing conditions and evaluated the property’s National Register and National Historic Landmark significance, while also assessing its integrity. In addition, the team worked closely with park personnel to determine goals for an overarching approach to landscape treatment, supporting preservation of the overall landscape character and character-defining features of the battlefield and the established goals for the Five Forks Battlefield cultural landscape.

Scope of Work and Methodology

Scope of Work

Cultural landscape reports serve as the principal treatment documents and primary tools for long-term management of cultural landscapes. Treatment and management decisions related to the physical features, biotic systems, and use of the cultural landscape are guided by the comprehensive documentation, analysis, evaluation, and establishment of preservation goals presented in the documents.

The Cultural Landscape Report for the Five Forks Battlefield is intended to provide park management with an assessment of the character-defining features of the cultural landscape and recommendations for treatment designed to ensure the preservation of significant resources. At the same time, the Cultural Landscape Report is intended to guide appropriate development of new infrastructure to accommodate and improve the visitor experience, whether visitors are passing through the battlefield in vehicles, walking the trails, or parking at the tour stops. The document will also provide recommendations associated with expanded interpretation relating the significance of the battle at Five Forks and portraying the stories and descriptions of the rural landscape surrounding the historic crossroads, where remarkably little has changed through the more than 150 years since the 1865 battle.

The statement of work provided to the project team by the National Park Service identifies the following tasks to be completed in support of the Cultural Landscape Report:

- Conduct primary and secondary research, obtaining narrative accounts, historical mapping, surveys, aerial photographs, and historical imagery documenting the history of the Five Forks Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report project area from National Park Service files and other repositories to include, but not limited to, the National Archives and the Library of Congress, and other local and regional historical organizations.
- Prepare an original, chronological narrative landscape history, drawing upon research findings presented in the detailed chronology and drawing upon archival documents and secondary sources gathered during the course of research.
- Identify all landscape features within the boundaries of Five Forks Battlefield, organized by landscape characteristic.
- Prepare an original narrative description of existing landscape conditions illustrated with imagery derived from on-site field investigation and revise the existing conditions site plan to accurately reflect landscape conditions encountered and documented during field investigations.
- Prepare an original narrative statement of landscape significance derived from both literature review and project research and prepare a narrative evaluation of landscape integrity of location, design, setting, workmanship, feeling and association as defined by the National Register of Historic Places program.
- Consult with park staff, park partners, and local government representatives to identify the present-day issues bearing on long-term preservation of general landscape character and specific character-defining features and assess the potential threats to the historic landscape from anticipated modernization and upgrades to public roads and rights-of-way traversing the historic battlefield landscape.

Methodology

The Cultural Landscape Report for Five Forks Battlefield was prepared in accordance with guidance offered in the most recent versions of various federal standards documents. The methodology used to prepare each component of the document is described below.

Background Research and Data Collection

Prior to the virtual project kick-off meeting held on November 3, 2022, Cultural Landscape Report project team members began to collect documents and other materials pertaining to the project and the site, including archival documentation available online through the Library of Congress and reports and studies prepared previously for Five Forks Battlefield. The team also collected materials available electronically from the National Park Service Integrated Resource Management applications (IRMA) portal and the National Park Service History Electronic Library and Archive, which included *Petersburg National Battlefield Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement* (2004) and the *Cultural Landscape Assessment for Five Forks Battlefield* (2005). The historian for the project traveled to the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, to conduct archival research. Park personnel provided the team with previous planning documents, historic photographs and maps, National Register documentation, archeological sites and surveys, construction drawings including planting plans for the 2009 visitor contact station and maintenance facility, and other available historical and current information pertinent to the project.

Kick-Off Meeting

On Thursday, November 3, 2022, National Park Service personnel from Interior Region 1, North Atlantic-Appalachian, Region 1–Olmsted Center, Petersburg National Battlefield, and project team members conducted a virtual meeting to initiate work on the Cultural Landscape Report for Five Forks Battlefield. Participating from the region were Debbie Coles, Contracting Officer, and Eliot Foulds, Technical Representative and Landscape Preservation Planning and Program Manager. Participating from the Petersburg National Battlefield were Emmanuel Dabney, Project Contracting Officer's Representative and Project Manager, Museum Curator, and Acting Chief of Cultural Resources, and Alexis Morris, Archeologist, Section 106 Coordinator, and Temporary Chief of Resource Management. Project team members participating in the kick-off meeting from WJE included Una Gilmartin, Historical Engineer, Contract Manager; Tim Penich, Historical Architect, Project Manager; Deborah Slaton, Historian/Conservator; and Nichole Hoepfner, Project Controls. Team members from Liz Sargent HLA included Liz Sargent, Historical Landscape Architect; Jane Jacobs, Historical Landscape Architect; Lucy Lawliss, Historical Landscape Architect; and Christina Osborn, Landscape Graphics Specialist. Participating for Historical Research Associates, Inc., was Matt Sneddon, Historian.

During the meeting Eliot Foulds provided the group with a summary of the scope of work for Phase 1 and goals for the project as articulated by the park in identifying the need for the Cultural Landscape Report. He emphasized that the overall need for the document is to set up what comes next for the National Park Service at Five Forks Battlefield and includes identifying existing and future partners, funding sources, and long-range planning improvements and initiatives associated with the draft *Dinwiddie County Comprehensive Plan – 2043*.

Field Investigations

Team members for the project traveled to Petersburg, Virginia, on Monday February 20, 2023, to conduct site investigations, documentation, and research. In the afternoon following arrival, the team conducted a driving survey of the extent of the battlefield to obtain a sense of the topography, vegetation, roads, and other features within the battlefield boundaries. On Tuesday, February 21, team members met on site with National Park Service personnel for the site kick-off meeting. During the meeting, Emmanuel Dabney and Alexis Morris provided the team with a summary of the goals for the project as articulated by the park in identifying the

need for the Cultural Landscape Report (Figure 4). Based on the discussions, the following goals and issues were considered important or essential to consider:

- Education for new interpretive staff through the history and existing conditions/analysis sections of the document.
- Treatment recommendations and guidelines to set the stage for future treatment plans that the park can use to move forward in decision-making for the preservation and rehabilitation of the Five Forks Battlefield.
- Strategies and recommendations for coordination with Dinwiddie County and the current land planning decisions presented in the draft *Dinwiddie County Comprehensive Plan – 2043*.
- Guidance for decision-making associated with landscape management, battlefield preservation, rehabilitation of the landscape to its 1865 condition, field and forest patterns, current agricultural leasing.
- Guidance for trail design, management, and maintenance.
- Development of strategies and recommendations based on current staff levels. There are currently three full-time maintenance employees for the entire 2,659-acre park and no dedicated maintenance staff for Five Forks Battlefield.
- Strategies and recommendations for the visitor contact station and vicinity currently closed to the public.
- Strategies for obtaining data to confirm the number of visitors to Five Forks Battlefield, currently unavailable due to closure of the visitor contact station.
- Strategies for continued coordination with Dinwiddie County, focusing on the goals and management objectives of the park, especially in relation to current planning for the roadways that comprise the heart of Five Forks Battlefield.



FIGURE 4. Project team members met with park staff to discuss management issues and park goals and objectives.

After the kick-off meeting, team members present spent the afternoon on the site with Emmanuel Dabney at various locations in the battlefield landscape, conducting site orientation and initial field investigations.

Over the course of four days, team members photographed cultural and natural resources, refined the preliminary base maps, and recorded location, materials, dimensional, and condition information related to natural and cultural landscape features. The team visited the entire landscape within the study boundary and developed documentation in the form of photographs, field notes, and annotated maps. Park staff provided guidance regarding the history of features and issues to consider for future treatment (Figure 5 and Figure 6).



FIGURE 5. Team members led by Emmanuel Dabney investigate the site of the old barn and the condition of the structure.



FIGURE 6. Park personnel conducted a tour of the visitor contact station and site for the team investigations.

Landscape Documentation and Site Physical History

The project team drafted the site physical history portion of the Cultural Landscape Report following review of all materials collected during the various research efforts. Important dates associated with the physical development of the site were organized into a historical chronology. The team used the chronology to identify a series of discrete historic periods associated with the site's evolution. The team also described each period using a combination of historical narrative, historic maps and photographs, and other illustrations.

Existing Conditions Documentation

The project team documented the existing conditions of the Five Forks Battlefield through compilation of base mapping, data collected during field investigations, and review of park planning documents, park files, and other available cultural and natural resource documents. The documentation comprises the Existing Conditions chapter of the document and includes cross-referenced narrative, graphic, and photographic information organized in accordance with the framework established in the National Park Service publication, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques*, and the statement of work provided to the team by the National Park Service (Figure 7 and Figure 8).



FIGURE 7. Volume of traffic and types of vehicles were observed at the confluence of the roads at the Five Forks junction.



FIGURE 8. Existing conditions associated with accessibility, parking, and interpretation were observed and recorded at the tour stops.

Evaluation of Significance

The Cultural Landscape Report includes an evaluation of the significance of the battlefield based on the National Register of Historic Places criteria. The statement of significance was derived from previous documentation and significance evaluations, and the analysis and research undertaken on behalf of the Cultural Landscape Report. The evaluation draws from the National Register nomination for Five Forks Battlefield (accepted by the Keeper in 1975), the National Historic Landmark Designation for Five Forks Battlefield (1960), and the Multiple Property Documentation Form “The Civil War in Virginia, 1861–1865: Historic and Archeological Resources” (accepted by the Keeper in 2000). Five Forks Battlefield was described in the Multiple Property Documentation Form as part of the Appomattox Campaign. The period of significance for the Five Forks Battlefield is 1865.

Cultural Landscape Evaluation

To better understand the relationship between the existing Five Forks Battlefield landscape and the character of the landscape during the identified period of significance, the project team introduced landscape characteristics as the framework for comparing historic and existing conditions. The three primary goals of the comparative analysis were to:

- Understand which natural and cultural features survive from the period of significance.
- Establish the basis for an integrity assessment.

- Provide an understanding of the similarities and differences between historic and existing conditions that will contribute to the development of strategic treatment guidelines and recommendations and inform future treatment plans.

Through the development of the cultural landscape evaluation, all landscape features were assessed to the extent possible as either contributing, non-contributing, missing, or undetermined. Contributing features survive from the period of significance with integrity and are associated with a significant historic context; non-contributing features either originated after the period of significance, have lost integrity, or are not associated with significant historic context; missing features are those known or thought to have existed during the period of significance but which are no longer evident except possibly in the archeological record; and undetermined features are those for which a date of origin cannot be determined. For non-contributing features, the document comments on whether they are compatible with the historic landscape.

Assessment of Integrity

The Cultural Landscape Report assesses the overall integrity of the Five Forks Battlefield cultural landscape in accordance with the seven aspects of integrity—location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association—discussed in the National Register Bulletin, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. Integrity is assessed to determine whether the characteristics and features that defined it during the period of significance are present, retain their historic qualities and convey their historic associations. Historic landscapes must retain integrity to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This information comprises part of the analysis and evaluation section of the document.

Description of Study Area Boundaries

The Petersburg National Battlefield consists of 2,659 acres that lie in separate units in a semi-circle to the east, south, and west of the city of Petersburg. The Eastern Front, Western Front, Five Forks, Poplar Grove National Cemetery, and City Point units are linked together by a 33-mile-long tour route that allows visitors to explore the siege landscape and battlefields of the Petersburg Campaign. The rural Five Forks Battlefield is located approximately 17 miles southwest of Petersburg in Dinwiddie County. The agricultural fields and forest at the junction of roads leading to the Southside Railroad were the site of the battle that led to the final collapse of the Confederate defenses (Figure 9 and Figure 10).

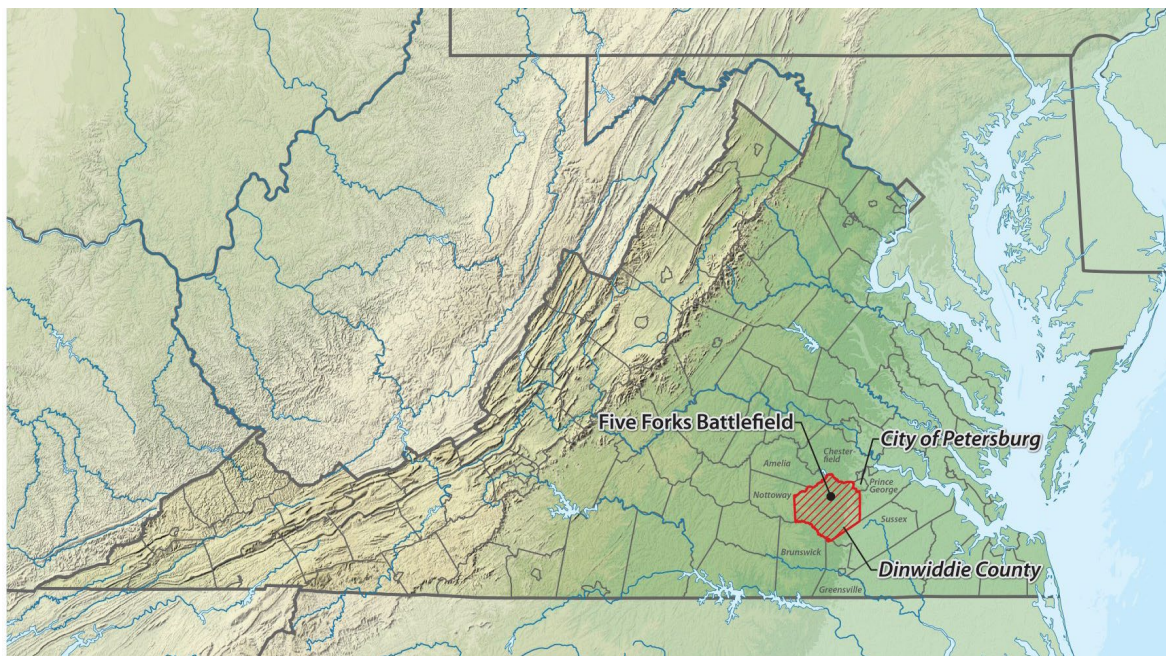


FIGURE 9. Five Forks Battlefield within the State of Virginia, Dinwiddie County, and the surrounding counties.

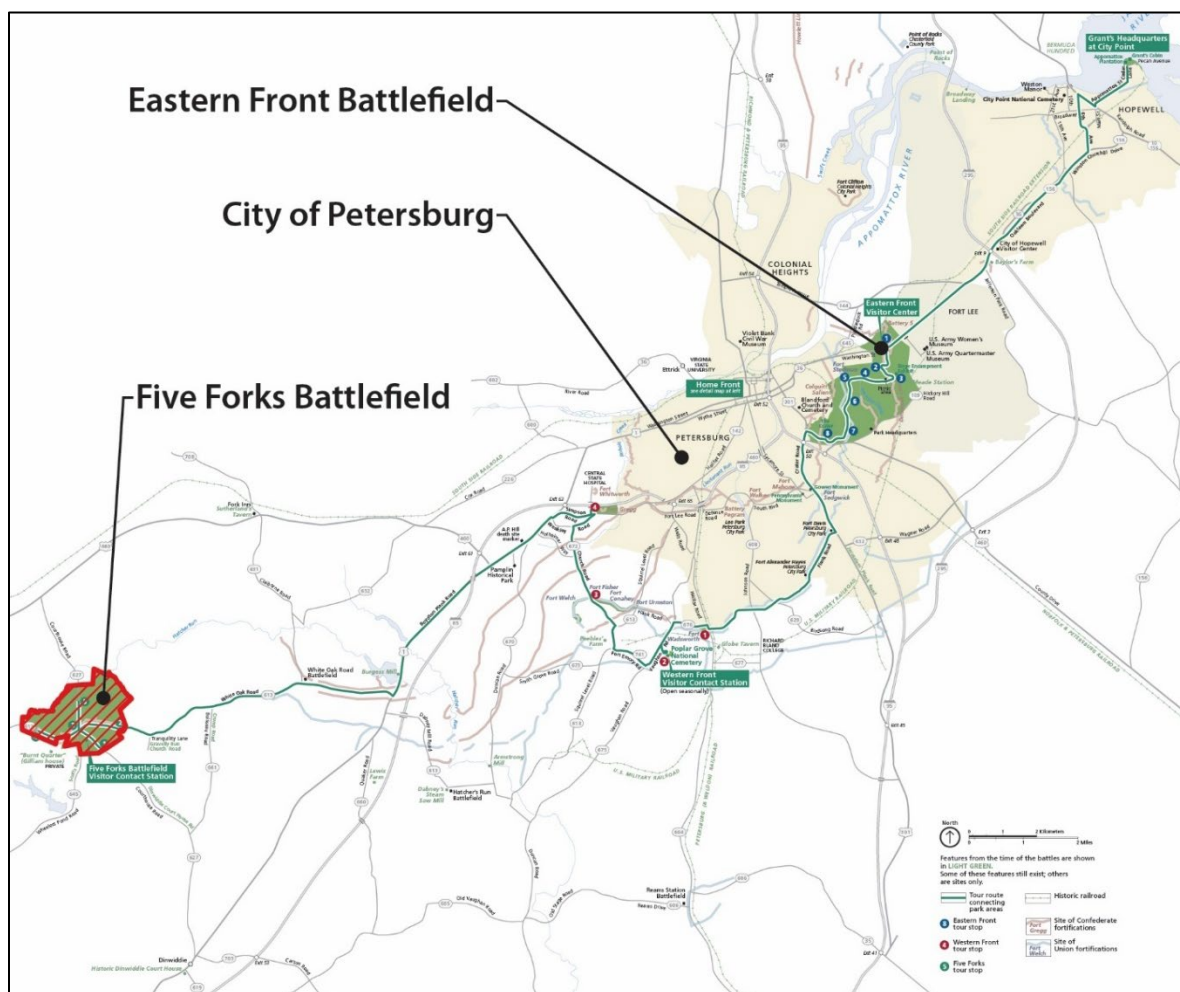


FIGURE 10. The boundary of Five Forks Battlefield within the context of Petersburg National Battlefield.

The Five Forks Unit boundary includes approximately 1,115 acres. The Cultural Landscape Report study area boundary corresponds to the park boundary of the Five Forks Battlefield Unit, including the park-owned land most closely associated with the fighting during the battle. Central to the Five Forks Unit is the intersection for which it is named, formed by the convergence of White Oak Road, Courthouse Road, and Wheelers Pond Road. The unit is roughly bounded to the northeast and northwest by Hatcher's Run, on the southwest by a 500-foot buffer along White Oak Road, and on the southeast by the park maintenance complex and intermittent streams. The Virginia Department of Transportation administers the full extent of the road corridors (plus or minus 60-foot-wide including right-of-way) that fall within the boundaries of the Five Forks Unit (Figure 11).

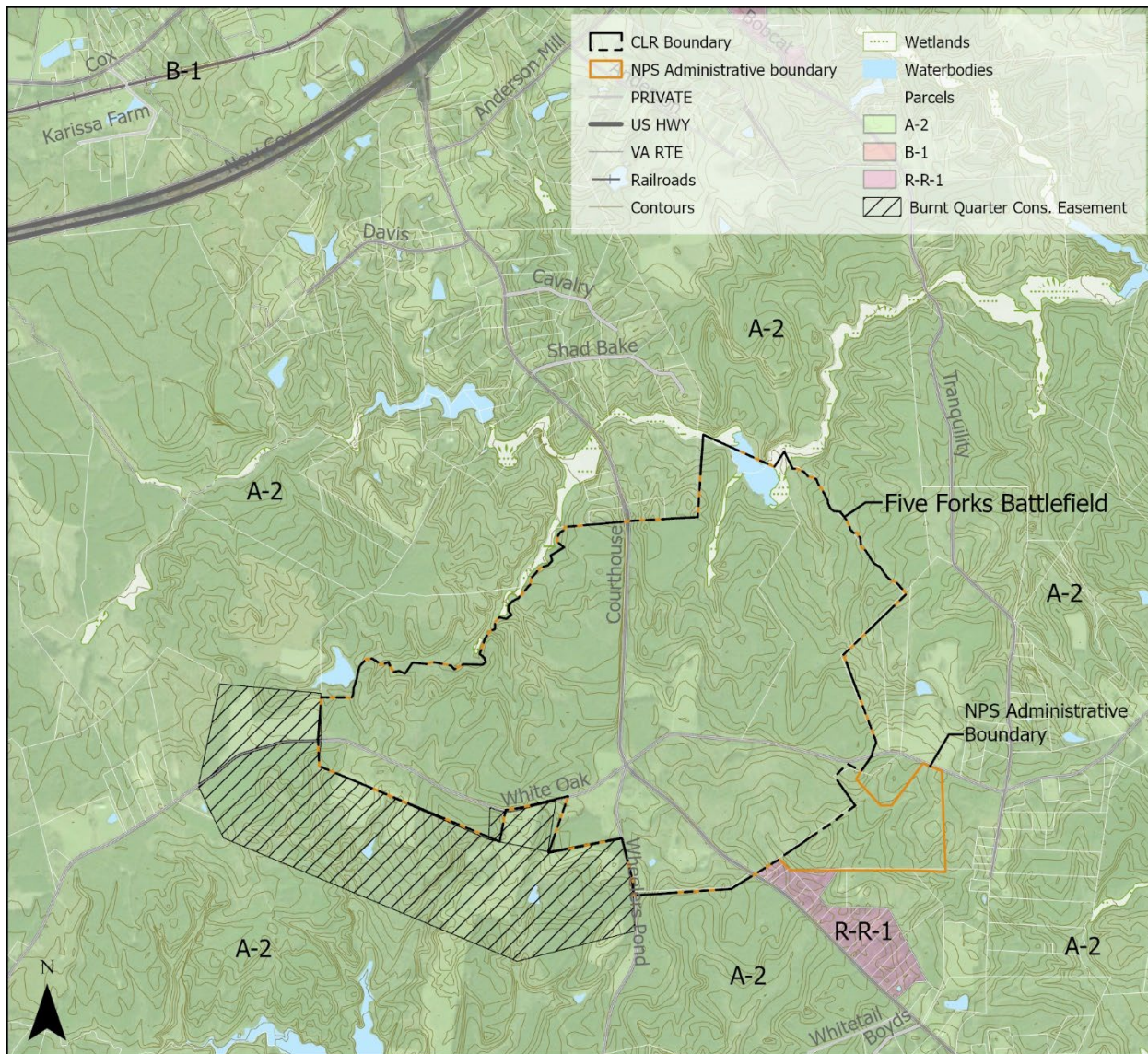


FIGURE 11. Boundary of Five Forks Battlefield Unit within the surrounding patterns of fields, woodland vegetation, streams, and drainageways, and within county zoning designations and the adjacent conservation easement.

Most of the land surrounding the site boundary is zoned A-2, Agricultural, General, with a small section of RR-1, Residential, Rural, adjacent on the south boundary along Courthouse Road. The description of the zoning designations is presented in the draft *Dinwiddie County Comprehensive Plan-2043* as follows.

Agricultural, General, District A-2: Covers the portion of the county into which urban-type development could logically expand as the need occurs. Generally, it surrounds residential sections. This district is established for specific purposes including: 1) Providing for the orderly expansion of urban development into territory surrounding incorporated areas within or adjacent to the county; 2) Confining such development to such locations as can feasibly be supplied urban-type facilities; and 3) Discouraging the random scattering of residential, commercial, and industrial uses into the area.

Residential, Rural, District RR-1: The purpose of the residential, rural, RR-1 district is to protect environmentally and ecologically sensitive areas and preserve the natural beauty of rural areas of the county where urban services (i.e., water and sewer mains, etc.) are not planned. At the same time, the district is intended to provide developmental flexibility by allowing for spacious residential development for those who choose to live in a rural environment. All subdivision proposals will be carefully reviewed prior to granting an RR-1 classification to ensure that the proposal is compatible with the surrounding environment and existing land uses. All county ordinances will be in full effect in this district. Should a central water/sewer system be constructed, it will meet the minimum standards and requirements promulgated by the Dinwiddie County Water Authority and appropriate state regulatory agencies.

Summary of Findings

The battle at Five Forks was a limited but crucial engagement across a rain-soaked landscape in the late afternoon of April 1, 1865. The Union Army's success in routing the hastily entrenched Confederate troops along White Oak Road, allowed Sheridan's calvary to drive the Confederates from the battlefield. The Union troops The Union troops were then able to ride a few miles north along Courthouse Road and to claim the Southside Railroad (Figure 12).

The integrity and significance of the Five Forks Battlefield's cultural landscape is critically tied to its location, which is established by the Five Forks intersection and the three roads that form the intersection, along with other key battlefield remnants including Hatcher's Run to the north—largely outside the park boundary—the Confederate breastworks and Angle that survive to the east of the intersection, the Confederate retreat road to the west, and the historic entry road to Burnt Quarter plantation—also outside the park boundary. Inherent to the significance of the location are the road corridors that were both essential to the battle and critical in bringing the battle to this landscape. The intersection and roads define the spatial organization of the battlefield landscape and provide access to the non-extant component landscapes—period farms and fields missing from the contemporary landscape—within the five land areas defined by the three roads. The terrain is unchanged in the battlefield. The vegetation, although not original to the battlefield landscape, contributes through its makeup of species and its general location, particularly in the ditches and slopes north of White Oak Road.

Using the broad periods of significance suggested by the nomination form in use at the time, the 1972 National Register of Historic Places documentation and the 1975 National Historic Landmark documentation identified Five Forks Battlefield as significant during the nineteenth century, and specifically noted the date of April 1, 1865. The findings of this Cultural Landscape Report concur with those of the Cultural Landscape Inventory, which identifies the period of significance for the Five Forks Battlefield as 1865. The period of significance focuses on the military operations of March to early April 1865 in the vicinity of Five Forks, ending with the conclusion of military activity in the area in the first week of April.



FIGURE 12. “A Final Stand” interpretive wayside located in the landscape along White Oak Road states: “The defeat at Five Forks forced Lee to abandon the Petersburg lines—and hence the capital at Richmond. Eight days later, caught in a vise of Union troops, Lee surrendered his army at Appomattox.”

The Five Forks Battlefield is a significant historic resource that merits careful protection and preservation. As steward of the property, the National Park Service intends to balance protection of the battlefield with the provision of public access and interpretation. The primary goal of treatment of the cultural landscape at Five Forks Battlefield is the long-term preservation and protection of resources contributing to its significance. The recommendations within the Cultural Landscape Report provide a foundation for future development of a strategic and comprehensive treatment plan that fulfills the park’s long-range goals and objectives for Five Forks Battlefield.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Conduct further archival research to identify as possible additional images or other documentation of the landscape prior to, during, and after the Battle of Five Forks.
2. Consider updating a vegetation management study to re-establish the nineteenth-century agricultural patterns within the battlefield and to thin/replant forested areas of the battlefield.
3. Consider a cooperative effort to develop a Cultural Landscape Report for Burnt Quarter, including research and identification of contributing buildings and structures along internal roads and paths that have been lost in the rest of the battlefield.

Endnotes

1. John Milner Associates, *Cultural Landscape Assessment for Five Forks Battlefield* (2005), 1-1.
2. Brook S. Blades, “*An Archeological Overview and Assessment of the Five Forks Unit, Petersburg National Battlefield, Virginia*, Management Summary (1999), 1–2.
3. The Workers of the Writer’s Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Virginia, *Dinwiddie County: “The Countrey of the Appomatica”* (Richmond, Virginia: Whittet and Shepperson, 1942), 227.
4. Frank S. Melvin, Virginia State Office, National Park Service Five Forks Battlefield National Register of Historic Places nomination, June 30, 1972.
5. National Park Service, *Petersburg National Battlefield Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* (March 2004), 3.
6. DRAFT “Petersburg National Battlefield General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement,” March 2004, 10–11.
7. John Milner Associates, *Cultural Landscape Assessment for Five Forks Battlefield*, (2005), 2.
8. “Development Concept Plan for Five Forks Battlefield, A Component of Petersburg National Battlefield,” (1990), [Files, Office of the Historian, Petersburg NB], 7–8.
9. National Park Service, *Cultural Landscape Inventory for Five Forks Battlefield* (2020), 58.

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Site History

The Battle of Five Forks has received extensive coverage in histories and previous cultural resource reports, which benefit from the testimony given during the Court of Inquiry convened in 1879 to weigh whether Union Gen. Gouverneur K. Warren was unjustly relieved of his command of the V Corps during the battle. This context draws on and synthesizes some of the previous work while focusing on aspects of the landscape that shaped and tell the story of the battle. The narrative that follows traces the development of the landscape at Five Forks in terms of five periods: the Five Forks landscape before 1861; the Civil War years, 1861–1865; the aftermath of war, Reconstruction, and local agriculture prior to park establishment, 1866 to 1926; early efforts to commemorate the battlefield, 1927 to 1991; and the era of National Park Service stewardship up to the current year, 1992 to 2023. The analysis takes up how the landscape’s natural and built features influenced the battle, what the landscape can reveal about the Civil War itself, and how changes over time have affected the battlefield’s historic integrity. Although a single battle late in the war at a seemingly remote rural crossroads, Five Forks is best understood as part of the larger Civil War campaign in Virginia—a history intertwined with that of Petersburg and Richmond, the Confederacy’s most important centers of government, industry, supply, and transportation in the state.

The Five Forks Landscape before 1861

Over many millennia, geological and climatological forces created a natural division—the Fall Line—between the harder subsurface geology of the Piedmont Plateau and the softer sediments of Atlantic Coastal Plain (Figure 13). West of the Fall Line, after the collision of continental plates created the Appalachian Mountains, the Piedmont Plateau developed as an expanse of rolling hills and plains of loamy and clay soils underlaid by a geology of igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic rocks.¹⁰ East of the Fall Line, receding oceans deposited sands, clays, and gravels over millions of years. Waters draining from the mountains east toward lower elevations eventually formed four great river systems—later named the Potomac, Rappahannock, York, and James—that now empty to the Chesapeake Bay. Where the rivers met a more pliable, erodible material falls and rapids formed along a line running roughly north to south.¹¹

Spruce and fir forests originally filled the Piedmont Plain. As the regional climate warmed after the Ice Age, broad-leaved deciduous trees such as oak, chestnut, hickory, maple, and poplar replaced spruce and fir in some places. In the sandier soils of the Coastal Plain, pine forests were more common.¹²

Human settlement in the area gravitated toward natural advantages such as the waterways that fed the Chesapeake estuary. Villages and seasonal settlements appeared along the Fall Line where rapids and falls served as barriers to fish, and rivers were navigable downstream to the rich resources of the estuary. Piedmont Plateau forests provided excellent hunting grounds, and soils and climate were amenable to agricultural development.

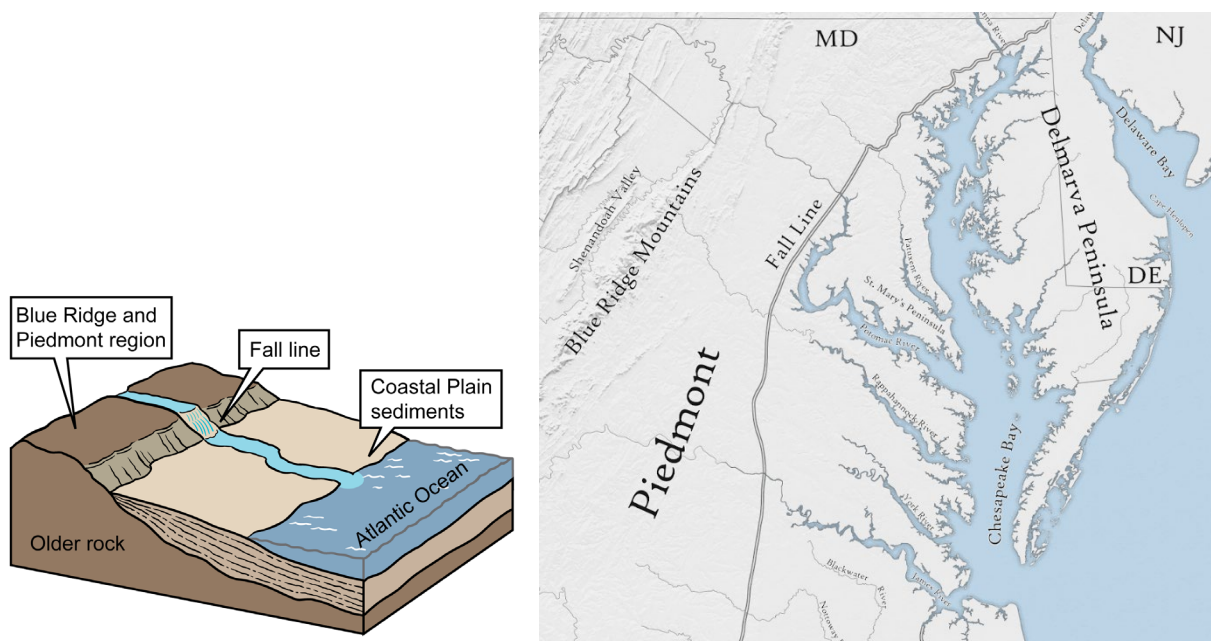


FIGURE 13. Geological construction of the Piedmont Region. (Source: <https://earthathome.org/hoese/topography-brp/>, accessed July 2023)

The surviving historical record makes entering the political, linguistic, and cultural world of the American Indian peoples prior to arrival of English colonists in early seventeenth century a difficult task. Various Algonquian-speaking groups populated the area around the Chesapeake Bay, with territories based on watercourses, living and farming areas, and hunting and foraging—unfixed boundaries without a conceptual basis in individual ownership. River names could change based on political associations; for example, the Rappahannock River was formerly known as the Opiscatumek. When the English arrived in the Chesapeake in 1607, they landed among peoples who could be collectively called “Powhatan,” a name derived from a regional chieftain and village whose sphere of influence included a number of various groups such as the Appamattuck and Weyanock.¹³

English colonists came ashore intent on taking possession of the land. The entire colonial enterprise was predicated on the value of land—the Virginia Company was funded by shares in a yet-unsecured 100-mile-square tract. The colonists brought with them many ideas that likely seemed alien to the native peoples: a political system based on parishes, shires, and parliamentary monarchy; a kind of mercantile capitalist economic system fueled by world-wide trade networks and the commodification of natural resources; a stratified social hierarchy; Christianity; English common law; and a different kind of commitment to technological development. In the many gaps between these two cultural worlds, perhaps the one with the most immediate consequences was a different perception of ownership. Whereas native peoples conceived of territorial domain based on a collective presence and communal use that may vary with time, colonists approached the land in terms of ownership by a single authority (whether individuals, commercial entities, or government), monetary value, a codified process of exchange, and specific boundaries defined by a cadastral survey system. Realizing that some of these ideas might not be entirely well received, the colonists’ first order of business was to build a fort.

The Five Forks area is beyond the traditional lands of the Powhatan and is mostly closely associated with the Siouan speaking people.¹⁴ Most relevant for the history of the landscape at Five Forks was what native peoples passed on to the colonists. Native peoples were crucial to early survival and success of the colonists, particularly by supplying foodstuffs. They grew corn, tobacco, various kinds of squash, and fruit. Over many centuries travelers between various groups had made trails and trade routes, typically between established

villages. Some early colonists recorded their observations about the agricultural practices they encountered there:

About their howses they have commonly square plotts of cleered grownd, which serve them for gardens, some one hundred, some two hundred foote square, wherein they sowe their tobacco, pumpons [pumpkins], and a fruit like unto a musk million, but less and worse, which they call macock gourds, and such like, which fruets increase exceedingly, and ripen in the beginning of July, and contynue until September; they plant also the field apple, the maracock, a wyld fruit like a kind of pomegranette, which increaseth infinitely, and ripens in August, contynuing untill the end of October, when all the other fruicts be gathered, but they sowe nether herb, flower, nor any other kynd of fruit. *William Strachey, 1609.*¹⁵

The greatest labour they take, is in planting their corne, for the Country naturally is overgrowne with wood. To prepare the ground they bruise the barke of the trees neare the root, then doe they scotch the roots with fire that they grow no more. The next yeare with a crooked peece of wood they beat up the weeds by the rootes, and in that mould they plant their Corne. Their manner is this. They make a hole in the earth with a sticke, and into it they put foure graines of wheate and two of beanes. These holes they make foure foote one from another; Their women and children do continually keepe it with weeding, and when it is growne middle high, they hill it about like a hop-yard. *John Smith, 1607.*¹⁶

Colonists keenly noted the tobacco crop, as the market for tobacco in England was beginning to expand in the early seventeenth century. Although the native tobacco was not to European tastes, transplanting Caribbean strains to Virginia in 1612 saw the birth of a massive cash crop industry—tobacco became a kind of currency in Virginia. Growing, curing, storing, and transporting tobacco was labor intensive in a land with few laborers. Tobacco prices could fluctuate, which meant that smaller, marginal farms had a more difficult time weathering periods of low prices. Tobacco also exhausted the soil, which encouraged both acquisition of larger farms and territorial expansion.

Agriculture and hunting provided a middle ground for native peoples and colonists to interact and exchange resources. Another conceptual meeting point was slavery. Colonists arrived with indentured servants, and after 1619, enslaved Africans for lifetime servitude. American Indians had long practiced slavery, typically enslaving members of other groups or tribes captured during wars or raids. As part of trading arrangements with Powhatans, colonists also acquired American Indian (slaves) enslaved peoples. Over the next two centuries treatment of the African and American Indian enslaved peoples diverged. While American Indians received some legal protections such as limited terms of service, Africans and African Americans were regarded more as property that could be inherited. Whereas the numbers of American Indian enslaved peoples declined toward the end of the eighteenth century, the numbers of enslaved Africans and African Americans increased dramatically. Through tobacco, slavery became deeply enmeshed in the plantation society and economy and through the labor of their enslaved people, many Virginia plantation owners became wealthy.

Slowly but surely English colonists spread out during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, surveying boundaries, declaring ownership under English royal charters, and establishing a system of land sales and acquisition. Colonists employed a well-developed system of survey and mapping as part of gaining possession of native lands. Establishing boundaries was essential to the English colonization effort, which enticed participation through promises of land grants. A surveyor became an important position and required a royal commission. Certain colonists could obtain land grants for enslaved peoples as well to enlarge their plantations. Other tools of expansion were war and other acts of violence. A multitude of treaties negotiated between colonists and various native groups beginning in 1614, with others following in 1632, 1646, 1677, and subsequent years, attempted to create terms of peaceful coexistence, but all ended with the Powhatans and others pushed out of ancestral lands.

Small towns emerged along the Fall Line near native villages in a familiar pattern: Fredericksburg established at Mahaskahod on the Rappahannock River in 1728; Richmond near a former Powhatan village and trading station in 1737; and Petersburg at the site of a fort and trading station on the falls of the Appomattox River in 1748. In each case the town was sited at the furthest point upriver waterborne transportation could reach, at points where commercial goods could be easily transported to the major waterways. Using waterwheels at the falls, mills for grinding flour, sawing lumber, and processing and weaving cotton appeared.

In the first half of the eighteenth century, land grants and plats began to fill what was then Prince George County. One indication that the western section of the county was becoming more populated was a petition in 1752 by Prince George County residents to form a new county due to “many inconveniencies” caused by the distance to Prince George County Courthouse. As a result, Dinwiddie County was established from the western half of Prince George County. Shortly before that division, William Thompson, Jr. acquired a 2000-acre property in 1748 that later became the basis for much of the future Burnt Quarter plantation. An earlier history of Five Forks noted that in the mid-eighteenth century many of the

... names and locations that later become familiar ones in connection with Five Forks begin to appear. James Boisseau, Gentleman, owned 628 acres in 1757 on the northside of Gravelly Run near the Court House Road. George Browder had 299 acres in 1755 between Butterwood Road and Hatcher’s Run adjoining William Thompson, James Pittloe (formerly Elias Clark), and Thomas Williams. Moses Ingram of Brunswick County owned 774 acres on a branch of Hatcher’s Run in 1772, adjoining the boundaries of Henry Thweatt Jr., Sydnor, George Thweatt, and Hudson (Hughes 1975:38). Therefore, properties owned by the Boisseau, Thweatt, and Sydnor families have emerged in the general vicinity of Five Forks prior to the Revolutionary War.¹⁷

A survey carried out for Isham Eppes dated August 22, 1772, at the intersection of Butterwood and Court House Roads shows that a residence and outbuilding once may have stood at the southeast corner of Five Forks (Figure 14). Just after the Revolutionary War, between 1782 and 1783, John Scott Coleman purchased Thompson’s property.

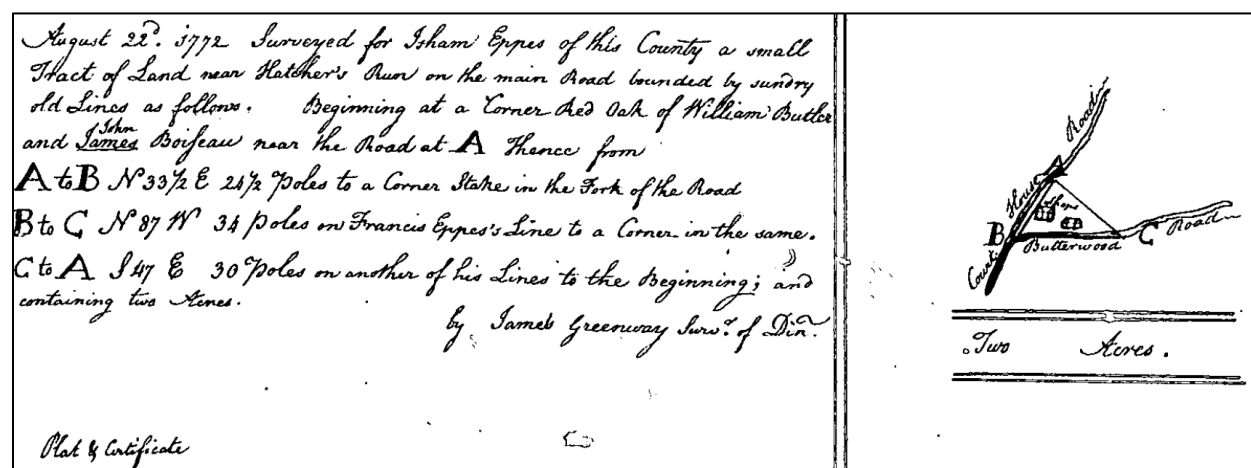


FIGURE 14. A survey carried out for Isham Eppes dated August 22, 1772, at the intersection of Butterwood and Court House Roads shows a residence and outbuilding once may have stood at the southeast corner of Five Forks. (Source: Dinwiddie County, Surveyors Record, 1752–1865.)

Property owners in the vicinity of Five Forks established plantations, acquired enslaved people, and built manor houses—some with grand names such as “Red Oaks” or “Sweedden [sic]” shown on an 1820 map of Dinwiddie County—following an example set earlier in Virginia (Figure 15). By the close of the eighteenth century, Dinwiddie County

... had numerous gentlemen who lived in considerable style on their plantations. Among them might be named Gray Briggs of “Wales”. George May of “Sterline”, William and Edward Osborne Branch of “Laurel Brook”, Dr



CARRYING TOBACCO TO MARKET.

FIGURE 16. Rolling a tobacco hogshead to market. (Source: E. R. Billings, *Tobacco: Its History, Varieties, Culture, Manufacture, and Commerce*, 1875.)

In the area around Five Forks, a road network emerged over time to connect various plantations, churches, and towns. Butterwood or White Oak Road served as the main route to Petersburg, while Court House Road might have seen more administrative traffic. By 1820 four major roads connected the Dinwiddie inland areas with Petersburg: two east-west running roads in the northern half—Cox Road and Butterwood or White Oak Road, the Boydton Road running centrally from the northeast to the southwest, and Halifax Road running on a north-south alignment. A symbiotic relationship between the Dinwiddie County hinterland and Petersburg markets fueled economic growth and encouraged an investment in the movement of goods.

Petersburg in 1839 provided one snapshot of the antebellum economy in Virginia after the Revolution. An industrial compendium recorded that Petersburg had six tobacco factories, six flour mills, one brass and cast iron foundry, two earthenware potteries, three cotton textile factories (since 1828), two cotton-seed oil mills, wheelwrights, carriage manufactories, printers, tanneries, blacksmiths, coppersmiths, hatters, and jewelers, among other enterprises. Petersburg warehouses held some 40,000 bales of cotton, 5,000 hogsheads of tobacco, and more than 100,000 bushels of wheat.²⁰

Petersburg prospered despite the fact that it lacked suitable access to ocean-going shipping. Large ships had to put into City Point on the James River, some 8 miles from Petersburg. Moreover, the falls and rapids that had once been an asset now impeded commercial navigation on the Appomattox River. To improve access to markets, Virginians in the area turned to three solutions. The first, a time-honored approach, involved constructing a canal around the falls. The Upper Appomattox Canal Company, founded in 1795, spent the next few decades opening a canal and lock system to improve the transportation of tobacco bateaux to the city. Second, Virginians were quick to adopt railways and steam-powered locomotives after their introduction in the United States in the early nineteenth century. In 1830 the Virginia and North Carolina General Assemblies granted charters for the Petersburg & Weldon Railroad, which opened in 1833. A few years later a short line was built from Petersburg to the waterfront facilities at City Point, and another line was completed to Richmond in 1838. Two additional railroads constructed in the 1850s, the South Side Railroad running southwest to Lynchburg and the Petersburg & Norfolk, made Petersburg one of the most important rail hubs

in the South. Third, privately financed corporations sought to improve the notoriously bad dirt roads with plank roads funded by toll and subscription. Construction of the Boydton Plank Road which largely followed the old stage road route southwest toward Warrenton, North Carolina, began in 1851 (Figure 17).



FIGURE 17. South central Virginia showing railroads and major roads (1864). (Source: Library of Congress.)

On the eve of the Civil war, the area around Five Forks was dominated by a few relatively large plantations utilizing enslaved peoples to grow tobacco, corn, and other crops. The surrounding area was forested where not cleared for cultivation, interspersed with swampy ground, ravines, and creeks. Cultivated fields ranged from 30 to 80 acres. In most cases homes, barns, slave quarters, and other outbuildings were grouped in clusters within clearings. Tobacco hogsheads, wagons of corn, and other plantation goods in the area would have traveled on White Oak Road (also referred to as Butterwood Road) to Petersburg markets and railroads. Ford's Road (also referred to as Ford's Church Road or Church Road) ran north over Hatcher's Run and the tracks of the South Side Railroad to Ford's Church. Courthouse Road led southeast toward Dinwiddie Courthouse, and Scott's Road, a lesser road, ran past the property of E. Scott toward the southwest. Other smaller farm paths connected the various homes and fields of the Five Forks plantations.

The Civil War, 1861 to 1865

From the earliest days of the republic the role of federal versus state authority on many issues had been hotly debated, whether pertaining to internal improvements, banks, or economic policy—particularly tariffs. Alongside this question another divisive issue, the legal sanction of slavery in the states, increasingly polarized politics in the antebellum era. The states' role in controlling the future of slavery came to a head with the victory of Abraham Lincoln in the 1860 presidential election. Democrats in several southern states saw Lincoln's presidency as tantamount to the end of slavery in the United States. South Carolina claimed a right to leave the federal republic over the perceived threat to slavery, and 169 delegates primarily drawn from the planter class voted on December 20, 1860, to secede. Five other states—Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana—followed South Carolina's example in January 1861. Virginia initially voted against secession but efforts by secessionist states to seize federal forts precipitated armed conflict. After Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers to suppress the rebellion, Virginia voted to leave the Union. Delegates from Dinwiddie County, including James Boisseau, voted 850 to 1 for secession. Boisseau likely never imagined that in a few short years his farm would be the scene of the twilight of the Confederacy.

Virginia became one of the primary battlegrounds of the Civil War for several reasons. As home to the Confederate capital at Richmond, Virginia had a paramount strategic and symbolic importance. The most populous and economically powerful of the Confederate states, Virginia contributed the most soldiers to the war effort. Essential industries, agricultural lands, commercial ports, and transportation networks within its borders were tempting wartime targets.²¹ The state's close proximity to the federal capital at Washington, DC, alone ensured both armies' attention would be fixed on northern Virginia.

Recruitment was brisk in Dinwiddie County. White men from a wide range of ages, professions, and social backgrounds joined local regiments and companies such as the McRae Rifles, Petersburg Grays, and Chesterfield Light Artillery. This ensured that brothers, cousins, and friends fought and died together, sometimes within miles of their Virginia homes. Familiar names from the Five Forks area such as Gilliam, Barnes, Boisseau, Crowder, Dabney, Lewis, and Scott filled the enlistment rosters. Many would see hard service in the Army of Northern Virginia from Antietam to Appomattox Court House.²²

The conduct of war underwent some important transitions in the mid-nineteenth century. The Napoleonic wars between 1803 and 1815 set an enduring standard for tactics, leadership, and military theory. Battles were fought between massed infantry armed with muzzle-loaded smoothbore musket and bayonet; cavalry armed with swords and sometimes with pistols and carbines; and mobile artillery, typically horse-drawn cannon in the 6 to 12 pounder range. Because the standard infantry musket was accurate from about 50 to 100 yards, tactical maneuvers focused on massing fire and protecting flanks. Battlefield mobility and cohesion were also important. Armies had to consider what organizational structure could support commands carried by staff officers and visual signals.

When the United States established an officer training school at West Point in 1802, the army chose a French model with a heavy engineering curriculum. As a result, officers of the Civil War generation graduated from the military academy at West Point with engineering degrees, well versed in a mathematical approach to war and fortification. For this generation, the study of Napoleonic wars—not yet in the distant past—also loomed large. The first test of their training came with the war against Mexico in 1846, which was generally fought with the weapons and tactics of the Napoleonic era of warfare.

Efforts to improve the accuracy, range, and rate of fire of the standard infantry musket resulted in several new weapons between the Mexican War and 1861. A French officer is credited with development of the "Minié ball" in 1847 that one historian summarized as "significant because it was the first projectile type that could be made a loose enough fit to easily slide down the barrel of a rifled long gun, yet maintain good accuracy during

firing due to obturation by expansion of the bullet's base when fired.”²³ A rifled musket firing a Minié round dramatically increased the range and accuracy of the standard infantry weapon, which in experienced hands was now capable of hitting targets at 400 yards. Other attention was given to the cumbersome and slow process of muzzle loading. In 1861 the Spencer and Henry rifle companies introduced breech loading repeaters able to fire multiple shots from a magazine. Gatling's multi-barreled gun dramatically increased the rate of fire from a single weapon but became available too late in the war to significantly affect the battlefield.²⁴

Existing commercial technologies such as the railroad, telegraph, and photography developed in the 1820s and 1830s also found military application in this period. The effects of some of these new technologies, particularly that of soldiers with rifled muskets firing the Minié ball, could be seen in the Crimean and Franco-Austro-Sardinian Wars but due to various exigencies (the new technologies were primarily applied in a siege setting during the Crimean War and the Franco-Austro-Sardinian War was relatively short lived) the lessons were not always clear.²⁵ Consequently, when war between the North and South broke out in 1861, most Army officers had little practical experience with putting some new technologies to the best use.

Due to continuities in the officer corps, military training, and equipment, the opposing sides in Civil War took the field in 1861 similarly armed and organized. Because the Battle of Five Forks was marked by several command controversies, sketching basic changes in the organizational structure of the armies during the Civil War is important for understanding the battle's outcome. The American Battlefield Trust outlines the two armies' initial structure in the following terms:

The regiment was the basic maneuver unit of the Civil War. They were recruited from among the eligible citizenry of one or more nearby counties and usually consisted of 1,000 men when first organized. The attrition of disease, combat, and desertion would rapidly reduce this number. Replacements were exceedingly rare for both sides—it was more typical for an entirely new regiment to be raised instead. Regiments were usually led by colonels.

Two or more regiments would be organized into a brigade. Note that it was uncommon for the branches of the army—infantry, cavalry, and artillery—to be mixed within a brigade. A typical brigade would consist of between three and five regiments and be led by a brigadier general.

Two or more brigades would be organized into a division. Divisions tended to be slightly smaller in the Union army—usually two or three brigades. Confederate divisions could include as many as five or six brigades. Divisions were led by major generals.

Two or more divisions would be organized into a corps. A corps typically included infantry, cavalry, and artillery units, the idea being that a corps was a formation that could conduct independent operations.

Two or more corps would be organized into an army.²⁶

One consequence of not infusing veteran units with replacements to make up losses was that later in the war certain regiments might have relatively little combat experience—particularly Union regiments. The 210th Pennsylvania, for example, mustered in late 1864 and spent its early deployment in the Petersburg-Richmond trenches. When moved out into the field, the regiment broke and its commanding colonel was mortally wounded under a determined assault by General Eppa Hunton's veteran 8th Virginia Regiment at the Battle of White Oak Road that preceded Five Forks.²⁷ A day later, the 210th acquitted itself by attacking and taking the breastworks at the Angle as part of General Romeyn Ayers' Second Division at Five Forks.

The organizational structure of the two armies underwent two important transitions during the war. Initially command authority at the higher echelons flowed more horizontally, leading to problems with coordinating efforts. After some problematic experiences, both armies sought to develop a more pyramidal chain of

command with clearer hierarchies, in part to facilitate the replacement of officers lost during battle. Second, as the war went on both sides shifted toward more unified artillery brigades and cavalry forces. Whereas earlier in the war a brigade might have individual cavalry and artillery regiments attached, the advantages of larger, more independent specialized units began to tell later in the war. Unified cavalry divisions, for example, emerged as valuable assets for reconnaissance, raiding, quick flank attacks, and screening army movements, among other uses.²⁸ The effects of both changes—the more pyramidal command structure and unified branch units—would play out at Five Forks.

When the war began the two armies marched into the field armed primarily with rifled muskets (infantry); swords, carbines, and pistols (cavalry); and both smoothbore and rifled cannons (artillery). Many were led by graduates of West Point, officers with a military engineering education including Union generals Ulysses S. Grant, Philip Sheridan, Gouvenour Warren, Romenyn Ayers, Charles Griffin, Wesley Merritt, and George Custer, and Confederate generals Robert E. Lee, George Pickett, Fitzhugh Lee, and George Steuart—officers who would have a hand in events at Five Forks. Behind the army came wagon trains with supplies, camp baggage, ambulances led by horses and mule teams. Both sides were quick to make use of railroads for troop movement and supply and the telegraph for communications between commands. The Union benefited from a more developed rail and telegraph network and experienced executives to draw on for operational leadership, establishing the US Military Railroad and US Military Telegraph Corps to mobilize these assets for the war effort. To monitor enemy troop movements, the armies relied on reconnaissance patrols and vedettes and pickets guarded important roads, bridges, or positions. When armies closed in on each other, skirmish lines were set to blunt the initial advance of the enemy and allow the main body to form up in battle lines to assault or defend positions. In forming up for moments of combat, regimental flags and color guards were essential in maintaining battlefield command and order.

The first major battle of the Civil War at Manassas Junction in mid-July 1861 foreshadowed the kind of strategic factors that would shape what was to come. With the objective of taking Richmond, federal troops marched down the Warrenton-Alexandria Turnpike with the Orange & Alexandria Railroad behind them to secure a line of supply. Confederate forces took up positions to deny the Union this important rail junction and transportation hub. Confederate leadership used railroads to good effect, transporting troops from the Shenandoah Valley to Manassas where they helped swing the battle in their favor. After the victory at Manassas Junction, Confederate troops built field fortifications to help hold the vital rail junction from future Union attack. Much of war would be fought to defend or take strategic rail lines, road networks, and centers of supply whether at Chattanooga, Vicksburg, Atlanta, or Petersburg. Raiders on both sides were sent deep behind lines to destroy railroad tracks and supply trains or depots. If not the first military use of railroads, the Civil War provided the most extensive lesson in their value to the conduct of war.

A more painful lesson taught by the war was the importance of field fortifications. Civil War began with tactics geared at marching troops in order towards each other in rectangular lines intended to concentrate musket fire at certain points. After the experience of attack and counterattack in battle, it became a regular practice by infantry on both sides to throw up at a minimum a breastworks, typically of logs and dirt, when in the vicinity of the enemy (Figure 18).

Over the course of the war, battles across the South (and in a few famous cases, the North) repeatedly drove home the ghastly cost of attacking entrenched positions. In Virginia, Union frontal assaults at Fredericksburg (December 1862), Chancellorsville (May 1863), and Cold Harbor (June 1864) resulted in massive numbers of casualties.²⁹

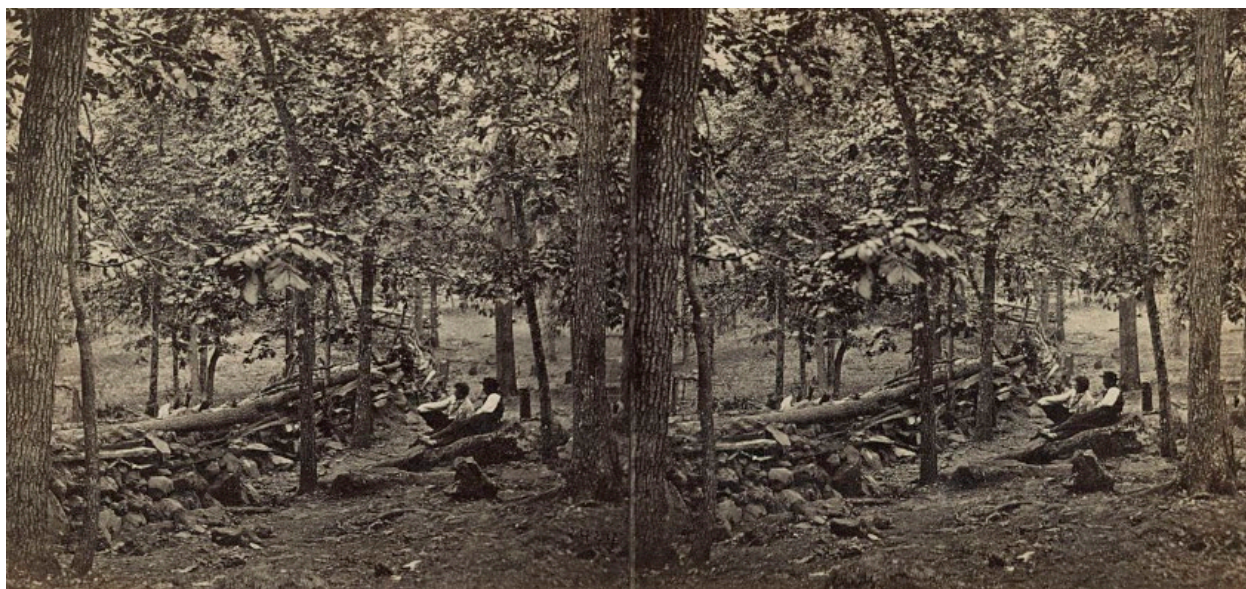


FIGURE 18. Typical breastworks, Gettysburg 1863. (Source: *Library of Congress*)

On the home front in Dinwiddie County, residents took steps to support the army. In May 1863 county magistrates met at the courthouse to ascertain the amount of supplies needed and arrange delivery to the nearest quartermaster. They exhorted planters to “devote their energies and labor chiefly to growing provision crops, etc.”³⁰ Three gentlemen were selected by the magistrates to “discretely” decide what prices would be paid for various supplies. Both issues were related, as some southern planters continued to grow cash crops such as cotton and tobacco due to the low prices offered by the Confederate government for provision crops. At least some fields in Dinwiddie County near Five Forks that prior to the war grew tobacco were likely converted to corn and wheat.

As the war entered its third year, the Union was still trying to bring its advantages in manpower and resources to bear, in part by taking the war to the Confederate home front. After taking command of all Union armies in March 1864, newly promoted Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant carried out a campaign to wear down Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia and approved a plan by William Sherman to cripple the southern home front with a destructive march through Georgia to South Carolina. After a series of maneuvers and battles in northern Virginia failed to produce a decisive victory, Grant’s efforts took a disastrous turn at Cold Harbor where thousands of lives were squandered in a frontal attack on Lee’s fortified lines. Seemingly outgeneraled by Lee and with long lists of dead and wounded received at home, frustration grew in the North about the course of the war. Leaving Cold Harbor after a secretive crossing of the James River, Grant forced Lee into a defensive position protecting Richmond and Petersburg with some 35 miles of fortifications. Grant, with the memory of Cold Harbor in his mind, turned to a strategy of flanking the defenses and denying lines of supply in lieu of more frontal assaults. Both cities were vital to the Confederate war effort, particularly Petersburg as a rail depot and main supply base for the Confederate army. As the Union army built its own parallel fortifications to hold the Confederates in their positions, the two armies settled into trench warfare.

In the early days of the siege, two railroads running south and southwest—the Petersburg & Weldon and the Southside, respectively—still served Petersburg. Grant moved to deny the Army of Northern Virginia these important supply lines. He sent Union cavalry on a raid in June 1864 with the objective of tearing up as much of the Weldon and South Side railroad tracks as possible. During this raid, Union troops made their first visit to Five Forks before moving up Ford’s Road to connect with the South Side line at Ford’s Station. Although the raiders successfully destroyed some 60 miles of tracks, the effort was ultimately deemed a failure due to the heavy cost in casualties. Next Grant began extending his lines west to cut off the supply lines and thin the Confederate defenses holding the Richmond and Petersburg fortifications. Lee met these efforts with sharp

retorts, and at many of the engagements—Reams Station (August 1864), Burgess' Mill/Boydton Plank Road (October 1864), and Hatcher's Run (February 1865)—Confederate forces achieved either tactical victories or blunted federal advances but failed to prevent the Union army from extending the siege lines west.

From behind the trenches in early 1865, the Army of Northern Virginia's prospects looked grim. Lee weighed a last desperate gamble to escape the Richmond-Petersburg siege and join forces with Joseph E. Johnston's Army of the Tennessee in North Carolina, the last major body of Confederate forces in the field. Under these circumstances, defending his last railroad and remaining east-west road arteries were absolutely crucial to either maintaining line of supply for existing defenses or preserving an escape route to the west.

If Lee and his generals unfolded a map of the area west of Petersburg—perhaps the one recently made by Confederate Army Engineer A. H. Campbell—they would have seen the far end of their western defenses at the intersection of White Oak Road and Clairborne Road (Figure 19). The defenses here prevented a Federal attack up Clairborne Road north toward the South Side Railroad. The next north-to-south running road to the west was Ford's Road (or Church Road). Federal forces moving north on Ford's Road could threaten both the Southside Railroad and the extreme western flank of the Petersburg area defenses. After receiving reports of Union cavalry moving with that objective, Lee looked again to seize the initiative with his own attack. Searching for what could be spared from the Petersburg-Richmond defenses, Lee ordered three brigades from Swift Creek area near Richmond to join two brigades from Major General Bushrod Johnson's Division pulled out of the far western line and cavalry force led by Lee's nephew, Major General Fitzhugh Lee. He assigned General George Pickett overall command of the force. Robert Lee's own son, William Henry Fitzhugh ("Rooney") Lee commanded a cavalry division under his cousin; another was under the command of Thomas Rosser. The bulk of Pickett's force were Virginians, including the 3rd Virginia Regiment, its ranks filled with many men recruited from Dinwiddie County. Pickett's artillery commander, 23-year-old Lt. Col. William Pegram's ancestral home was, a few short miles away south of Five Forks.³¹ In one of its final military uses of the war, Pickett's division boarded the Southside Railroad on March 29 for Sutherland's Station, to meet the Union threat.

Meanwhile, Lee learned that a strong Union infantry force—V Corps—was moving up to support Sheridan's cavalry movement. Using the existing roads, Warren's V Corps had to travel southwest before moving north on Quaker Road toward the area where it met the Boydton Plank Road near White Oak Road. Lee rode out to the White Oak Road defenses near Clairborne Road to examine the threat to his western flank. To break up this concentration of troops on his right and isolate Sheridan's cavalry, Lee sent three brigades of Johnson's Division against V Corps battle near Lewis Farm on Quaker Road on March 29 and attacked again two days later at White Oak Road just south of the Confederate line. Using the woods to their advantage, the Confederates attacked exposed flanks and isolated Federal units. Warren's V Corp steadied itself after initial setbacks, regained lost ground and ultimately dug in on lines across from the Confederate positions. The battles on the far western flank of the Petersburg line showed that even understrength and undersupplied, Confederate units could still break Union units late in the war.

One of Confederate cavalry General W. H. F. Lee's first orders of business when he arrived at Five Forks on March 30 was to seek out local knowledge, enlisting sixteen-year-old Samuel Yates Gilliam, then living with his mother and sister at Burnt Quarter, as a guide. Gilliam, who had hunted widely in the area, later provided detailed descriptions of the landscape, roads, and aspects of the battle he witnessed during his testimony to the Warren Inquiry. Between Gilliam's evidence, other inquiry testimony, and maps produced after the war, a relatively accurate account of the battlefield was documented. National Park Service Historian Chris Calkins combed through the Warren Inquiry testimony to overlay descriptions of the landscape on a map grid.

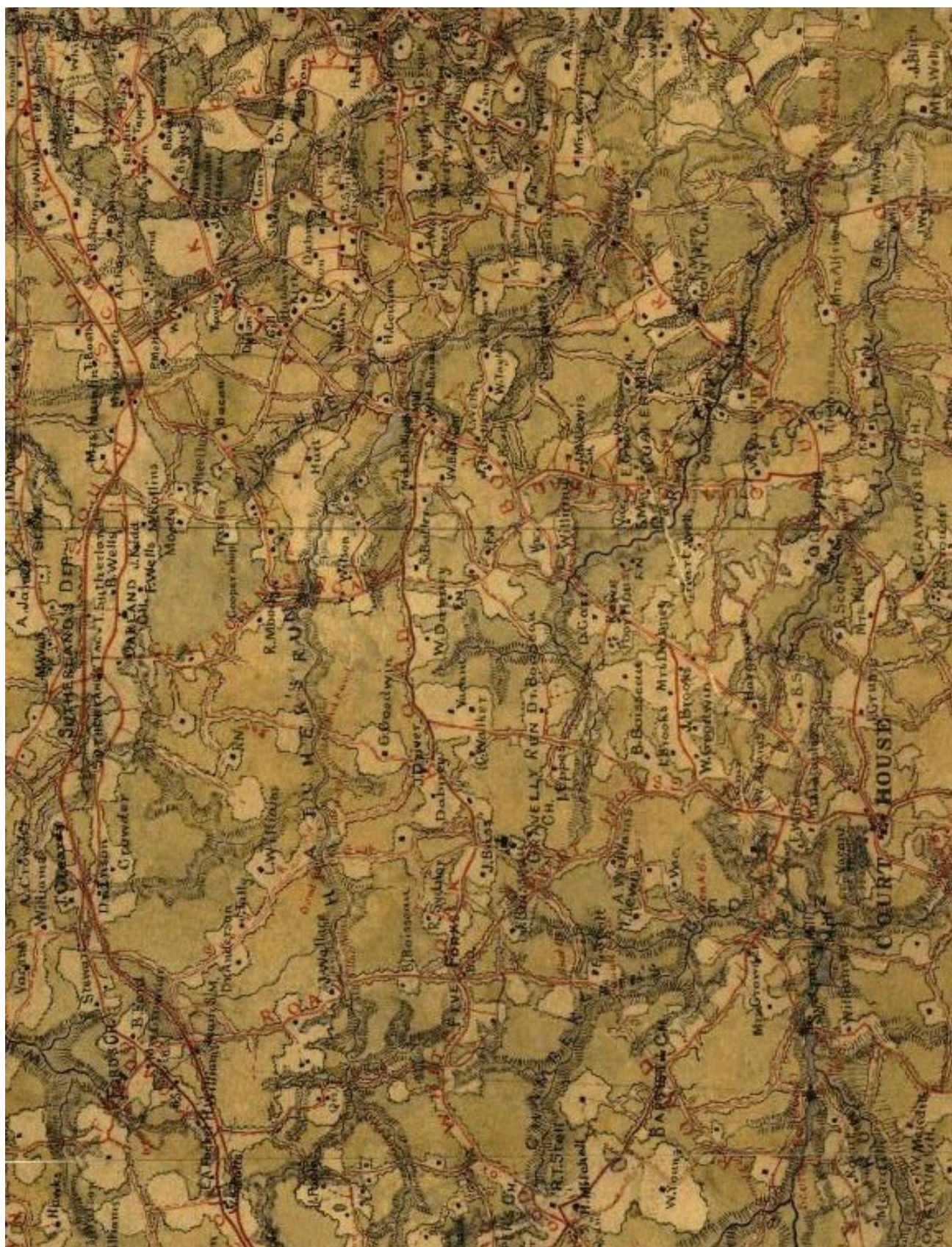


FIGURE 19. Map of Dinwiddie County, 1864. (Source: A. H. Campbell, Confederate Engineer Department, "Dinwiddie County," 1864)

Site History

As it had been for perhaps one hundred years, Five Forks was an important crossroads for inland Virginians traveling to Dinwiddie County Courthouse and local farms and churches, or transporting goods to and from Petersburg (Figure 20). The roads running into Five Forks, Grant believed, were so important to Lee's "very existence while he remained in Richmond and Petersburg, and of such vital importance to him even in case of retreat, that naturally he would make most strenuous efforts to defend them."³²



FIGURE 20. Five Forks area, April 1866. (Source: War Department, "Five Forks, Virginia – April 1866," National Archives)

Except for a small clearing to the northwest, the immediate intersection was surrounded by woods. Six farms were arrayed around Five Forks. West and southwest of the intersection lay the considerable plantation of Burnt Quarter. At some point in the mid-eighteenth century, a large field of approximately 85 acres had been cleared in the woods south of White Oak Road and a plantation manor house built. Over the next century the Thompsons, Colemans, Goodwyns, and Gilliams continued to clear land (totaling approximately 405 acres) to the south and west between stands of trees for growing tobacco and corn with the labor of their enslaved peoples. Just prior to the war, Burnt Quarter totaled 2,526 acres under widow Mary Elizabeth Coleman Gilliam, who was listed as the owner of 41 enslaved people (30 females and 11 males) ranging in age from 1 to 67. They lived in quarters near tobacco barns, granaries, and other outbuildings in a cluster of buildings in the vicinity of the manor house. Peach and apple orchards grew around the house. Maps show a saw mill in the woods southwest of the manor house. Farm paths led past the house to White Oak Road, the edges of the various fields, and the neighboring plantation of James Boisseau to the east.

Long-time residents of Dinwiddie County, the Boisseau family owned several farms in the general area. James Boisseau bought “Cedar Lane,” a 400-acre farm just south of Five Forks, after graduating from William and Mary College in 1839. Boisseau was an active lawyer, judge, and politician, serving as Dinwiddie County’s delegate in Virginia’s secession vote in April 1861. Despite his pedigree, he joined as the Confederate army as a corporal in Captain Epes’s Company, Virginia Heavy Artillery, serving with John P. Gilliam who was first lieutenant.³³ Cedar Lane, which abutted Courthouse Road, was a smaller version of Burnt Quarter with fewer buildings and orchards clustered near the center of an approximately 130-acre cleared field. Otherwise, the property was heavily wooded.

East of Cedar Lane were two other farms on Gravelly Run Road, a more northerly one run by Thomas Bass (shown on some maps as Barnes) and the other owned by James Moody. A Methodist church stood among the pines on the northern edge of Moody’s 35-acre cleared field east of Gravelly Run Road—a smaller 23-acre field was cleared west of the road. The approximately cleared land of the Bass farm ran along the southern edge of White Oak Road where it met Gravelly Run Road, another field lay north of White Oak Road. The 1860 agricultural census for Dinwiddie County shows Thomas Bass in possession of 150 unimproved acres and 75 improved acres.

Northwest of the Bass farm across White Oak Road was a large area of swampy ground, ravines, and forest except where the Sydnors (also shown on maps as Sidney) had cleared an irregularly shaped field for cultivation. The 1860 agricultural census for Dinwiddie County shows Robert Sydnor in possession of 414 unimproved acres and 200 improved acres. A small house and a few other buildings occupied a relatively central location in the field; some 365 yards northwest of the house stood the remains of a burned house remembered during the battle as “the Chimneys.” Hatcher’s Run ran across the northern edge of the property. Several farm paths connected the Sydnor/Sidney house with other farms, leading southeast to Bass, northwest to Dr. Anderson, northeast to Harman, and due west to the Benjamin Boisseau property.

Benjamin Boisseau’s (also shown on maps as C. Young) farm on the west side of Church Road followed the familiar model of a main house, enslaved people’s quarters, and farm buildings located relatively centrally in a cleared field surrounded by forests. The 1860 agricultural census for Dinwiddie County shows Benjamin H. Boisseau in possession of 310 unimproved acres and 250 improved acres. Like many of the other farms, small creeks and ravines ran through the field. At 41 years old, Benjamin Boisseau enlisted as a private in the Virginia artillery shortly after the outbreak of war.

While Lee was gaining information about the area, Union Gen. Philip Sheridan wrote to convince Grant that he could either turn the Confederate flank or take the South Side Railroad via Five Forks if given infantry support. Sheridan confidently sent his cavalry force up Court House Road from Dinwiddie Court House toward Five Forks, sending out two brigades on roads to the west to prevent an unexpected attack from that

direction. Indeed, Pickett's Division struck Sheridan's cavalry, moving northeast up some farm roads, while Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry moved east along Ford Station Road to cut off the Federal retreat. Fighting dismounted, Union cavalry was hard pressed and fell back to Dinwiddie Courthouse and prepared to make a last stand. Pickett, however, became concerned about reports of a large body of Union infantry moving westward to assist Sheridan. He halted the Confederate attack, and early in the morning of April 1, withdrew back to Five Forks. Sheridan expressed to a fellow officer that evening that "he had one of the liveliest days in his experience, fighting infantry and cavalry with cavalry only."³⁴

The battle had been a miserable one, fought in heavy rain. One officer described the roads as "sheets of water," and rivers and creeks were swollen. Bogs and swamps deepened and expanded. In his memoirs, General Grant remembered the terrible condition of the roads.

It soon set in raining again however, and in a very short time the roads became practically impassable for teams, and almost so for cavalry. Sometimes a horse or mule would be standing apparently on firm ground, when all at once one foot would sink, and as he commenced scrambling to catch himself all his feet would sink and he would have to be drawn by hand out of the quicksands so common in that part of Virginia and other southern States.³⁵

Union forces laboriously built corduroy roads to support artillery and wagon trains, but Sheridan's cavalry moved too quickly for that and had advanced without artillery units. Similarly, as it came to Sheridan's aid, Warren's V Corps had to leave its artillery batteries behind.

As morning dawned on April 1, troops on both sides were wet and had had little sleep. Confederate forces had moved out in the early hours and also suffered from a lack of rations. Sheridan's forces found the Confederate line near Dinwiddie Court House abandoned, and he sent his cavalry north to meet Warren at Five Forks.

Five Forks was not a great place to defend, except perhaps against a mounted cavalry charge. Dense woods along the roads made it difficult to position artillery for greatest effectiveness and hid enemy movements. Typically, defensive fire did the most damage against advances across open fields. The Five Forks area lacked any high ground that could be used to advantage. Enemy troops could move quickly on either flank down White Oak Road. One Confederate officer thought it "a very bad place to fight."³⁶ On the other hand, boggy and swampy ground, ravines, and dense undergrowth in the area might be used to limit or concentrate the field of attack, and plenty of trees were available for building breastworks.

For these reasons, Pickett would have preferred to defend farther north behind Hatcher's Run, but he had his orders from Lee to hold the road junction at Five Forks. After consulting with the other generals, Pickett set his defenses. "Working like beavers," as one Confederate officer put it, the troops cut down trees and tore down rail fences to build breastworks along White Oak Road that extended about one mile east of Five Forks and three-quarters of a mile west.³⁷ The breastworks likely consisted of a horizontal barricade of logs kept in place by log posts driven vertically into the ground. Dirt excavated behind the works was piled on the logs. The breastworks were characterized as typical "nothing formidable," but nonetheless offered effective protection. Testimony in the Warren Inquiry indicated the Confederates erected abatis in front of the breastworks at certain points.

Confederate Descriptions of Breastworks

General Fitzhugh Lee testified that the breastworks "could not have been strong or of a serious character of any kind" because they were only thrown up that morning.³⁸ "Our throwing up works and taking position were simply general matters of military precaution."³⁹ Other testimony by former Confederate troops who participated in the Warren Inquiry noted the following:

W. W. Wood: “. . . they were the works as our troops usually threw up then, at that time, at that stage of the war, whenever we stopped—just threw them up hastily for infantry men to get behind, to lie down and fight in case of sudden attack. They were not substantial works. Q. How long were you engaged at the works there? A. As soon as we got up a few logs, threw some earth against them, probably as high as this table, I was stopped. We were throwing up those works when attacked.”⁴⁰

To his knowledge, all works thrown up that morning except for a stretch of some 100 to 200 yards worth next to the Five Forks.⁴¹

Joseph Mayo, Colonel 3rd Virginia Infantry: “We made a very respectable breastwork, with what we had to work with, in about an hour and a half or two hours.”⁴²

Samuel Gilliam: “Q. Did you see earthworks then? A. Yes. Q. When were they thrown up? A. They must have been thrown up some time that morning. Q. How high were they when you got there? A. They were between waist high and breast high, I think. Q. How substantial were they? What were they made of? A. Made of large pine logs and dirt thrown over them. Q. Is the line of works there this day? A. Yes; except a very small portion that I pulled down.”⁴³

Union Descriptions of Breastworks

Testimony by former Union troops who participated in the Warren Inquiry noted:

Roger Hannaford, 2nd Ohio Cavalry: “Thus we followed up the enemy, sometimes slow, at times on the run, & by twelve M we had them in their breastworks at Five Forks, where they were strongly posted, heavy breastworks & an abattis of felled pine trees thro' which it was impossible to pass but one at a time & very slowly at that.”⁴⁴

General Joshua Chamberlain, 1st Brigade, 1st Division, V Corps: “The report of the cavalry reconnaissance, as it came to us, was that the enemy had fortified this road for nearly a mile westward, and about three-quarters of a mile eastward from Five Forks, and at the extreme left made a return northerly for perhaps one hundred and fifty yards, to cover that flank.”⁴⁵

Romeyn B. Ayers, Brevet Major General, 2nd Division, V Corps. The Angle: “The enemy had cut out the trees for 50 or 60 feet in front of that flank; there were small pines growing there and you could not see the breastworks until you got on them.” “We never saw this angle until we got right on it.” “It was a very dense pine undergrowth there, and they cut out only about 60 feet in front and left the rest.”⁴⁶

Brevet Brig. Gen. G. R. Maxwell, 1st Michigan Cavalry, Devin's Division: “Q. Were they formidable? How high were they? A. I should judge from what I recollect of it, ordinary field-works thrown up hastily—that any infantry well disciplined would throw up in an hour or two—simple protection, nothing formidable about them. A. How did you wish to be understood when you, a few minutes ago, used the expression that you could not carry them? A. We had not force enough. Q. They were able to hold you with the force that you had there? A. O, yes; and cavalry do not fight earthworks, without infantry support, with any degree of confidence, particularly if they have line of bayonets back of them.”⁴⁷

Given how Pickett arranged his forces, it is intriguing to learn that according to Col. Joseph Mayo of Terry's Brigade, the Confederate leaders were anticipating an attack from the right rather than the left.⁴⁸ Mayo explained the reasoning behind this during the Warren Inquiry:

You said you were really anticipating an attack from the right. What led you believe that the United States forces would attack upon the right? A. We were under the impression that they would try to cut us off from the railroad; and that, while a demonstration would be made very actively in our front, this infantry column, covered by the woods, was moving all the time. This was my impression, and it was General Beale's and General Pickett's—that the right was the point of apprehension.⁴⁹

After conducting reconnaissance and looking at his own maps, Sheridan came up with his plan of attack. While his dismounted cavalry took up positions along the main line of breastworks along White Oak Road to occupy defenders, the V Corps would deliver a concentrated blow to the Confederate left or eastern part of the line where it was refused and angled north for approximately 150 yards (the Angle). The dismounted cavalry would join in an all-out assault on the White Oak Road breastworks after the V Corps attacked. Sheridan hoped, at the very least, to drive a wedge between Pickett's forces and the Army of Northern Virginia, preventing them from rejoining the defense lines west of Petersburg. He sent his staff engineer George L. Gillespie out to locate the best staging area for the V Corps to form up for the attack. Gillespie found an open field near Gravelly Run Church on James Moody's property that would serve. After directing the V Corps where to report, Sheridan waited for Warren's three divisions under Generals Ayers, Griffin, and Crawford to arrive and form for battle.

One problem with Sheridan's plan is that he had erroneously estimated the length of the Confederate breastworks and the location of the Angle. Sheridan's reconnaissance may have mistaken the hasty skirmish works Munford's cavalry had thrown up east of the Angle along White Oak Road for the main line of Confederate breastworks (Figure 21). In any case, when V Corps finally marched at around 4:00 p.m. toward the far eastern end of the Confederate works with Ayers Division on the left and Crawford on the right with Griffin behind, Ayers unexpectedly received fire on his left flank after crossing the Bass field. The end of the Confederate line was not straight in front of him but some 200 yards to the west. As Ayers wheeled his division to the left (west) to meet the fire head on, Crawford's division continued on a northwesterly course, losing contact with Ayers. Griffin's left-most brigades of 1st Division noticed the gap, and angled their march left to cover Ayers' right flank. Together Ayers and part of Griffin's line smashed into the 150 yards of breastworks at the Angle held by General Matt Ransom's five regiments of North Carolina infantry and some 1,100 of Munford's dismounted cavalry.⁵⁰

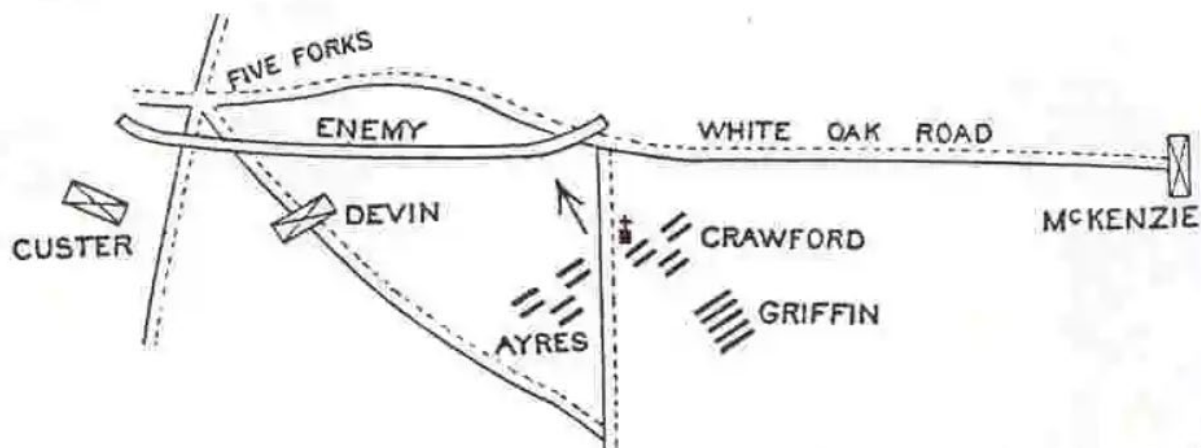


FIGURE 21. Approximation of sketch made based on Sheridan's battle plan. (Source: Warren Inquiry)

Before the V Corps launched their attack, two important events earlier in the day set the context for what happened next. First, Sheridan was beside himself with impatience waiting for Warren's attack, having gotten his cavalry into position much earlier in the day. A few exploratory assaults launched against the breastworks by dismounted cavalry were thrown back. Sheridan fretted that he lost the opportunity to attack that day and would have to retire some miles to the south leaving the enemy in possession of the important crossroads. He rode over near the V Corps' staging area near Gravelly Run Church to speed the V Corps' preparation. Second, after setting his defenses just after noon, Pickett and Fitzhugh Lee—the two top commanding generals of the Confederate force—accepted General Thomas Rosser's invitation to join him for a shad bake up north near Hatcher's Run. Couriers kept the men informed throughout the day.

Ayers and part of Griffin divisions' determined attack—urged on by Sheridan who led from the front—took the breastworks on the refused line at the Angle. Cavalry brigades in Brigadier General Thomas Devin's division joined the assault on the far left of the breastworks. Munford sent a desperate plea for reinforcements and tried to extend his line north but overwhelmed, his troopers fell back across the Sydnor/Sidney field. Munford and remnants of Ransom's brigade attempted to make a stand on the west side of Sydnor field, erecting some hasty breastworks with whatever was available, but they were unable to stem the Union tide.

As Ayers and Griffin attacked the Angle, Warren raced northwest to locate and re-direct Crawford toward the fight. As a result, neither Ayers, Griffin nor their staff knew much about Warren's whereabouts when queried by Sheridan after the breastworks had been carried. Although not to plan, Crawford's northerly march fortuitously added momentum to the Union attack on the Confederate left and cut off any hope of retreat up Ford's Road. As Crawford moved south down Ford's Road, the Confederate left was hemmed in on three sides. The battle spilled westward across Five Forks, where Colonel Pegram had three artillery pieces at the crossroads facing south. Still on his horse directing fire, Pegram took a bullet in the side. As the defenses around Five Forks collapsed, the battery attempted to retreat but was captured (Figure 22).

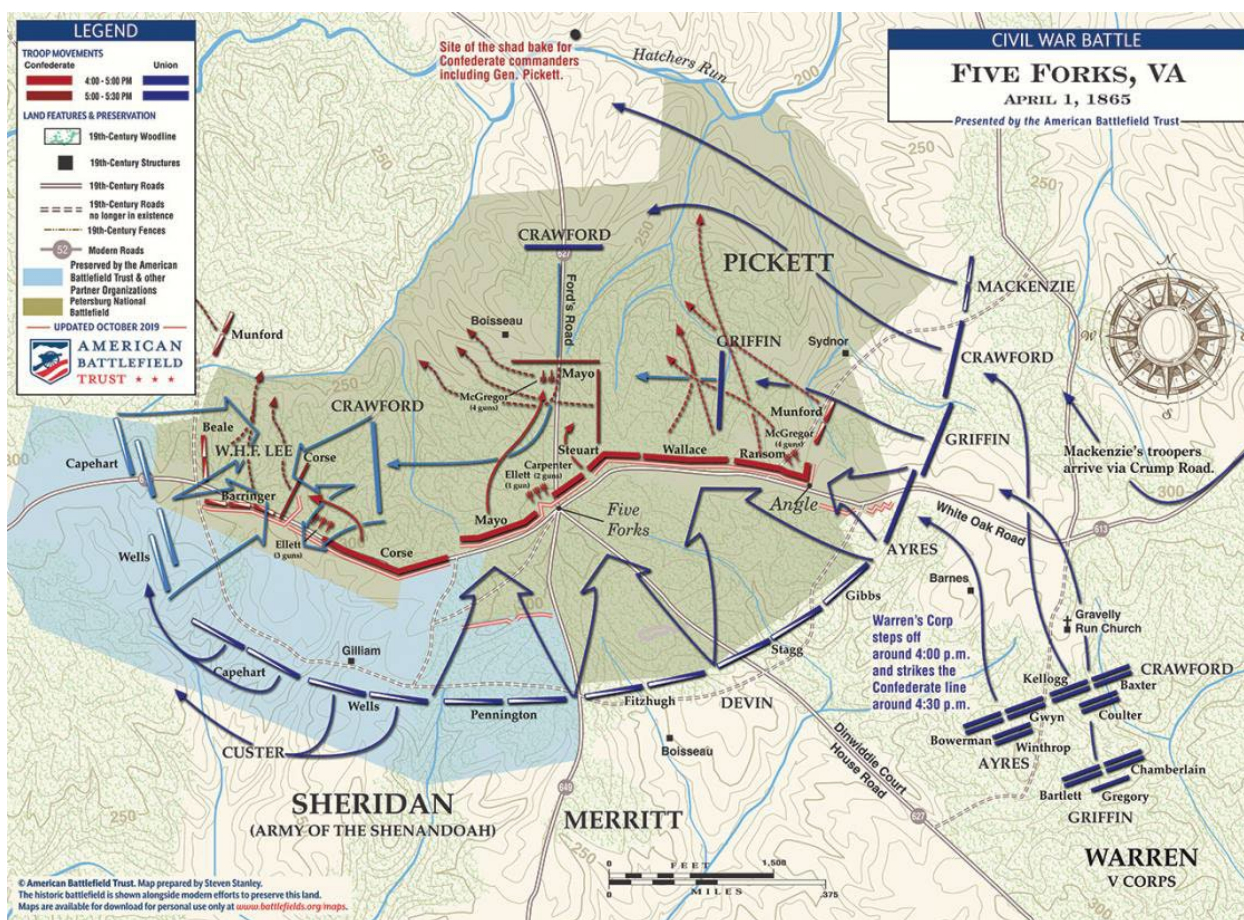


FIGURE 22. American Battlefield Trust, "Battle of Five Forks – April 1, 1865." (Source: American Battlefield Trust, <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/civil-war/battles/five-forks>, accessed July 2023)

At same time Confederate left was crumbling, the right end of the line had been holding their ground throughout the day. W. H. F. Lee's cavalry began the battle in a skirmish near the Burnt Quarter house and outbuildings. An artillery position near a tobacco barn on the west side of the field broke up a cavalry charge and discouraged advances across the clearing. Assaults by dismounted cavalry in the woods on the Confederate breastworks were unsuccessful. A recollection of these efforts by a cavalryman from the 2nd Ohio

revealed that the cavalry, even if dismounted, were somewhat unaccustomed to taking on fortified positions head on:

Useless, worse than useless; to expect that a thin line of dismounted men, not indeed much thicker than a skirmish line, could unaided carry such breastworks, even had they been easy to approach, for the enemy lay behind them as thick & close together as they could be, & have room to load & fire.⁵¹

It was only as the support came up & formed in line of battle that the enemy gave way. I could not but notice the difference between the advance of Infantry & Cavalry. The latter do everything on a dash, & if not carried at once, fall back; but Infantry advance slower, more deliberately, & are not so easily discouraged.⁵²

Forced to withdraw from their position at Burnt Quarter by the collapse of the Confederate left, W. H. F. Lee's unit fought off a charge by some of Custer's brigades and supported a rearguard stand by General Corse that allowed the remaining Confederates to retreat west and northwest. Some took White Oak Road west, some followed a farm path leading north to William Dabney's farm, and others found their way northwest through the woods. After two days of exhausting battles and marching, the bulk of the Federal troops did not follow, except for a short pursuit by some of Custer's command. Samuel Gilliam escaped with W. H. F. Lee, but not until after checking to see if his sister had been evacuated. His mother stayed in the house at Burnt Quarter.

The day ended with a massive victory for the Union. Thousands of prisoners (at least 2,063 captured) had been taken and Pickett's division had been decimated. The V Corps reported 75 dead, 506 wounded, and 53 missing—cavalry losses were likely much lighter.⁵³ Sheridan, with relatively few losses, now controlled the crossroads. In the morning he would be able to strike out toward the Southside Railway and roll up the Confederate western flank. Upon hearing the news of the victory at Five Forks, Grant ordered an all-out assault on the Petersburg defenses, which he later explained as follows: "I was afraid that Lee would regard the possession of Five Forks as of so much importance that he would make a last desperate effort to retake it, risking everything upon the cast of a single die. It was for this reason that I had ordered the assault to take place at once, as soon as I had received the news of the capture of Five Forks."⁵⁴ Lee had in fact decided that the defense of Richmond and Petersburg was no longer tenable and prepared to make a desperate dash west for a rendezvous with Johnson. In the week that followed the battle at Five Forks, Union forces maneuvered to cut off this route, actions that ultimately ended with Lee's surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House.

In the post-battle analysis that followed, it was clear that the Confederate defense had been hampered by the absence of Pickett and Fitzhugh Lee. The pyramidal command hierarchy that had developed during the war served to slow the Confederate response to the V Corps attack. After observing the massing of the V Corps near Gravelly Run Church in the opening stages of the battle, Munford's troops took up an advantageous position east of the breastworks, where the federal forces would be subject to fire while crossing Tom Bass' field. Munford "asked General Ransom for his artillery, and he would not let me have it. I urged him to open on the Fifth Corps. He said Pickett was in command. *Pickett was not in command, in person.*"⁵⁵ Compounding the problem, Munford's dismounted cavalry was not the best unit to resist a heavy infantry assault, a vulnerability that Pickett may have remedied if present to see the developing threat. Another critical opportunity to better meet the weight of the attack on the left was lost when Steuart and Mayo balked at sending Ransom reinforcements from their section of the breastworks without authorization from Pickett. The ranking officer was W. H. F. Lee on the far right, a cavalry officer who typically operated independently of an infantry command.

Sheridan believed he was hampered by his command as well. Without fully understanding the larger picture, Sheridan thought Warren too slow to organize for the attack, failed to lead from the front, and was not in place to rectify a disorderly attack. Unfortunately for Warren, Grant also harbored a belief that he was too

cautious and instructed Sheridan that he might replace Warren if warranted. Sheridan relieved Warren of his command at the moment V Corps was carrying the battlefield. After years of requesting a review of what he believed a miscarriage of justice, Warren finally received word that a court of inquiry would be convened in 1879 (conveniently after Grant's presidency had ended). A meticulous recounting of the battle from many witnesses from both the Union and Confederate armies exonerated Warren, but unfortunately not before he died in 1882. Whether justified or not, Sheridan's impetuous discharge of Warren's command adds another interesting layer to the history of the battle.

The Warren Inquiry also revealed several significant aspects of the battlefield's landscape. Roads, clearings, woods, swampy ground, and ravines played a role in the layout of defenses and the plan of attack. Pickett may have been counting on ravines, swampy ground, and underbrush near the Angle to form a natural defense. Munford described the general area near Five Forks in the following terms:

The woods were thick; it was interspersed with little ravines full of springs, and it was very boggy. The land was natural loam. There were but few roads at Hatcher's Run. It is generally a boggy country, and the most indifferent land for cavalry to move in, and in those low points you could not move many infantry. Our horse artillery, which generally went everywhere with us, we did not dare carry in there, simply because they would have been stuck there.⁵⁶

Nevertheless, McGregor had four pieces of horse artillery, but they had likely been pulled into position from White Oak Road. Because of the condition of the roads, Federal troops had no artillery support during the battle.

The battle also showed that even a quickly constructed breastwork could be an effective defensive position. Behind their breastworks along White Oak Road, the Confederate defenders were able to hold off the dismounted federal cavalry. The fact that the refused works at the Angle had only about an approximately 60-yard field of cleared fire may have reduced its effectiveness.

Woods played an important part in the battle as it unfolded. Soldiers from both sides took cover behind trees. Dense stands hid Union infantry movements, which were important given that the Confederates expected attack from the right. The forests and even short pines also obscured cooperation between friendly units. Union general Crawford suggested that the wooded and tough terrain accounted in part for why his forces lost contact with Ayers 2nd Division.⁵⁷ The terrain and dense woods were blamed for the acoustical shadow that masked the sound of battle from Pickett and fellow generals at the shad bake, with disastrous effect on the Confederate command.

Structures and buildings served as waypoints, defensive positions, and in one case, a hospital. Federal generals met at James Boisseau's house to discuss plans for the attack; James Moody's house marked one part of the staging area; and Gravelly Run Church became a field hospital. Twenty-six-year-old Union Gen. Frederic Winthrop died at the church from wounds he received at the Angle. The Bass house, Syndor/Sidney house, the Chimneys, Burnt Quarter and outbuildings all appear repeatedly in the Warren Inquiry testimony as sites of defensive positions or battlefield landmarks.

The landscape around Five Forks in the immediate aftermath of the battle would still have been marked by the horrors of war. With the wounded carried off the fields and out of the woods to the hospital, what remained was to bury the dead. Mrs. Gilliam reported that after the battle her lawn and garden were so littered with dead horses that it took days to drag them away.⁵⁸ In some instances the soldiers were buried where they died, such as Richard Bail of the 2nd Ohio Cavalry, who was killed by a shell fragment.

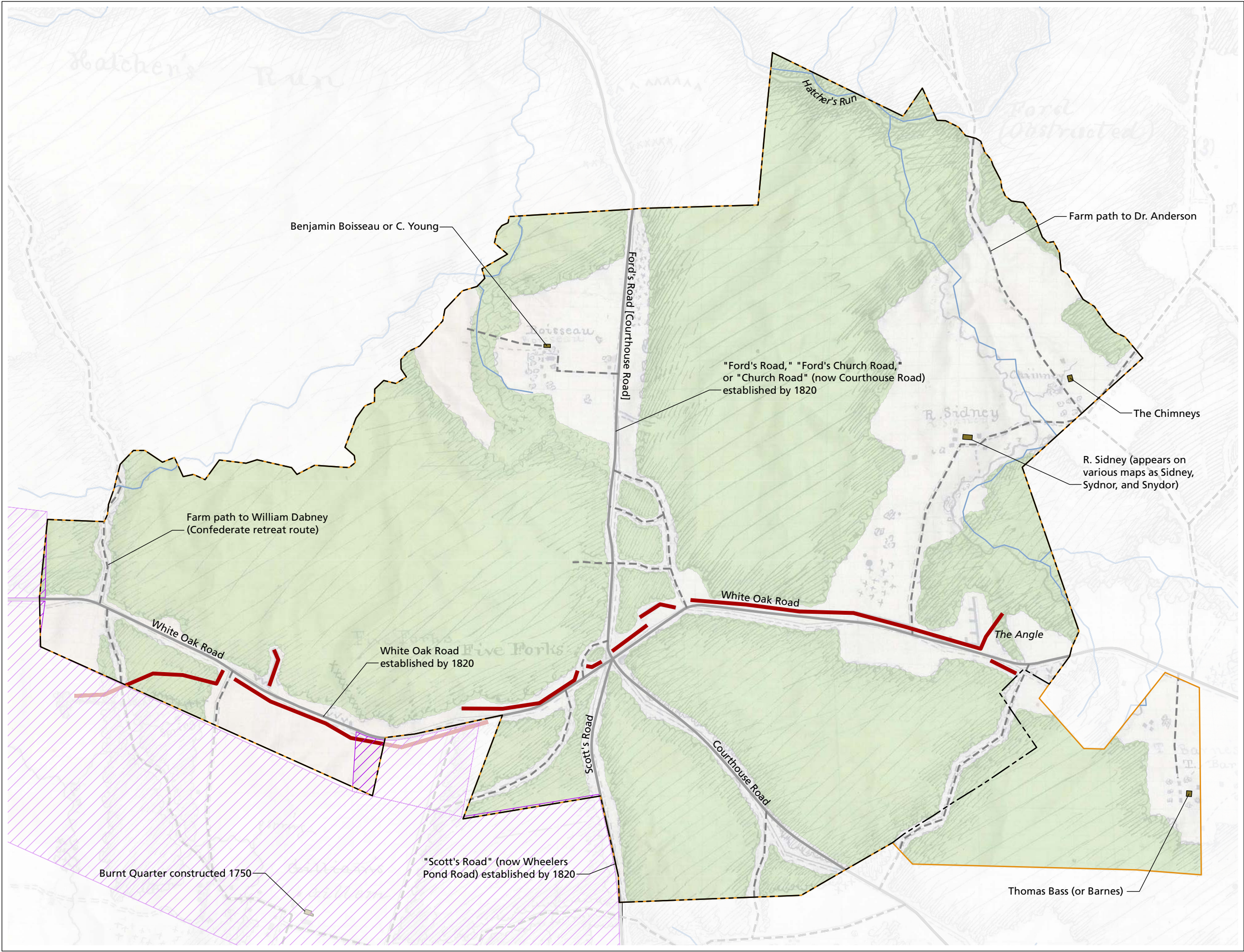
After we had finished the victory late in the night, Sergt. Randall and some of his [Richard's] comrades buried his body with that of Sergt. Rose of A. A. who was killed near him when they fell. They marked their grave by driving down round poles at the head and foot of the grave.⁵⁹

The most visible physical symbol of the battle was the breastworks running along White Oak Road. In some places abatis further bolstered the works. The remains of Munford's line along White Oak Road east of the Angle was likely still evident. More hastily built breastworks and rifle pits could be found along the western edge of Sydnor/Sydney field near the White Oak Road works where the Confederates had tried to make a stand.⁶⁰ Samuel Gilliam described these as "timber and logs thrown together very hastily, with a little dirt thrown up in front of them, as if a man had done it in a hurry—rapidly."⁶¹ Homes and other buildings were damaged in the fight. A Confederate artillery round destroyed one chimney at Burnt Quarter and Federals allegedly vandalized the home's interior after occupying it. The Sydnor/Sidney house, which had been used initially by Confederates to fire at the Union advance, was undoubtedly damaged in the firefight. Any fence rails in the vicinity had been pulled down for breastworks. Woods in the line of fire were holed or splintered, and fields bore the marks of thousands of boots.

Landscape Summary, 1865

Refer to Figure 23, 1865 Period Plan.

The principal roads forming the Five Forks intersection were all established by 1820 in more or less the same alignments as they exist today. Located nearby was the oldest farmstead in the region—Burnt Quarter—which was built in stages beginning in 1750 southwest of the intersection. The Burnt Quarter plantation connected to the east-west corridor of White Oak Road in several places. By 1865, there were several other farmsteads located near the intersection that opened onto White Oak Road or the north-south route of Courthouse Road, then called "Ford's Road" or "Ford's Church Road." These included the land owned by Benjamin Boisseau west of Courthouse Road, property owned by R. Sidney (variously spelled Sydnor and Snyder) to the northeast, and a property known as The Chimneys, also to the northeast. At the time the Battle of Five Forks was waged on April 1, 1865, much of the landscape surrounding the intersection was wooded and marked by deep ravines and swampy ground. The majority of the cleared areas occurred in association with farmstead building clusters. Just prior to the battle, Confederate forces under the command of Major General George Pickett built hastily constructed earthen fortifications to protect their position along White Oak Road as a way to defend further advancement by Major General Philip Sheridan's army toward the last supply line and evacuation route serving Richmond and Petersburg—the South Side Railroad. The earthworks extended to either side of the roadway.



Cultural Landscape Report

Petersburg National Battlefield
Dinwiddie, Virginia

Five Forks Battlefield
1865 Period Plan



National Park Service
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
www.nps.gov/oclp

SOURCES

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2. Michler, N. "Map of the battlefield of Five-Forks" 1865
3. Perham, A.S. "Map...battle of Five Forks...1865" n.d.
4. Thompson, G. "Five Forks, VA" 1866
5. Michler, N. "Petersburg and Five Forks" 1867
6. NPS Landsnet Boundaries and Tracts

DRAWN BY

Christina Osborn, ArcGIS Pro 3.1, 2023

LEGEND

- CLI Boundary
- Legislative Boundary
- Burnt Quarter Conservation Easement
- Woods
- Road
- Farm road
- Earthworks
- Building

NOTES

1. Projection: WGS84 / UTM NAD83 / State Plane NAD83 / etc.
2. All features shown in approximate scale and location

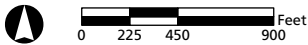


Figure 23

Aftermath of War, Reconstruction, and Local Agriculture prior to Park Establishment, 1866–1926

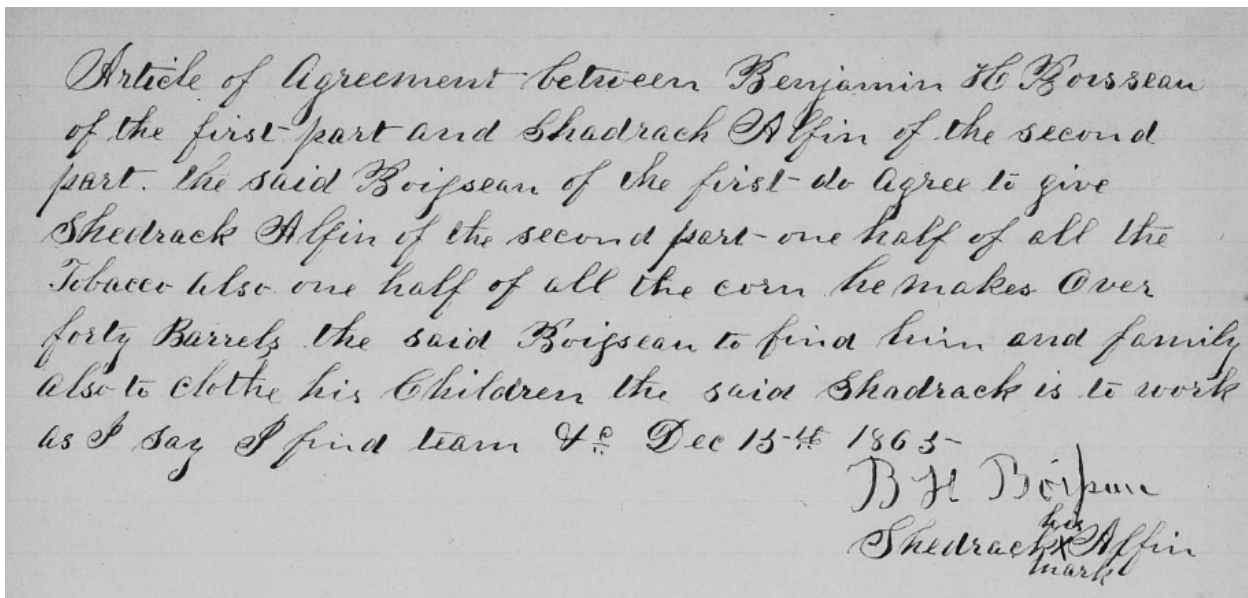
To Virginians, changes wrought by the Civil War must have felt like a world turned upside down. After the war the southern economy was in shambles, with much of its industry, railroads, agricultural production, and cities destroyed. A significant percentage of its male population between the ages of 16 and 40 counted as casualties of war—either dead, wounded, or missing. Amputees and others with disfiguring or debilitating battle injuries were a common sight. Beyond the cost of war, the end of the “peculiar institution”—slavery—recast the South’s political, economic, and cultural future. Passage of the 13th and 14th Amendments between 1865 and 1866 abolished slavery and granted citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the United States and gave them equal protection under the laws. Legislation only went so far—hard questions of what to do with emancipated enslaved peoples, many without land or immediate means of employment, lay ahead. Establishment of the Freedmen’s Bureau was one government attempt to address those problems. The bureau was tasked with providing food and medical aid, establishing schools, and adjudicating legal disputes, among other efforts to help newly freed people in the South. Former enslaved men and free Blacks were allowed to vote as a means of affecting change for themselves. Ellis Wilson, characterized in the federal census as “mulatto,” was elected to the Virginia state legislature in 1869 from Dinwiddie County.⁶² The period of Reconstruction had begun.

In practice, Reconstruction proved that old ways die hard. Less than a year after Appomattox, southern state legislatures passed “Black Codes” to severely limit the rights of “persons of color,” defined by Virginia code as “having one-fourth or more of negro blood” (South Carolina’s definition was one-eighth).⁶³ Virginia’s Vagrancy Law, enacted in 1866 typical of such efforts, allowed sheriffs to detain persons meeting specific conditions of vagrancy and hire them out “for the best wages that can be procured” for a term not to exceed three months. The commanding general of the U.S. Army in Virginia, Alfred Terry, saw through the intent of the law: “. . . the ultimate effect of the statute will be to reduce the freedmen to a condition of servitude worse than that from which they have been emancipated—a condition which will be slavery in all but its name.”⁶⁴ At the same time, riots in Memphis and New Orleans to suppress political representation resulted in scores of Blacks killed and wounded, many by ex-Confederate soldiers. Outraged by such brazen maneuvers and incidents of violence, congressional leaders pushed through two Reconstruction Acts in 1867, past President Andrew Johnson’s veto, bringing military occupation of several southern states to enforce citizen’s rights afforded under federal law. Further efforts to safeguard political enfranchisement (for males over 21 years old) came with ratification of the 15th Amendment in 1870 and a series of Enforcement Acts.

Despite the Reconstruction Amendments, southern Whites re-established a power structure that endeavored to deny Black Americans their civil rights, in part due to the remarkable treatment of former bitter enemies after the war. Setting the tone, Grant paroled Lee after his surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House and allowed him to go home. Very few former Confederates were jailed or otherwise held accountable for the secession, including Confederate Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, who was at one time considered a war criminal for his role in the Fort Pillow Massacre.⁶⁵ The conciliatory attitude toward the former Confederacy was exemplified by President Johnson’s choice of July 4, the national celebration of the country’s independence, to issue a blanket amnesty for all former Confederates in 1868. Former Confederates received their property back, and in most cases could vote and serve in government—prohibitions against Confederate officers and government officials from standing for public office were poorly enforced and soon dropped. As one example of the world turned upside down, the infamous Confederate guerilla leader John Mosby became a trusted ally of Ulysses Grant during his presidency.

Reconstruction and Jim Crow weighed heavily in Dinwiddie County, with one of the largest Black American populations in the state, a legacy of its high percentage of enslaved people during the antebellum era.⁶⁶ Of the county's population of 30,702 in 1870, 17,664 were recorded as Black. At least 120 enslaved people were working on the six farms surrounding the Five Forks intersection prior to the war. What happened to them after the war ended is not yet documented. What is better known are general patterns of economic development, employment, agriculture, and property and home ownership in the Five Forks area, into which those who stayed built their lives.

During Reconstruction, the plantation system in Virginia—largely built on enslaved labor—underwent a transition to “owned” farming or tenant and sharecropping arrangements. Tenancy typically involved renting out a portion or all of a farm for a set fee, either with room and board or without. In most cases tenants had to supply their own equipment but a variety of agreements could be made. Letting out a farm for share of the crop, and in some cases, orchards, poultry, and livestock, was another common arrangement. Lastly, farmhands could hire themselves out for wages. One study noted that payments for labor were typically made only once a year, just before Christmas.⁶⁷ As part of end of the plantation system, the average size of farms in Virginia decreased from 324 acres in 1860 to 160 acres in 1898, a postwar trend experienced across the South.⁶⁸ In 1870 Dinwiddie County, an agricultural survey reported the 70 percent of farms were farmed by owners, 11 percent by tenant farmers, and 19 percent by shares.⁶⁹ By 1898 those percentages shifted slightly to 59 percent farmed by owners, 22 percent rented for cash, and 19 percent by shares (Figure 24). The average farm hand wage in 1898 in Dinwiddie County was \$0.40 per 12 hour day or \$6.50 per month (by comparison, a clerk averaged about \$15.00 and city school teachers \$61.47 per month).⁷⁰



Article of Agreement between Benjamin B. Boisseau of the first part and Shadrack Affin of the second part. The said Boisseau of the first do agree to give Shadrack Affin of the second part one half of all the Tobacco also one half of all the corn he makes Over forty Barrels the said Boisseau to find him and family also to clothe his Children the said Shadrack is to work as I say I find team &c Dec 15-1865-
B. B. Boisseau
Shadrack Affin

FIGURE 24. Share agreement between Benjamin Boisseau and Shadrack Affin for farming, December 15, 1865. (Source: Dinwiddie County)

Between 1875 and 1895 Reconstruction lost its political strength, the US Army left the South, and the era of “Jim Crow” took hold. Many southern states followed the “Mississippi Plan” enacted by the state legislature of Mississippi in 1890 that established poll taxes, literacy tests, grandfather clauses, and residency requirements—backed up by intimidation—to disenfranchise Black Americans and give control of state politics to the Democratic Party. Supreme Court decisions such as *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 that gave legal sanction to the principle of segregation based on “separate but equal” treatment eroded any semblance of racial equality. In 1902 Democrats in the Virginia General Assembly put forward a state constitution modelled

on the Mississippi Plan. Dinwiddie County's delegate Judge Branch Jones Epes, ex-Confederate captain in Johnson's Virginia Heavy Artillery, voted for the new constitution.⁷¹

The transition from Reconstruction to Jim Crow was aided in part by a memorialization movement that emerged after the war's end. It began with initiatives to honor the war dead in national cemeteries and a concomitant effort to locate and reinter soldiers buried at the vast number of battlefield sites. One of the first national cemeteries was established at Gettysburg to inter the enormous number of soldiers killed there. The dedication of the Union cemetery at Gettysburg in November 1863, according to one historian, "marked a new departure in the assumption of national responsibility for the dead and a new acknowledgement of their importance to the nation as well as to their individual families." The national cemetery at Gettysburg proved the exception, for even after the war at the vast majority of other Civil War battlefields, whether Fredericksburg, Cold Harbor, Wilderness, or Five Forks, the dead "still lie substantially where they fell, with such poor burial as our troops could then give them" as one advocate for the national cemetery program put it.⁷² In one poignant memory, Thomas Boisseau recounted what was likely a common scene in the sites of former battles across the South:

In the winter of 1865 a gentleman (a Federal soldier) came to my home, which is about two miles from "Five Forks"; he remained with me overnight. He stated, "He, with his brother, was in that battle. His brother was killed in a body of woods on the Gilliam farm, and he placed his body under a pine tree, which had been cut down and had not fallen from the stump, covered the body with dirt and leaves the best he could. By his request, I went with him in search of the body of his brother, and being acquainted with the plantation ("Burnt Quarter"), having spent many days (when a boy), more than sixty-five years ago (hunting over it). Learning from him the facts connected with the description of the locality of the pine tree, we soon located the tree, and from under it recovered the body of his brother."⁷³

Between 1865 and 1871 the US Army Quartermasters led an extensive recovery effort to identify where possible and re-bury soldiers at national cemeteries. Union dead from around Petersburg—including Dinwiddie County—were reinterred at Poplar Grove National Cemetery in Petersburg.

From the national and battle-site cemeteries movement emerged a widespread enthusiasm for erecting monuments and preserving battlefields. Not a year had passed after the epic clash between armies at Gettysburg when the Pennsylvania state legislature enacted a measure in April 1864 to incorporate the Gettysburg Battle-Field Memorial Association to subscribe and fund preservation of the battle grounds "... as they were at the time of said battle, and by such perpetuation, and such memorial structures as a generous and patriotic people may aid to erect, to commemorate the heroic deeds, the struggles, and the triumphs of their brave defenders." Without further comment on how the erection of such memorial structures might conflict with the purpose of preserving the site as it was during the battle, the act also allowed for efforts to "... improve and ornament the grounds and to erect and promote the erection by voluntary contributions of structures and works of art and taste thereon, adapted to designate the spots of special interest, to commemorate the great deeds of valor, endurance, and noble self-sacrifice." The act also authorized construction of roads and planting rows or colonnades of trees along the roads to access the monuments and spots of special interest.⁷⁴

Early "preservation" of Gettysburg was driven by the erection of monuments to commemorate specific regiments from various states. Initially Pennsylvania, and to a lesser degree Minnesota, were the only states to allocate funds for purchasing land and to construct monuments and tablets. Year by year, the association wrangled money to acquire prioritized parts of the battlefield, such as the Wheat Field, add avenues, and mark prominent points on battlefield with signs. Frustrated with the lack of contributions from other states, the association placed temporary signs to mark the location of the Pennsylvania regiments more widely. The board reported the following year that "placing of these cheap boards had the desired effect. Visitors from other States, in passing over the field, would inquire with indignation whether there were no other troops

than Pennsylvanians engaged in the battle, and upon being informed that only the States of Pennsylvania and Minnesota had made appropriations, naturally became desirous of having their States properly represented. Public interest was thus gradually being awakened.”⁷⁵ Monuments at Gettysburg thus tapped something individual and personal, representing communities who fought and died there together.

Monuments also served another role, that of an aid to military professionals studying the battle—a key stated purpose of the battlefield preservation movement. The Gettysburg Battle-Field Memorial Association spent considerable energy ensuring that markers and monuments accurately represented the various regiments’ position on the battlefield, correctly listed numbers involved and casualties, and negotiating conflicts about placement and attribution of roles in the battle. The association also appointed a board to approve monuments and markers that met common standards for design, information, fonts, and materials.

Gettysburg laid the groundwork for a more national effort to preserve other Civil War battlefields. A groundswell of support culminated in the establishment of the first national military park in 1890 at Chickamauga and Chattanooga under the War Department “. . . for the purpose of preserving and suitably marking for historical and professional military study the fields of some of the most remarkable maneuvers and most brilliant fighting in the War of the Rebellion.”⁷⁶ Chickamauga and Chattanooga followed the Gettysburg monument model. Between 1890 and 1930, more than 1,000 stone and bronze monuments were placed to represent various regiments and their movements during the battle. What differed was that the national military park included Confederate regiments. Gettysburg had allowed placement of a single Confederate monument (1st Maryland Infantry Battalion) in 1884 but some thirty-three years passed before another Confederate monument was approved in 1917.⁷⁷ In contrast, Chickamauga and Chattanooga reflected the reintegration of the South through a reconciliation of memory—coming at the same time Reconstruction was giving way to Jim Crow. The dedication was attended by thousands of veterans of the battle on both sides, which became characteristic of many memorializations of the Civil War as the nineteenth century wore on. Between 1890 and 1900 four other battlefields—at Antietam, Shiloh, Vicksburg, and Gettysburg—were designated national military parks through a transfer from the memorial association to federal management. Although the four parks represented sites of major Civil War battles, the absence of any national military park in Virginia was conspicuous, given its importance during the war.

In the background, the heavy presence of the Civil War that remained many years after Appomattox burned in the hearts of some disgraced or dishonored officers who turned to memoirs, newspapers, courts of inquiry, and even battlefields as tools to exonerate their past conduct. Union General Rosecrans, for example, was instrumental in gathering support for the Chickamauga and Chattanooga park. Late in 1863 Grant, recently promoted to overall command of federal forces in the west, had relieved Rosecrans of his command after his defeat at Chickamauga, which had nearly destroyed the Army of the Cumberland. “Rosecrans remained bitter towards Grant for the rest of his life,” notes an American Battlefield Trust biography, which he expressed in a letter to his friend James Garfield: “I consider my present situation an outrage on justice having few parallels in this or any other War. But I am a firm believer in the final downfall of iniquity.”⁷⁸ Rosecrans no doubt would have approved newspaper coverage of his arrival at Chickamauga in 1889 to help lay out the boundaries of the proposed military park, which was also attended by large numbers of veterans of the battles on both sides.

General Rosecrans, the projector and effective manager of the two greatest strategic campaigns of our war, or, for that matter, that of any war was revisiting the fields where history will not fail to award him renown. He had left them under a cloud of misrepresentation, and was now returning for the first time since his achievements have become generally understood and appreciated. It was a triumphal progress for him.⁷⁹

In the South, the cemetery and memorialization effort was led by women, who created Ladies’ Memorial Associations to oversee reinterment of Confederate dead. According to one historian, these associations in

Winchester, Fredericksburg, Petersburg, Lynchburg, and Richmond “alone reinterred more than 72,520 remains, nearly 28 percent of the South’s total war dead.”⁸⁰ The Ladies’ Memorial Association of Petersburg organized the reburial of 30,000 Confederate soldiers in Blandford Cemetery in the southeast part of town. “Grand commemorations” to dedicate such cemeteries drew thousands, inaugurating what became an annual memorial day. In Richmond, for example, on May 10, 1866, all businesses closed, and some 20,000 people (nearly half the city’s population) turned out for a solemn day of laying flowers on the graves, listening to speeches, and remembering the dead. Special attention was given to a visit by veterans to the grave of Colonel William R. J. Pegram, the young artillery commander killed at Five Forks. A tribute in the *Richmond Dispatch* thanked the Virginia women for their care of the cemetery and imagined that those from other states could now be confident that they had honorably preserved:

... the remains of every Confederate soldier who sleeps within her broad domain, whether he be her own child, or only adopted when the rude hand of war sent him to repose forever under her battle-scarred bosom. The Carolinas and Alabama, Georgia and Texas, Mississippi and Florida, all have their representatives in this State, and the States of the south have been cemented together by blood shed in a common cause until there is no rivalry left except as to which shall show the most honor and gratitude to the other. Every battle-field and every soldier who feel in the southern cause is a link to bind us together; and this tie no time can weaken or force of circumstances dissolve.⁸¹

From such sentiments, it is clear to see why one history of national cemeteries saw “. . . what was to become the cult of the Lost Cause in the latter decades of the century found an origin in the rituals of Confederate reburials.”⁸² Together with the Lost Cause rhetoric and projects, the memorialization and monuments movement kept the spirit of Confederacy alive and renewed a cultural overlay that continued the prewar legacy of racial discrimination.

Given the thousands of Civil War battlefields, and those associated with other wars as well, the War Department faced a challenging question of which potential military parks to support or reject. Consequently, the War Department commissioned a survey in 1925 by the Historical Section of the Army War College to prioritize the vast number of sites for potential protection. The survey categorized battlefields in terms of three classes: Class I, Class II (a) and Class II (b). For Class I sites, those worthy of national military park status, the report recommended:

It is the view of the War Department that national military parks should as a general thing cover a comparatively large area of ground, probably some thousands of acres, and so marked and improved as to make them into real parks available for detailed study by military authorities, the battle lines and operations being clearly indicated on the ground. The expense of maintaining such a park is so great as to indicate that the number should be kept fairly low.

Less important and extensive engagements which have nevertheless a definite military and political effect should be listed under the second category, the idea being that limited areas of ground on the site of the battle could be purchased and appropriately marked and the whole aggregation of separate areas designated as a national monument.⁸³

The report put “battles around Petersburg and the James River, Virginia between June 15, 1864 and April 2, 1865” involving the Army of the Potomac on the list of Class II (a) sites, “battles of far-reaching importance, in which the numbers engaged and the losses sustained, or the resultant military or political effects, were so great as to warrant their inclusion,” but not sufficiently important to warrant large land acquisitions or expense maintenance projects. For Class II (a) battlefields “it would be sufficient to mark the battle lines as on the field at Antietam, otherwise the battle might be commemorated as an important historical event by the erection of a single monument.”⁸⁴ Although the War Department report set no schedules and offered no acquisition plan for the recommendations, the stage was set for establishing some kind of national military park in the vicinity of Petersburg to capture some of the most important battlegrounds of the last year of the war.

Other developments that affected the area around Five Forks came toward the end of the nineteenth century as industrialization and urbanization began to transform the economy of the United States more broadly. Between 1875 and 1880, the percentage of agricultural workers in the nation's overall workforce fell for the first time below 50 percent—and the percentage continued to decline in the twentieth century. A number of technological developments shaped and contributed to this shift, including the expansion of railroad and telegraph networks, the introduction of commercial telephone and electrical service after 1880 and 1890, respectively, and the advent of automobiles and aircraft in early twentieth century. Widespread adoption of automobiles was accompanied by the “Good Roads Movement” that promoted road improvement projects from interstate highways to rural dirt roads. According to the federal agricultural census, mechanization, the application of scientific knowledge, and improved methods of agricultural production led to a “revolution” in farming in the early twentieth century that in the long run dramatically reduced the number of agricultural workers in the United States.⁸⁵ Such trends and technologies, however, were slow to come to Dinwiddie County and other parts of the South.

Compared to other regions, the South lagged behind the rest of the country in use of telephones, electricity, trucks, tractors, and automobiles on farms. The 1920 agricultural census reported that only 20 percent of southern farms had phones, 3 percent had electricity, 2 percent were using tractors, and 13 percent had automobiles.⁸⁶ Until well into the twentieth century few rural residents and farms had access to electricity, since it was expensive to extend lines out to areas with few customers.

Five Forks Battlefield, 1866–1926

Aside from the absence of the wounded, Five Forks would still have borne the marks of battle for some days. The gruesome task of disposing of the dead horses and burying soldiers, typically where they had fallen, was the first order of business. Although Sheridan's command was gone, maneuvering to trap the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House, Federal forces likely remained in the area in some fashion and may have occupied local homes as officer's quarters.

In the years immediately following the end of the war, the Quartermasters re-interment project exhumed and reburied at least thirty-four Union dead at Poplar Grove National Cemetery in Petersburg. They found five cavalymen buried in Mrs. Gilliam's yard, including Captain Uriah W. Parmelee of the 1st Connecticut; an unknown soldier in Mr. Bass's garden; four buried near the breastworks one-half-mile from Five Forks; and nine known and eight unknown soldiers buried by Gravelly Run Church, used as a field hospital during the battle.⁸⁷ Local Ladies' Memorial Associations may have been similarly active around Five Forks reinterring Confederate dead. A monument to six unknown Confederates buried in Mrs. Gilliam's yard at Burnt Quarter still stands on the grounds, although the soldiers were reinterred elsewhere at some point.

Breastworks and Other Defenses

Two sources—Cotton's map produced for Warren Inquiry and associated testimony in 1880, and a diary kept by local attorney and Dinwiddie County resident Walter A. Watson in 1907—suggest that the breastworks and other defensive works were still clearly discernible at the time. During his survey, Cotton found the main Confederate breastworks along White Oak Road and the Angle still in place. Cotton's testimony described traverses in the refused section of the breastworks at the Angle. Confederate artillery was emplaced at a section of this refused line, which may explain the presence of traverses here and not elsewhere on the breastworks along White Oak Road. Cotton also notes the scant remains of the Confederate attempt to reform a defensive position along the west side of the Syndor/Sidney field.

Q. You found no works farther north than this return? A. No, sir; they rest within 60 feet of quite a deep ravine. Through the woods, not located here, I would find occasional man-holes, man pits, large enough to hold three or four men; but they are not located. On this map this “refuse” has frequent traverses.⁸⁸

Q. Did you find any long traverse on the main line of works? A. No, sir. At the west of the Sidney or Sydnor field, along the edge of the woods, it did not require imagination to make a good line along there; the logs and tree and remnants we found there, and I was told that there was a line, but there was no earth upon it, and nothing by which I could determine it satisfactorily . . . I could not identify it as being an intrenched line.⁸⁹

A later reconnaissance of Five Forks in 1907 by Watson found the breastworks still evident, which he recorded in his daily journal:

Dec. 22. Left Richmond at 12:30 for Dinwiddie. Rode out to Five Forks horseback to see the battle field of April 1st, 1865. The Confederate earthwork is extant all the way from the Forks on the north side of and immediately beside the White Oak Road to a point one-half mile or more east, where it bends off in a northeast course a hundred yards or more. At some points no embankment is visible. West of the Forks, after going some distance up White Oak Road, you again find it—now south of road three quarters of a mile perhaps, on "Burnt Quarter"—S. Y. Gilliam's—ending in the vicinity of a large white oak which was undoubtedly there in '65. There is a cannon ball hole in the house at "Burnt Quarter," fired by a Confederate gun. The chimney of the house was knocked down.

March 26. Finish Court this A.M. and Cutler Galusha sends me by buggy to Church Road. A part of the Confederate earthworks at Five Forks—immediately on the north side of White Oak Road and east of the forks—still stand, after forty-five years. On the right of the road, going from Church Road, and south of Hatcher's Run are the chimneys of an old plantation house that is gone.⁹⁰

Unlike the breastworks, relatively solid defenses constructed of logs and rails typically secured with vertical posts, other more temporary measures such as abatis likely were removed or decayed in place. Neither Cotton nor Wood mentioned seeing abatis. The growth of trees and vegetation obscured the wider evidence of Confederate defensive positions in locations such as the west edge of the Sydnor/Sidney clearing and Munford's line east of the Angle.

The condition of the breastworks in 1926, prior to the establishment of the Petersburg National Military Park, may have suffered from some new land clearing activities near and some 750 feet east of the Five Forks intersection. The 1937 aerial shows clearing and presumably cultivation up to and along both sides of White Oak Road (Figure 25).



FIGURE 25. A 1937 aerial of Five Forks area showing possible new house construction between 1866 and 1937. (Source: Virginia Department of Transportation)

Buildings and Structures

In the aftermath of the battle a comprehensive accounting of what happened to all the buildings and structures on the battlefield is difficult to track in some cases. Burnt Quarter's manor house was repaired at some point. Tobacco farming continued in the area, but to what extent the Civil War-era tobacco barns were used is not known with certainty. Enslaved people's quarters were likely either converted to other purposes, abandoned, or torn down, eventually replaced in some cases by homes for tenant or share farmers at locations separated from the main manor house. Cotton was asked during the Warren Inquiry about new construction in the area since the battle, and provided the following response:

Q. What houses on the battle-field and immediate vicinity have been built since the time of the battle, so far as you know? A. The houses that are named, beginning near Gravelly Run church, school-house, and Brookes's, and on the "Cotton map, No.1" Heath's; they have been built since 1865, I am informed. They are not on map No.2, but they are on "Cotton map No.1".⁹¹

Review of the 1937 aerial of the Five Forks area and 1944 USGS topographical maps suggest that farmhouses may have been constructed between 1866 and 1926 at the locations indicated with red squares.

Tax records note an increase in the value of buildings between 1894 and 1895 on the Gilliam property, which may correspond to the period of new home construction on Burnt Quarter lands, then owned by Samuel

Gilliam. Gilliam served as sheriff and later treasurer of Dinwiddie County. In 1895 he was running for the Virginia House of Delegates and was relying on tenant or share farmers to farm the Burnt Quarter fields.⁹² The homes probably followed a design similar to the one built at the Five Forks intersection, a two-story, wood-sided, gable roof residence on a rectangular plan with a covered front porch (Figure 26).



FIGURE 26. Farmhouse at Five Forks intersection, 1960. (Source: *Petersburg National Battlefield*)

The 1937 aerial photograph of the Five Forks area appears to show the Benjamin Boisseau house and several outbuildings around Burnt Quarter still standing, but houses and structures in the Sydnor/Sidney property may have been abandoned or in a derelict state as the former cleared field was reverting to woods. After remaining a field hospital for some weeks after the battle, Gravelly Run Church reverted to its former use as a church.⁹³ In 1910, church leaders successfully petitioned the federal government for funds to repair damage caused by Union occupation during the battle. In 1926 the church was still extant, but was reportedly torn down in the early 1930s.⁹⁴

Landscape

The general agricultural and forested character of the area around Five Forks remained in place after the battle and the pre-Civil War owners largely retained ownership of their property. Mary Gilliam and the Burnt Quarter plantation survived the battle, but according to one source, “heavily indebted, possibly as a consequence of the ravages of war.”⁹⁵ Gilliam, however, did not resort to selling her land to pay off the debt. By 1880 Mary Gilliam had rebuilt a thriving farm at Burnt Quarter. Agricultural records listed that she had 500 acres under cultivation, 1,630 acres of woodlands, 100 “unimproved” acres including old fields, and 31 acres of apple and peach orchards with cows, 50 head of sheep, 28 pigs, and 20 chickens. Burnt Quarter had 75 acres planted in corn, 25 in oats, 9 in wheat, 12 in “pulse” (beans, legumes) crops, and 10 in tobacco. Gilliam paid out \$175 in labor over the year in an era when farm hands earned about \$0.35 for a 12-hour day.⁹⁶

Tax and census records in the first decades after the war suggest that the Boisseau, Bass, Moody, and Sydnor families also continued to own their prewar properties in the area. In 1870, the first year public schools were

established in Virginia, Thomas Bass listed his occupation as a schoolteacher and some maps from this period show a school near Gravelly Run Church. According to agricultural records, Bass also farmed. He had 30 acres under cultivation, mostly corn and some wheat, and did not report paying wages to farm hands. James Boisseau, a county judge after his service in the war, had his farm valued at \$2,200. Branch J. Epps, a “commonwealth attorney” who lived nearby, had a \$1,500 estate.⁹⁷

The 1880 Virginia agricultural census shows that most farmers around the greater Five Forks area had farms between 50 and 400 acres, mostly planted corn, some wheat and oats, with smaller amounts in tobacco (1 to 2 acres). Some farm owners reported paying labor, typically around \$50 per year. Other farms operated under lease or share arrangements.⁹⁸

When discussing the changes in the area since the battle, Cotton noted the propensity of the area to return naturally to pine forest: “In that country, in two or three years, if the cultivation is abandoned, the pines spring up quickly, and along the margin of fields pines, one, two, three or four years old.”⁹⁹ Maps by Cotton and Maxson in 1880 show that by and large, the same arrangement of clearings and woods had changed little since 1865.

Over the next fifty or so years some significant changes reconfigured the battlefield’s landscape. The 1937 aerial photograph of the areas showed that the Sydnor/Sidney field no longer appeared to be under cultivation and showed signs of reverting back to forest, perhaps after some earlier logging operations. Some of the Burnt Quarter fields west of intersection and south of White Oak Road had reverted to more densely grown forest as well. In other places, several new agricultural fields had been cleared on Gilliam lands, including irregularly shaped areas surrounding the Five Forks intersection, a large area west of the Sydnor/Sidney property, and some fields south of Five Forks and on either side of White Oak Road about 1,300 yards west of the intersection. Since tobacco exhausts the soil rather quickly, farmers in the area would be unable to sustain continuous plantings over the course of the last half of the nineteenth century, which may explain the efforts to clear new fields.

In addition to the expansion of agricultural lands, some fields from 1865 remained, including the Boisseau and Bass clearings, and some of the fields around the Burnt Quarter manor house. Where clearings were not maintained, the land reverted to pine forests.

Roads

The Civil War spelled the end for Dinwiddie County’s turnpike and plank road system. During the war Union troops commonly laid corduroyed roads to support the movement of supplies and artillery but such roads were not maintained after the war’s end. With the state’s public works focused on other post-war issues, a history of Virginia roads found that “. . . twenty-five years after the war, Virginia’s roads were far worse than when the war began.”¹⁰⁰ Through the end of the nineteenth century, Dinwiddie County had no surfaced (macadamized, asphalt, concrete, or other hard surfacing) roads outside of Petersburg.

Widespread adoption of the automobile in the early twentieth century gave impetus to road improvement programs across the nation. In Virginia, some of the counties took the lead in this effort. Dinwiddie County, for example, enacted a general road fund, and road board to manage the improvement of roads in the county in 1904. As part of this legislation, the county established a road tax on real estate and personal property to fund road improvement and maintenance.¹⁰¹ Counties also offered long-term bonds. The state followed the same model two years later by establishing a State Highway Commission in 1906, staffed by prominent civil engineers and experienced road builders, and supported by state funds, road tax levies, and registration fees from automobile registrations. The state also made convict labor available as a resource. Passage of the Federal Aid Road Act in 1916 added federal support for the development of a nationwide highway system.

The dirt roads into Five Forks received little attention between 1866 and 1908. After increased funds became available and new agencies formed to manage the work, the State Highway Commission oversaw the construction of the Dinwiddie County's first two roads surfaced roads radiating from Petersburg, the Boydton Plank Road and Cox Road—long important routes in the area. Work also began in 1910 on the improvement—with grading to approximately 20 feet wide and application of top soil to between 12 and 14 feet wide—of 15 miles of White Oak Road extending west from Petersburg, which opened “up the territory lying between the Cox Road and Boydton Plank Road.”¹⁰² The improvement and maintenance of White Oak Road was carried out with convict labor, a common method of supplying a road workforce in Virginia during the early twentieth century. In 1915 an estimated 70 percent of peanut crop and 80 percent of tobacco crop were hauled to Petersburg by wagon. Both crops required considerable fertilizer, also hauled by wagon. Cox and Halifax Roads were particularly well travelled (Figure 27 through Figure 29). In 1925 the State Highway Commission let a contract for improvement of Court House Road graded to 18 feet wide and overlaid with top soil.¹⁰³ Although “improved” and likely graded slightly wider (except for Scott Road), the roads leading into Five Fork in 1926 retained much of their character and appearance in 1865.

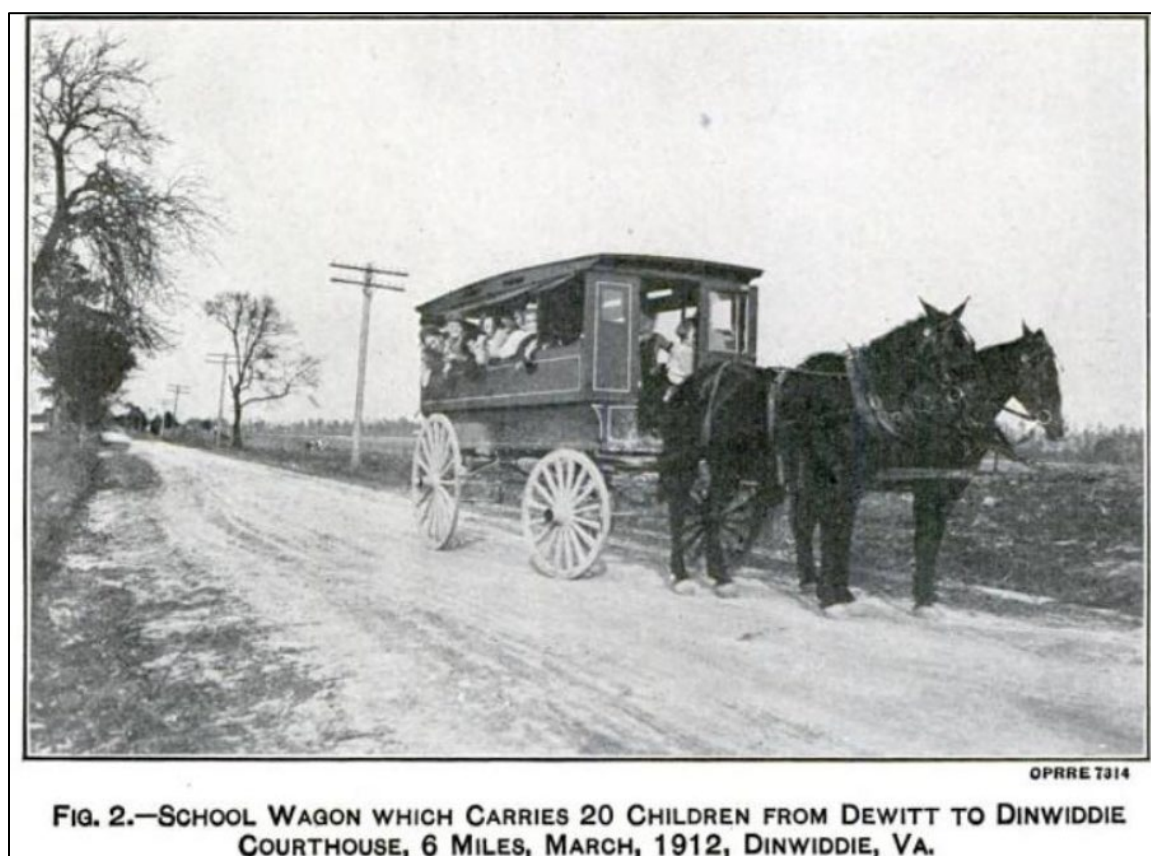


FIGURE 27. The establishment of a public school system in Virginia in 1870 created another reason to improve the state's roads. In the early twentieth century some counties such as Dinwiddie introduced the “school wagon.” (Source: J.E. Pennybacker and M.O. Eldridge, “Economic Surveys of County Highway Improvement,” US Department of Agriculture Bulletin (October 23, 1916)).

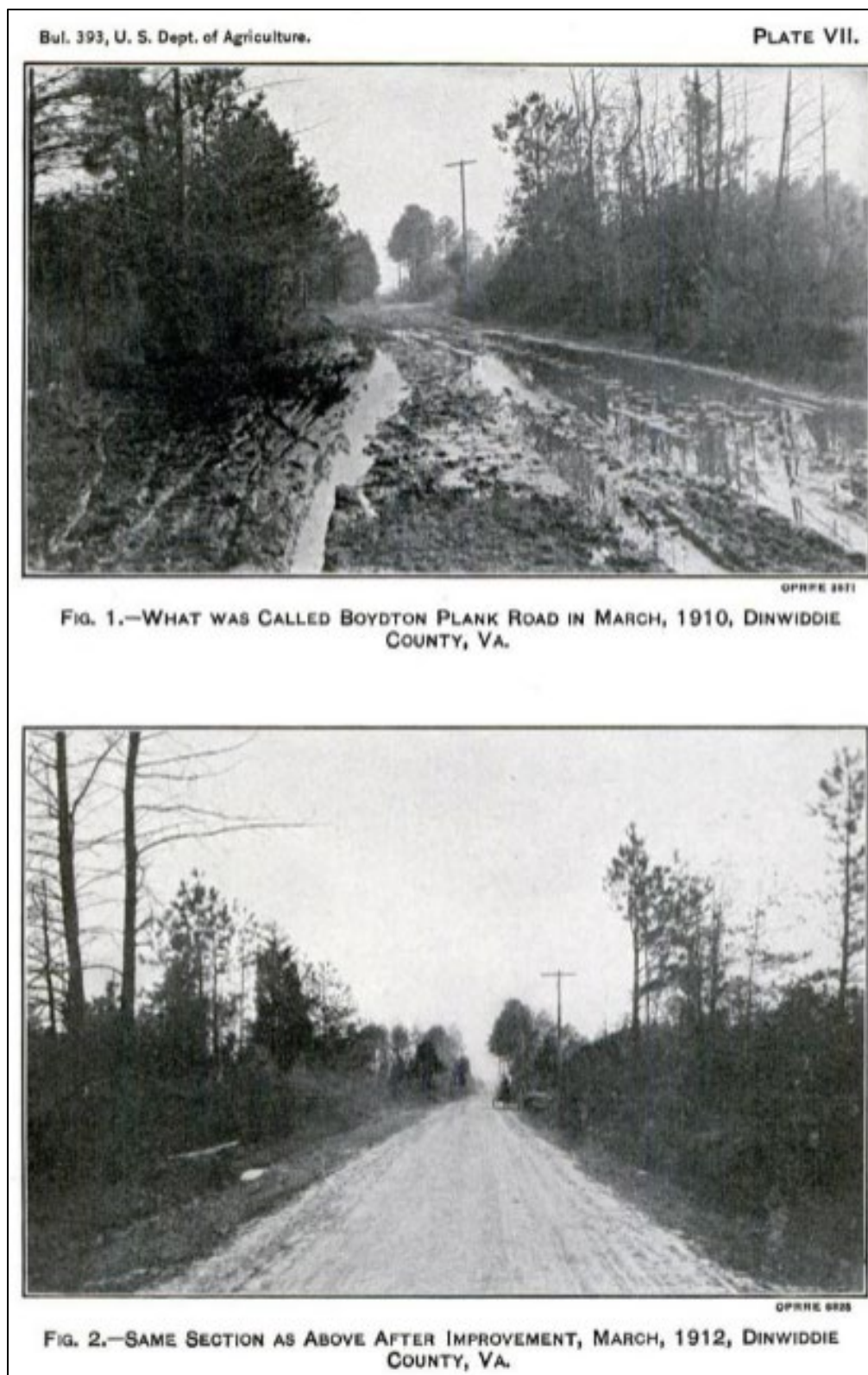


FIGURE 28. Views of roads after improvement, 1910 and 1912. (Source: J.E. Pennybacker and M.O. Eldridge, "Economic Surveys of County Highway Improvement," US Department of Agriculture Bulletin (October 23, 1916)).

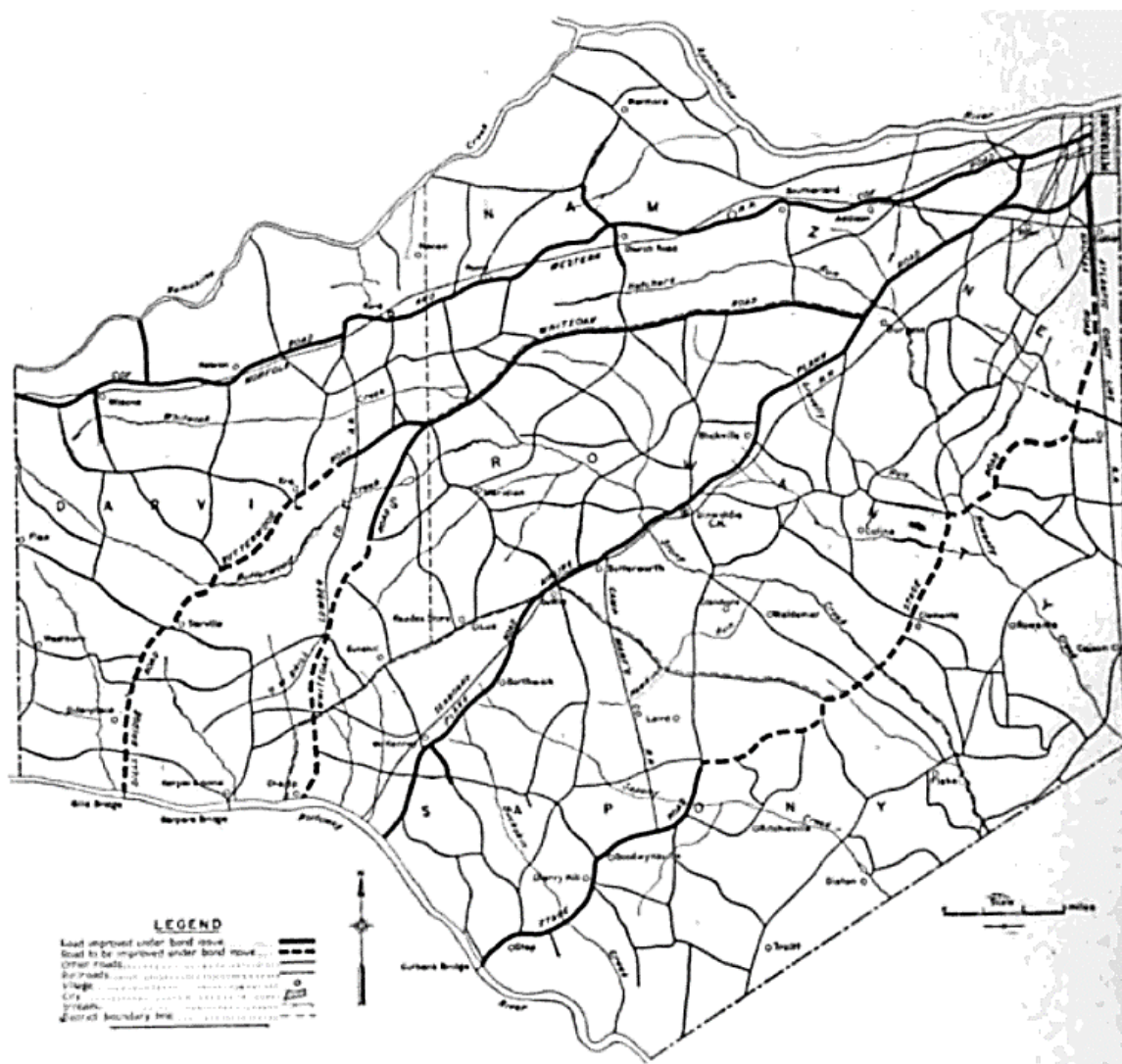


FIGURE 29. Dinwiddie road system in 1915 showing improved roads in bold. (Source: J.E. Pennybacker and M.O. Eldridge, "Economic Surveys of County Highway Improvement," US Department of Agriculture Bulletin (October 23, 1916))

Landscape Summary, 1926

Refer to Figure 30, 1926 Period Plan.

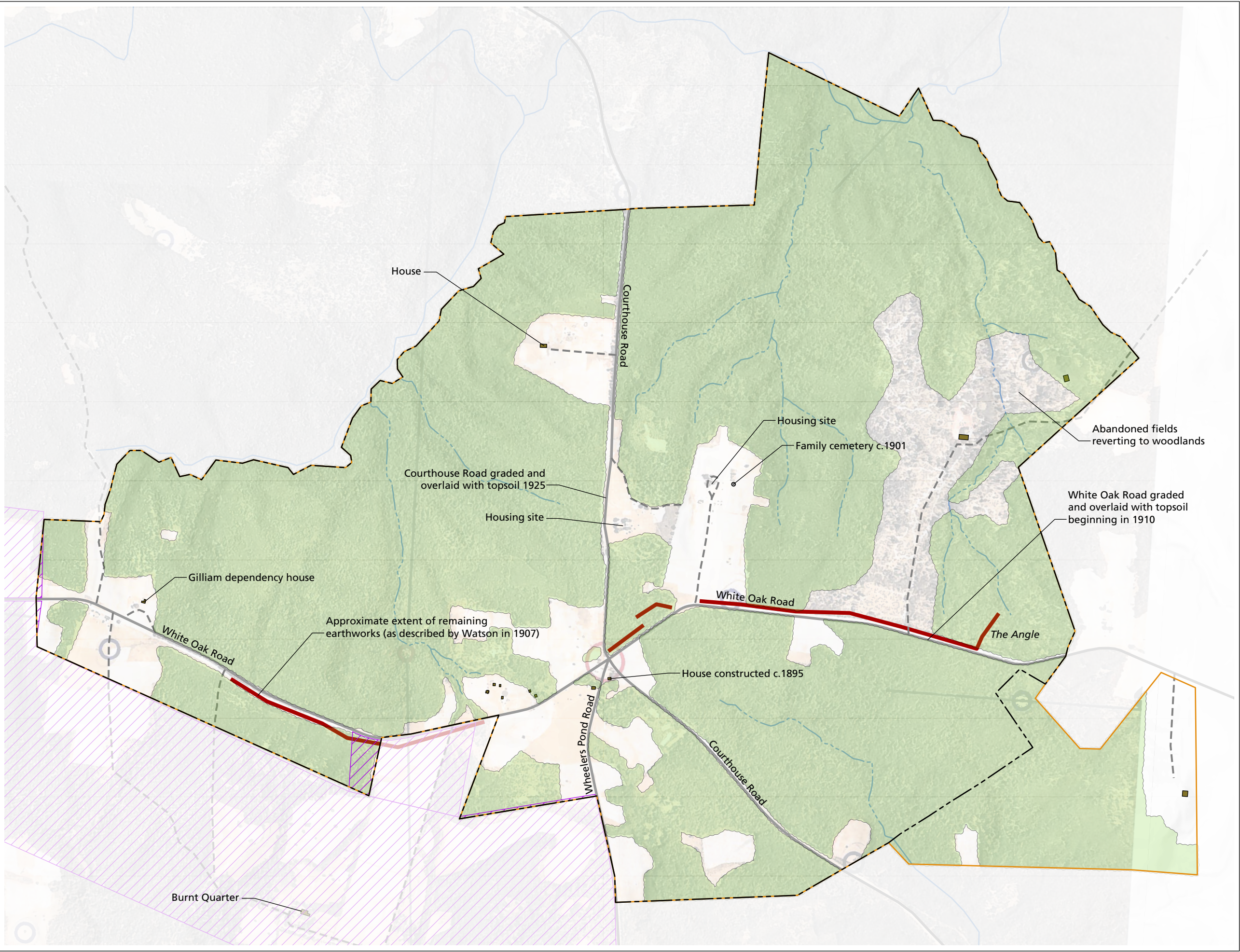
During the period between 1866 and 1926, portions of the landscape around Five Forks underwent some relatively significant changes. In terms of cultural landscape characteristics, shifts in land use, vegetation, cultural traditions, sightlines, and the arrangement of buildings and structures affected the battlefield's integrity to some degree. The more impactful changes are related to the expansion of agriculture in the vicinity of Five Forks and the introduction of the automobile. The end of slavery, a cultural tradition of sorts, underlies some of the spatial reorganizations. Whereas prior to the Civil War enslaved peoples generally resided in outbuildings grouped around the main residence or a cleared field, after emancipation new tenant farms and farmhouses were established at various points within a 3/4-mile radius of the Five Forks intersection—the heart of the battlefield. New houses were constructed at five or more locations, including one at the intersection of Five Forks, two west of the intersection, and two northwest of the intersection, with each becoming a node for new fields totaling approximately 125 acres. Agricultural clearing along White Oaks Road most likely destroyed remnants of the Confederate defenses in the vicinity of the intersection and

removed the trees that once concealed and protected Union soldiers as they moved into position opposite the Confederate breastworks along the road.

Another shift in land use and vegetation resulted in the opposite effect, by returning some former agricultural clearings to forest, with trees present where open ground had influenced the course of battle. For example, the Sidney/Sydnor field, although partially covered in some places by low pines during the battle, served to reorient the Federal V Corps as it flanked the Confederate left and provided terrain more suitable to rapid movement. Conversely, the retreating Confederates used the west side of the field to desperately re-form a defensive line in order to fire at the Union troops as they advanced across the open field. It appears that the former Sidney/Sydnor field reverted to woods in many places during the early twentieth century and showed signs of logging operations by 1937. Similarly, an open field between the Burnt Quarter manor house and White Oak Road that had been the site of cavalry operations during the war was transitioning to relatively dense woods by the 1920s. Areas where land use had changed, whether for agriculture or reforestation, altered battlefield sightlines and viewpoints. As trees filled in the field north of the Burnt Quarter main house, it was no longer possible to stand where Confederates rolled out artillery pieces and imagine their viewshed as they prepared to fire on Union cavalry advancing east of their position.

Circulation patterns in Five Forks remained similar to those in the Civil War era. All roads intersecting at Five Forks retained their basic character of unsurfaced, dirt single-lane rural roads. There were few modifications to the road network aside from additional access roads to the new farmsteads. The advent of the automobile era in the early twentieth century, however, portended future road improvements to support vehicular traffic. Both White Oak Road and Courthouse Road underwent improvements involving widening and grading. Although the exact nature of the improvements is unknown, the two roads were likely graded to between 18 and 20 feet wide and surfaced with local topsoil to a width of between 12 and 14 feet, as noted earlier. Although the compacted clay and sand topsoil improved the load bearing capacity and resistance to degradation during heavy rains, the appearance did not substantially differ from that of the Civil War-era dirt roads in the area. As the automobile and truck became more widely adopted in the United States, the roads into Five Forks, once so important to military operations in the last stages of the Civil War, gained increased value as part of a larger traffic network.

The sixty years that followed the end of the war brought changes that reshaped the Five Forks battlefield. While many key buildings and structures extant in 1865 remained (Burnt Quarter manor and the Bass, Boisseau, and Sidney/Sydnor farmhouses), several new houses were built within the battlefield lands. New agricultural clearings damaged defensive positions and reforestation obscured portions of the battlefield's open ground. Together, the new farmhouses, clearings, and reforested areas affected the battlefield's spatial organization, viewsheds, and built environment, although the Five Forks area avoided the more substantial residential, commercial, or industrial development that would have permanently effaced the battlefield's landscape. The five roads into Five Forks retained their Civil War-era appearance but introduced vehicular traffic that posed a threat to the battlefield's integrity of setting, feeling, and association. The landscape retained its basic topography, terrain, patterns of circulation, and agricultural and forested character. A portion of the defensive earthworks erected in 1865 remained clearly visible along White Oak Road. Although changes during the period between 1866 and 1926 may have adversely impacted the Five Forks battlefield to a great extent, many of the changes ultimately proved reversible, as the next hundred years revealed.



Cultural Landscape Report

Petersburg National Battlefield
Dinwiddie, Virginia

Five Forks Battlefield
1926 Period Plan



National Park Service
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
www.nps.gov/oclp

SOURCES

1. Walter A. Watson, "Notes on Southside Virginia"
2. Dinwiddie County Aerial Photographs 1937, 1954
3. NPS Landsnet Boundaries and Tracts

DRAWN BY

Christina Osborn, ArcGIS Pro 3.1, 2023

LEGEND

- CLI Boundary
- Legislative Boundary
- Burnt Quarter Conservation Easement
- Woods
- Road
- Unpaved road
- Earthworks
- Building

NOTES

1. Projection: WGS84 / UTM NAD83 / State Plane NAD83 / etc.
2. All features shown in approximate scale and location

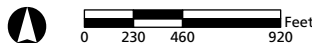


Figure 30

Efforts to Add Five Forks to Petersburg National Battlefield, 1927–1991

Addition of Petersburg to the ranks of the national military parks in 1926 was the result of a cooperative effort by the city's chamber of commerce, dedicated individuals, politicians, advocacy groups such as the Petersburg National Battlefield Park Association, and active Civil War organizations such as the Petersburg Ladies' Memorial Association, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Sons of Confederate Veterans, and the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), an influential Union veterans organization.¹⁰⁴ The rural community of Five Forks had no such local advocates. Nevertheless, the War Department's report on Civil War battlefields had recognized the importance of Five Forks in its more general recommendation of the Petersburg campaign as worth preserving. However, because the act establishing the Petersburg National Military Park authorized only donations rather than federal funds to acquire park lands, the effort began on a small scale focusing just on sections of the Confederate defenses in Petersburg.

While the initial work of establishing a national military park concentrated on Petersburg, the memory of Five Forks was kept alive by memorials, monuments, and reunions which gained coverage in local newspapers. In the wake of the announcement of the Petersburg National Military Park in 1926, the Petersburg Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy joined forces with "patriotic citizens" of Dinwiddie County to mark the Five Forks battlefield with a tablet.¹⁰⁵ The Historic Division of the Virginia State Conservation and Development Commission, recently established in 1926, also recommended installing a historical marker at Five Forks as part of larger statewide commemoration program.¹⁰⁶ Although nearly sixty years had passed since the end of the war, newspapers continued to dedicate space to soldiers on both sides. Reunions, in particular, remained popular topics. For example, on a single page of the September 1, 1925, issue of the *Grand Rapids Press* could be found articles on a meeting of Five Forks veterans ("Say, were you at Five Forks? Sure, I was with Custer. So was I, only I was with Lee's army.") and others titled "Civil War Comrades Meet After 58 Years," "Michigan Boys at Lookout Mountain in Summer of 1864," "This Date in the Civil War," and "Remember?" listing dates of famous battles.¹⁰⁷ The attention given the Civil War veterans in the late 1920s and early 1930s gained poignancy from the fact that none would be left within a few years. Another account of the battle at Five Forks from aged Confederate veteran R.H. Stoner of the Virginia 14th Cavalry included an interesting encounter between Stoner and Union Gen. Philip Sheridan: "When Captain Stoner was captured at Five Forks, General Sheridan shouting the order for him to surrender and was not 80 feet away from him at the time. Captain Stoner reached for his revolver but then realizing that the battle was lost, refrained from shooting. 'He was a fine looking man and a brave one and there was no use in attempting to take his life.'" ¹⁰⁸ Another tendency in some coverage of the Five Fork battle was to inflate the numbers of the Union Army facing the Confederates to lessen the blow of a disastrous outcome. The *Marietta Journal and Courier*, for example, attributed the victory to the size of the Union army, "whose forces outnumbered the Confederates more than 10 to one."¹⁰⁹ Although the importance of the Five Forks battlefield was not lost in first decades of the twentieth century, the means to acquire the property proved slow to materialize.

Establishment of the Petersburg National Military Park came during a period of transition for the management of historic battlefields. As Calvin Coolidge's presidency gave way to Herbert Hoover's, the administration appointed a new Secretary of the Interior, Ray Lyman Wilbur, and Secretary of War, James W. Good, in early 1929. With Hoover's blessing, one of Good's first undertakings was to get the War Department out of the national park business. Looking to eliminate the cost of maintaining the national military parks from the War Department budget, Good found the Department of the Interior eager to add it to the National Park Service portfolio. In February 1929, the Secretaries of War and Interior issued a joint statement supporting the transfer of War Department military parks to the Interior.¹¹⁰ The announcement was received with some uneasiness from congressional committees established earlier to study the national military park

issue. J. Mayhew Wainwright (NY), member of the House Committee on Military Affairs, for one, recalled that “members of the committee were astounded at the fact the War Department was willing to give up the care of these shrines to perpetuate military engagements,” and believed the War Department equally capable as the National Park Service of managing national battlefields. Some questioned whether the National Park Service mission and experience was at odds with what the national battlefields meant to do. Wainwright expressed concern that “the Interior Department could ever approach this subject in anything like the way the War Department could,” and that the sacred battlefields would become “playgrounds.”¹¹¹ Indeed, the National Park Service intended to widen the public appeal of all parks under its management, although how that would play out at national military parks was yet to be seen.¹¹² Despite the Secretaries of War and Interior’s intentions, the transfer of the national military parks to the Department of Interior and National Park Service was not finalized until Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s executive order in 1933. Newspaper headlines of “Capital Parks to Form Hub of National ‘Vacation Land’: Their Transfer to Interior Department Seen as Step in Great Development of Recreational Areas” announcing the National Park Service move may have confirmed Wainwright’s worst fears.¹¹³

Another important transition in the management of national military parks during this period was the movement away from monument-centric approach. As shown by the establishment of Gettysburg and Chattanooga/Chickamauga in decades after the Civil War, monuments proved an effective tool for preservation and fund raising. By the 1930s as the ranks of the veterans began to thin, the personal connections between soldiers, families, communities, and experience faded. Installing the kind of stone and bronze monuments that populated the battlefields of Gettysburg and Chattanooga/Chickamauga was not a priority for National Park Service management of parks. Petersburg National Military Park illustrated this trend. The monuments to commemorate the battle for Petersburg were generally erected between 1894 and 1927, prior to the formal establishment of the national military park and before the period when the National Park Service took over management of the national military park.¹¹⁴ Specific units or soldiers, located to accurately reflect positions and movements during the battle, were for the moment, a vestige of the past.

Gettysburg National Military Park proved an early test case for issues the National Park Service faced after taking over for the War Department. The park’s first National Park Service superintendent James R. McConaghie set the goals for his tenure as restoration, preservation, accessibility, and usability.¹¹⁵ Under his direction, park staff improved roads and added comfort stations to improve usability for visitors. An attempt to add picnic tables to the park met opposition that charged the National Park Service was turning the hallowed ground into a western-style national park. “One critic observed that the Park Service treated the grounds as ‘public parks rather than as sacred Memorials . . . such was not the case when the Cemetery and Battlefield were in charge of the War Department.’”¹¹⁶ McConaghie, a landscape architect, was concerned with enhancing aesthetical appeal of Gettysburg as part of his approach to preservation, which included plantings to hide monuments with trees. He also demolished the Forney farm buildings that were part of the original battle, and tried to restore historic viewsheds by cutting down non-historic trees, removing non-historic fencing, and burying utility lines.¹¹⁷

The early superintendents of Petersburg National Military Park also faced difficult choices. Unlike other battlefield in more remote or rural settings, Petersburg National Military Park faced pressure from urban development. Many of the defensive works had been destroyed, re-graded, or were reclaimed by natural vegetative growth. In addition to reconstructing various fortifications and clearing areas, the National Park Service added horse trails to the site in the 1930s—something that aligned more with the National Park Service’s mission to cultivate recreation than memorialization. Early interpretive and edification efforts included the placement of thirty 100-word route markers at strategic points. During its early years of operation, Petersburg National Military Park benefitted from the assistance of the US Army and Civilian Conservation Corp, which contributed patrols and maintenance crews to the park. When those partnerships ended in 1946, the National Park Service found its forces and funding inadequate to carry the full burden of

maintenance and patrol at Petersburg National Military Park.¹¹⁸ Finding themselves stretched thin at Petersburg National Military Park, the National Park Service lacked any additional resources to put towards the Five Forks battlefield. The question of how to best use available resources to further the National Park Service mission at the national parks proved a persistent challenge in the years ahead.

In the late 1950s, the impending 100th anniversary of the Civil War led to the widespread creation of state and local Civil War commemorative organizations.¹¹⁹ The first meeting of the Dinwiddie County Civil War Centennial Commission (DCCWCC) in July 1959 was attended by Thomas J. Harrison, acting superintendent of Petersburg National Military Park.¹²⁰ Other regional branches were formed to represent Southside, Colonial Heights, Hopewell, Prince George County, Chesterfield, and Petersburg. One of the DCCWCC's first acts was to tentatively propose inclusion of Five Forks within the Petersburg National Military Park.¹²¹ The National Park Service's first reaction to the proposal was negative, with officials responding that "the Siege of Petersburg was sufficiently portrayed and memorialized within the two and a half square mile park without including the many outlying areas such as Five Forks."¹²² Rebuffed, the DCCWCC made do with plans to erect signs on old "military roads," including those at Five Forks. The centennial commission's use of the roads' historic names caused some confusion among the locals in some cases.¹²³

Attitudes toward bringing Five Forks within the fold of the Petersburg National Military Park changed in with support of new superintendent Chester L. Brooks, who took over from Bernard Campbell in September, 1959.¹²⁴ Several of the regional Civil War centennial commissions backed the idea, petitioning Conrad Wirth, director of National Park Service, to add Five Forks to national park system.¹²⁵ Brooks, however, was reassigned in August, 1961 and carrying the project forward was left to his successor, William Featherstone. Although according to one source, Featherstone saw Five Forks as a distraction that would absorb time, energy, and money, he nevertheless set about collecting data to support the legislation needed to expand the park to include Five Forks.¹²⁶ In early 1962 Featherstone met with property owners within the prospective Five Forks park boundaries. Featherstone notified the regional director that most owners felt the battlefield should be preserved, but that the funds available—estimated at \$90,000—were grossly insufficient and that no donations could be expected. In sum, he concluded that the "attitude was not hostile, but whoever negotiates with these people should have a lot more to offer than now seems available."¹²⁷ Featherstone sought the backing of Dinwiddie County's Board of Supervisors, a crucial indicator of local support. The board offered a somewhat lukewarm statement of approval: "In view of the anticipated benefit to the county from the establishment of the Five Forks Battlefield as a part of the Petersburg National Military Park, the Board hereby states that it will not object to the acquisition of land by the Federal government and will not offer any protest."¹²⁸

The project was aided by the centennial fervor and active involvement of Virginia Congressman Watkins Abbitt, who introduced a bill in July 1962 to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire 1,200 acres of land at the Five Forks battlefield site. Funding for the project included the \$90,000 amount that Featherstone advised was wholly inadequate, a sum that the report accompanying the bill suggested might be reduced in the event of donations.¹²⁹ In an introduction to the draft bill, the Assistant Secretary of the Interior emphasized both the historical value of the site, vital to "commemorate adequately the campaign, siege, and defense of Petersburg" and war's end, and the need to protect the site from the imminent threat of logging operations. The bill also proposed changing the name of Petersburg National Military Park to Petersburg National Battlefield to better capture the mission and extent of the proposed Petersburg area holdings.¹³⁰

The bill passed in August 1962 with only \$90,000 authorized for acquiring the 1,200 acres proposed for the park.¹³¹ Featherstone dutifully met with landowners to judge their willingness to donate or sell, who again underlined the "absurdity" of the offers he had at his disposal. By October Featherstone wondered if the proposal for the Five Forks acquisition was hasty. In a letter to Southeast Regional Director Elbert Cox, Featherstone wrote "When urgently needed developments like our Visitor Center and the Route 36 overpass

are cancelled because Congress is scrutinizing carefully appropriations for Civil War areas, it would be an unconscionable waste of our resources to acquire an acreage so distant from the Park as is Five Forks. We cannot maintain or interpret properly several areas we own much nearer to home.”¹³² He recommended biding time until the conditions were more favorable. Cox reminded Featherstone that the addition of Five Forks to Petersburg National Battlefield was result of National Park Service actions and community support, passed by Congress, and urged him to continue in his acquisition efforts and include Five Forks in master planning.¹³³ Featherstone pressed on with planning for clearing some areas and reconstructing earthworks and the church at Gravelly Run if the land could be obtained.

The low amount authorized by the 1962 legislation continued to hamstring realization of the Five Forks battlefield park. If the 1,200 could not be purchased outright, the Petersburg National Battlefield staff, now led by Superintendent John Willett, focused on how to prioritize smaller areas to break up the cost of acquisition. In 1964 Willett’s team divided the battlefield in terms of five prior areas shown in a color coded map (Figure 31). Priority No. 1 included the area north of White Oak Road bounded by Church Road to the west and a line just east of the Angle: “In this area are Confederate earthworks, which are all that remain of an extensive line of fortifications that protected Five Forks . . . [we] can vividly describe the Confederate defense and final crushing flanking attack by the Union Vth Corps.”¹³⁴ The boundary extended north to provide a buffer and included the return (or Angle) in the Confederate line.

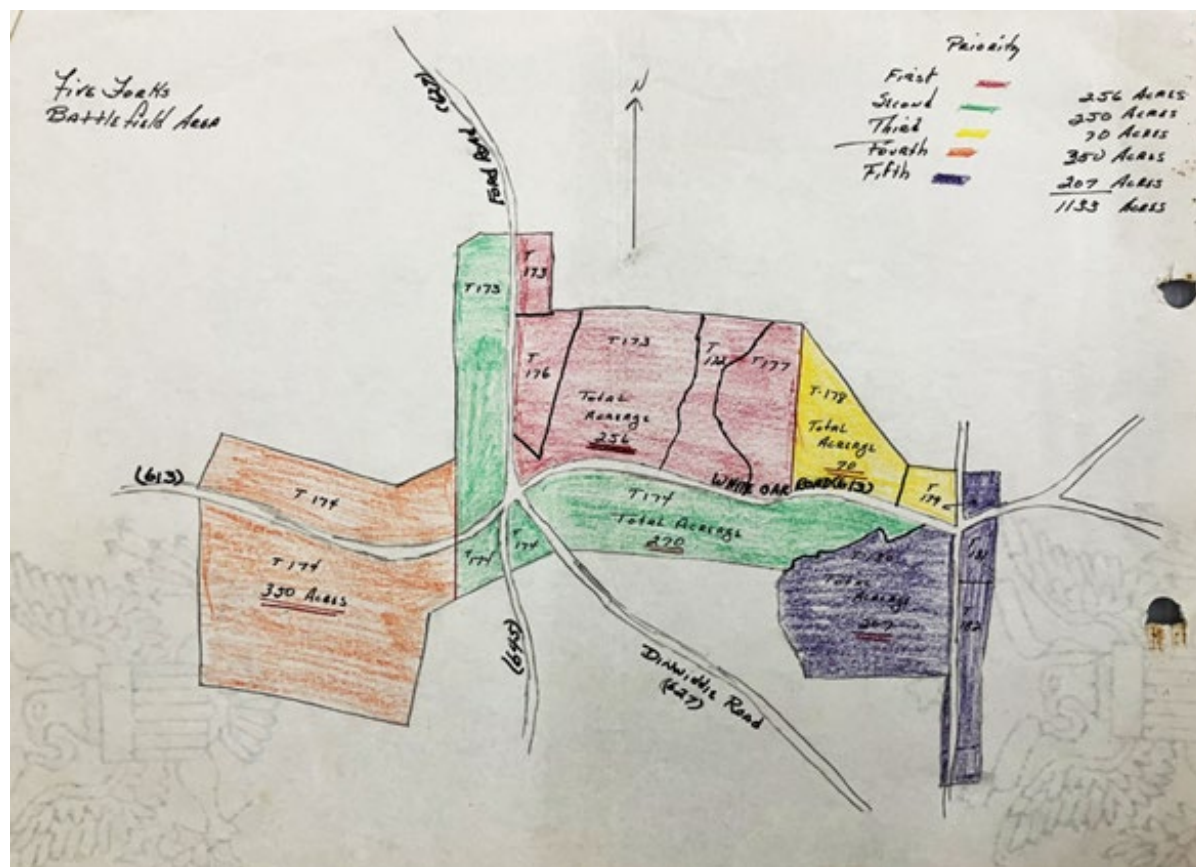


FIGURE 31. 1964 National Park Service sketch map showing proposed property acquisitions for Five Forks battlefield by colored priority ranking. (Source: Petersburg National Battlefield Archive)

Priority No. 2 areas would allow interpretation of the frontal attacks of Sheridan’s cavalry on Pickett’s Confederate infantrymen. “All original roads converging on Five Forks pass through or border this area . . . This was the key to not only Lee’s right flank but also to communications in this locality. From this major road junction, the Southside Railroad and the Appomattox River were readily accessible. Lee’s position at

Petersburg was secure only so long as he controlled Five Forks. The battle was given its name because of the Five Forks road junction.”¹³⁵

Over the land in Priority No. 3 passed Warren’s V Corps. “With the acquisition of this area,” the report noted, “we could interpret this flanking movement which spelled doom to Pickett’s Confederates.”¹³⁶

Priority No. 4 included Burnt Quarter, “which pre-dates the Civil War and its surrounding land was an active farm at that time. We would interpret the house as a Civil War home. This area captured the extreme western Confederate positions in the Five Forks line. However, no fortifications remain. A buffer zone is needed to interpret this area completely.”¹³⁷

Priority No. 5 contained an area on the eastern edge of the battlefield. “Gravelly Run Church which was used as a hospital during the battle. Nearby are some of the graves of mortally wounded soldiers who died there. Across this land the Vth Corps approached the eastern flank of the Confederate line. Acquisition would enable us to give a complete interpretive picture of the Battle of Five Forks, and also to protect this historic site.”¹³⁸

At the same time Petersburg National Military Park staff were working on plans to acquire property within the proposed Five Forks battlefield boundaries, the Dinwiddie Confederate Memorial Association and Dinwiddie Civil War Centennial Commission collaborated on erecting a stone memorial at the Five Forks crossroads (Figure 32). Dedicated on April 1, 1965, the 100th anniversary of the battle, the memorial read “Here at Five Forks on April 1, 1865 10,000 Confederates, commanded by General Pickett, were overwhelmed by about 50,000 Federal troops, led by General Sheridan, thereby opening the way to the Southside Railroad making further defense of Petersburg and Richmond impossible. Withdrawal to Appomattox followed. Dedicated to the memory of the valiant Dinwiddie soldiers, as well as to all soldiers of the South and North, taking part in this encounter.” It its estimates of the numbers of combatants involved the memorial followed in the footsteps of some earlier accounts that raised the odds facing the Confederate defenders. Most estimates of the Union forces in the field were between 17,000 and 22,000, less than half of the 50,000 etched in the memorial stone.¹³⁹ The “50,000” may have come from a number recorded in *Recollections and Letters of General Robert E. Lee*, a collection of the general’s letters and other writings that was published posthumously by his son, Robert E. Lee.¹⁴⁰ Within the context of the Lost Cause, any evidence of insurmountable odds tended to deflect blame from leadership and performance on the battlefield. In any case, the Union forces at Five Forks certainly outnumbered the Confederates, although that may be a statement that described most battles of the Civil War.



FIGURE 32. Five Forks memorial (left) and National Park Service National Historic Landmark plaque (right), no date.

Petersburg National Battlefield staff planning in the late 1960s focused on the Priority No. 1 and No. 2 tracts—approximately 600 acres.¹⁴¹ First year plans for the park included interpretive turnouts, parking areas, wayside shelters, and exhibits; second year work proposed “earthwork reconstruction.” The interpretive panels reflected one point of departure from the earlier monument-type approach to battlefield lessons taken by in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although military parks such as Petersburg had turned to reconstruction in some case to illustrate certain lost aspects of a battlefield, such projects at Five Forks never materialized “because of the Service’s increasingly dim view of reconstruction projects involving cultural resources.”¹⁴²

During the early 1970s Civil War and other battlefields came under new pressure from various forms of development. One of the most publicized threats came through a proposal by the Marriott Corporation to build a Great America theme park next to Manassas National Battlefield Park. Although opposition to the theme park successfully dissuaded its construction, more battles to preserve military parks were on the horizon. More locally, a plan proposed by the Virginia Department of Highway in 1970 to widen, improve, and re-align Court House Road (Route 627) promised to dramatically alter the intersection at Five Forks. Together, Joe Pete Gilliam and Petersburg National Battlefield managed to convince the highway department to maintain the original alignment (discussed in more detail in the “Roads” section below) but the road improvements and decline in farming in the Five Forks area portended future residential development.¹⁴³

Cognizant of the threats to Five Forks, Petersburg National Battlefield Superintendents Larry Hakel and Wallace B. Elms pressed for new legislation to expand the acreage and funding for the proposed battlefield. Elms again spoke with land owners within the battlefields boundaries but ran into old problems—the National Park Service simply lacked the funds to convince the primary land holder Joe Pete Gilliam to part with a large portion of his property. To support the legislative effort, just as Brooks had in 1961, Elms sought local support from the Dinwiddie County Board of Supervisors to increase park acreage to 2,100 acres. Instead of backing the National Park Service, the board passed a resolution to limit the park to 400 acres and sought to repeal the 1962 enabling act, a reflection of local fears of removing land from tax rolls and potential development. The Dinwiddie County Administrator promptly sent the resolution to Virginia Senator William

L. Scott with a request that any “efforts on behalf of the Board of Supervisors will be greatly appreciated.”¹⁴⁴ “Astounded” by the board resolution, Elms warned that the county action could torpedo over a half-century of work to create a military park at Five Forks. Indeed, Petersburg National Battlefield’s attempt to introduce the legislation in 1977 failed, dropped as too controversial for Congressional approval.¹⁴⁵

Prospects for Five Fork did not improve in the early 1980s under the Reagan administration. Reagan’s first Secretary of the Interior James Watt cut back on funding for battlefields and other public lands.¹⁴⁶ Another proposal to develop the area next to the Manassas National Battlefield in 1986 rallied opposition and gained nationwide attention. Several important nationwide organization such as the Association for Preservation of Civil War Sites (APCWS) formed in 1987 to create a private-sector organization specializing in Civil War preservation to aid government efforts.¹⁴⁷ Private foundations stepped into the breach to provide funds that were not forthcoming from Congress. Between 1989 and 1990 one of the leaders of the private effort, the Richard King Mellon Foundation, purchased over 100,000 acres of wildlife refuges and historic sites, mostly Civil War battlefields, at a cost of over \$21 million for donation. When transferred to the nation through the Conservation Fund, newspapers reported that “Officials believe it is the largest single gift of land ever made to the nation.”¹⁴⁸ Among the land donated to the National Park Service were the historic Cornfield, part of the Antietam National Battlefield, and 930 acres and a 435-acre scenic easement at Five Forks.¹⁴⁹

That the ample resources of the Richard King Mellon Foundation succeeded where the National Park Service had failed showed the continued critical role of private citizens and interest groups in battlefield preservation in the twentieth century. That the Burnt Quarter property now belonged to Steve Perry, a nephew of Elizabeth Gilliam, likely played a part. As the Petersburg National Battlefield finally could move forward with long developed plans for the national battlefield, the staff was buoyed by the fact that land was generally free of the kind of residential and commercial development that had adversely affected other sites. “The word pristine is certainly the adjective to describe Five Forks,” said Chris Calkins, National Park Service ranger and historian at Petersburg National Battlefield, “I’m sure once we finish it, people will be able to imagine Sheridan and Pickett running around there.”¹⁵⁰ The challenge of “finishing it” lay ahead.

Five Forks Battlefield, 1927–1991

Breastworks and Other Defenses

Some of the few early reports on the condition of the Confederate field defenses at Five Forks after Petersburg gained its federal military park status came during the Great Depression. A Civil Works Administration project in 1933 employed men to “clean off the forts and breastworks and beautify the highway from Burgess to Five Forks.”¹⁵¹ Another Depression-era program, the Works Progress Administration (WPA), conducted a survey of Five Forks characterizing the extant “earth works” along White Oak Road as “in a good state of preservation” without further description.¹⁵² No mention was made in the survey of other defensive works such as the temporary line formed along the west edge of the Syndor field or rifle pits referenced in the Warren testimony.

Land clearing by tenant farmers in the vicinity of Five Forks in the twentieth century likely effaced several sections of the original Confederate breastworks along White Oak Road. A 1937 aerial photograph shows nearly all the original defensive lines west of the intersection within cleared farmland, and a substantial section east of the intersection part of new farmland associated with a farmhouse between the former Syndor and Boisseau properties (Figure 33).



FIGURE 33. 1937 aerial photograph of the area near Five Forks. (Source: USGS)

The breastworks faced other threats beside agricultural clearing in the second half of the twentieth century. Petersburg National Battlefield staff noted in 1964 that earlier construction of a utility line along the north side of White Oak Road had destroyed a large section of the remaining breastworks and urged immediate acquisition of the Five Forks battlefield area to prevent further destruction. Timber clearing activities posed another danger. At some point in the first half of the twentieth century the Seward Luggage Company, through its subsidiary the Seward Lumber Company, purchased a tract that roughly approximated the boundaries of the Sydnor/Sidney property. Numerous logging roads shown in the 1937 aerial suggest this property was partially logged in the years prior to 1937. In 1960, the Seward Lumber Company sold the property to the Continental Can Company, which had acquired hundreds of acres in Dinwiddie County during the 1950s to support its wood pulp and plywood business.¹⁵³ Approximately 82 acres of Continental Can's 350-acre tract was within the proposed national battlefield, an important section that contained the eastern end of the breastworks including the Angle. Petersburg National Battlefield Superintendent John Willett notified the regional office in 1963 that much of what was left of the breastworks stood on the

property owned by the Continental Can, and that fortunately, the company agreed to cooperate to preserve the physical remains when they harvested the trees.¹⁵⁴

When Joe Pete Gilliam inherited Burnt Quarter after his mother's death in 1944, the estate had expanded since the Civil War. He continued to expand his holdings in the decades that followed, acquiring properties associated with Benjamin Boisseau, Thomas Bass, and James Boisseau during the Civil War. Following the example of Seward Lumber and Continental Can, the Gilliams sold timber rights in 1974 to harvest trees on 1,200 acres of their property—most of it within the proposed boundaries of the Five Fork National Battlefield—to the Union Camp Corporation. “Startled and concerned” was how Larry Hakel, the Petersburg National Battlefield Superintendent, remembered learning of the sale.¹⁵⁵ Although Union Camp planned to clear cut and reseed or replant pine seedlings after scarifying the land with a “drum chopping” machine (Figure 34), company representatives worked with National Park Service to avoid the breastworks despite lack of a formal protection of the site. Union Camp looked at maps, met with NPB historian Neil Mangum, walked and surveyed the sensitive areas, and mapped out buffer zones. Ultimately, Union Camp found “there is not much there,” but pledged that “what is there will be saved.”¹⁵⁶ The survey noted two artillery positions—determined by finding friction primers, brass rifling bands, and shell fragments—on a map of the proposed protection zones (Figure 35).¹⁵⁷

Despite the damage caused by agricultural clearing, utility work, and logging, Petersburg National Battlefield Superintendent Wallace B. Elms wrote that “there are considerable remains of the 1 ¼ miles of Confederate field trenches built along White Oak Road,” in a 1976 report intended to support the introduction of new legislation to expand the authorized acreage and increase the federal funding limit for adding Five Forks to the Petersburg National Battlefield.¹⁵⁸ Elms' characterization of the field works may have been colored by the need to present the historic integrity of the battlefield in a positive light, but he detailed that “west of Five Forks there is a short distance of trench visible to the south of the road. This would be near the right flank of the Confederate lines,” and that “east of Five Forks junction, north of White Oak Road, visible about 2/3 of distance they once extended.” At the Angle, Elms believed that the “earthworks and rifle-pits are in a near perfect state of preservation. They are hidden by a covering of brush and can be traced the entire 150 yard distance. These works are in as good condition as any at Petersburg.”¹⁵⁹



FIGURE 34. Typical drum chopping scarification rig pulled by a Caterpillar-type tractor, no date. (Source: Florida Memory: State Library and Archives of Florida)

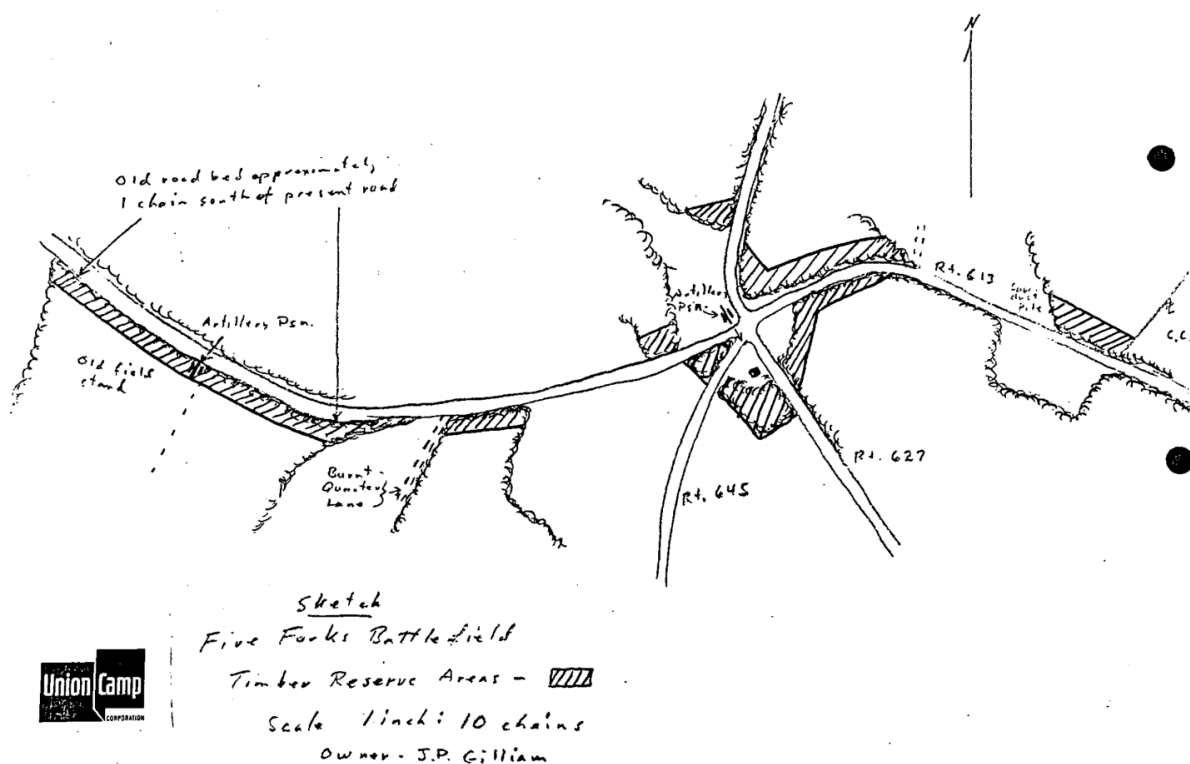


FIGURE 35. Union Camp Corporation sketch of buffer zones to protect breastworks, showing speculative artillery positions. (Source: Petersburg National Battlefield Archives, Richmond)

Although the Union Camp's buffer zones along the roads and at the Five Forks intersection helped preserve what remained of the former Confederate breastworks, the clear cutting operations and drum chopping scarification likely destroyed or damaged any physical remnants of the battle within the logging zones. Aerial photos from 1979 show widespread timber clearing in much of the land associated with the battle, and numerous logging roads cut into former forests (Figure 36). Between the Seward Lumber Company, Continental Can, and Union Camp, nearly the entire area covering the Five Forks Battlefield was logged by 1980.



FIGURE 36. 1979 aerial photograph of Five Forks area showing logged lands and logging roads. (Source: US Geological Survey)

The National Park Service had been fortunate to obtain the initial cooperation of Continental Can and Union Camp to protect the breastwork remnants, however, Hakel's fears were realized in 1982 when Continental Can bulldozed a logging road through the Confederate breastworks at the north end of the Angle.¹⁶⁰

The breastworks at Five Fork also faced the same problem degrading the Petersburg area defenses – relic hunters. Armed with metal detectors, relic hunters damaged the breastworks and earthworks by digging holes in search of bullets and other remnants of the battle.¹⁶¹ Because Five Forks was private ground, little could be done to prevent the hole-by-hole destruction of the former defensive lines.

Just prior to the acquisition of the property for the proposed national battlefield in 1989, evidence suggests that any remains of the Confederate breastworks along White Oak Road were likely within an approximately 780 foot long section immediately east of the Five Forks intersection, and approximately 0.5 miles of the east end of the works, including approximately 360 feet of the Angle, which ran roughly perpendicular to White Oak Road. An assessment of the Five Forks National Historic Landmark in 1984 by Petersburg National Battlefield Historian Chris Calkins concluded that “of the light breastworks thrown up by the Confederates on March 31-April 1, only a small portion remains, the rest probably having been destroyed by cultivation.”¹⁶² Time and weather had affected what agricultural clearing and logging operations had not damaged. No

specific mention of the logs, rails, and posts that had formed the structure upon which dirt had been piled were included in descriptions of the remnant breastworks in Calkins' survey of the landmark battlefield.

Buildings and Structures

Due to the Gilliams, the area around Five Forks experienced little development after construction of tenant homes and farm structures in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. The Burnt Quarter plantation house appeared much as it had in the Civil War days, and drew periodic coverage in local newspapers as a historical treasure (Figure 37). "I stopped for a moment as I opened the big swinging gate of the white picket fence and wondered if it were all a dream, for homes such as this are seldom seen today," noted a WPA surveyor during a statewide historical inventory conducted in 1936.¹⁶³ Accounts in the 1930s reported that the house even retained much of the furniture from its original period of construction in the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁶⁴ Joe Pete's wife, Elizabeth Gilliam, conscientiously maintained the house in its historic condition during their period of residence. "To all intent and purpose," one National Park Service visitor noted in 1970, the house "is a private museum."¹⁶⁵

A 1966 National Park Service survey of 324 acres of the Gilliam's larger 2,391-acre tract recorded 3 pack houses, 16 tobacco barns, 3 other barns, 9 tenant houses, and 8 miscellaneous structures.¹⁶⁶ The pack houses and "low profile" tobacco barns were constructed in the early 1960s as part of modernization of tobacco farming at Burnt Quarter, which included purchase of a tobacco harvester, "first of its kind in the county," automatic tying machine, and oil-fueled curers for the Gilliams' 25-acre tobacco field.¹⁶⁷ As discussed earlier, the tenant houses likely dated to the late nineteenth century or possibly the early twentieth century.

At some point in the 1950s—likely after 1954—a small general store and service station were built near the Five Forks intersection in the northeast sector between Courthouse Road and White Oak Road (Figure 38).¹⁶⁸ Despite its recent construction, a visitor in 1960 described the store and service station as "abandoned."¹⁶⁹ According to Dennis C. Bridgeman, who may have worked for the Gilliams or simply leased the property, the store and station were converted to a hunting club and dog kennel in 1956. The store continued to serve as a clubhouse for the Five Forks "Hunt Club" until 1989.¹⁷⁰



FIGURE 37. Burnt Quarter main house, circa 1970s. (Source: Petersburg National Battlefield Archives)



FIGURE 38. Bridgeman's Grocery near Five Forks intersection, no date, circa 1960, view north. (Source: Petersburg National Battlefield Archives)

One farmhouse (reportedly 100-years-old) on White Oak Road owned by the Gilliams burned down in 1971, killing Dennis Bridgeman's brother, retired U.S. Army sergeant William R. Bridgeman.¹⁷¹

Construction on property within the area proposed for the Five Forks battlefield not owned by the Gilliams included the gradual development of an auto wrecking business at intersection of White Oak Road and Gravelly Run Road (Figure 39) and some light residential development east of Five Forks along Gravelly Run. A 1944 US Geological Survey (USGS) map and 1954 aerial photograph show two buildings, likely a barn and farmhouse, on Evelyn Miller's 50-acre tract east of the Continental Can property that she inherited from her mother. Later aerial photographs suggest Miller demolished those buildings and built a single-story brick house on the property in 1976. A few homes went up on smaller plots of land south of White Oak Road on Gravelly Run near the location of the original Gravelly Run Church and Moody House, both no longer extant.



FIGURE 39. William Cone's auto repair and salvage business near the intersection of White Oak Road and Gravelly Run (now Tranquility Lane), no date, circa 1990, view east. (Source: Petersburg National Battlefield Archives)

Roads

By 1944 USGS topographical maps show the roads into Five Forks designated with numbered state routes: 627 (Church Road); 605 (Court House Road); 613 (White Oak Road); and 627 (Scotts Road). These designations later changed to integrate Church Road and Courthouse Road under State Route 627 and give the lesser travelled, unimproved Scotts Road its own designation as Route 645.

The Virginia State Highway Department steadily increased the mileage of hard surfaced roads in Dinwiddie County during the 1950s.¹⁷² The two paved roads into Five Forks, Route 627 (Church/Court House Road) and 613 (White Oak Road), likely had road maintenance over the years, but still closely followed their Civil War-era alignment (Figure 40 through Figure 42).

The importance of the roads for the integrity of the battlefield was recognized by the Dinwiddie County Civil War Centennial Committee, which in 1960 made one of its first orders of business to create road signs to mark important Civil War road networks.¹⁷³ The committee used Civil War-era road names, to the confusion of some of the local populous, and drew on prison labor to reduce the cost of the project.¹⁷⁴



FIGURE 40. Five Forks intersection in 196x, view south/southeast. (Source: Petersburg National Battlefield Archives)



FIGURE 41. Five Forks intersection, no date, circa 1960, view southwest. (Source: Petersburg National Battlefield Archives)



FIGURE 42. Westbound on White Oak Road (Route 613) toward Five Forks intersection, no date, circa 1960. (Source: Petersburg National Battlefield Archives)

The construction of new schools near Dinwiddie Court House in the mid-1960s initiated some more impactful road improvement projects on Route 627. At the February 3, 1965 meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Dinwiddie County, local organizations and the school board requested the Virginia Department of Highways give “immediate consideration” to improving Route 627 to meet the tremendous increase in the traffic volume attendant with the school construction project. The school board estimated the new schools would require some 38 busses to move 1,500 students along Route 627 and other feeder roads.¹⁷⁵

After studying the issue, in the late 1967 the Virginia State Highway Department proposed widening, and improving, and in some places including near Five Forks, realigning Route 627 (Court House Road) (Figure 43). The project would have substantially altered the historic intersection.

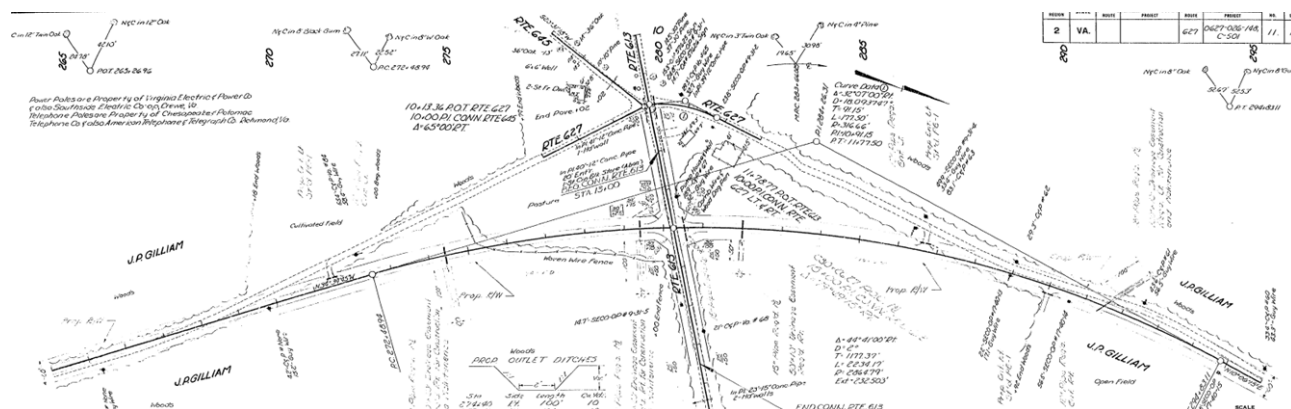


FIGURE 43. 1966 VA State Highway Department plan to realign Route 627 through Five Forks. (Source: VDOT)

In April 1970 a representative of the VA State Highway Department, J. Ernest Wrenn, appeared before the Board of Supervisors of Dinwiddie County to present plans for re-routing Route 627 to by-pass Five Forks with the idea that the project would still preserve the historic intersection.¹⁷⁶ Joe Pete Gilliam delayed the project by refusing to sell his land or provide an easement, and Petersburg National Battlefield Superintendent Martin Conway called on the National Park Service Director of the Southeast Region to help him block the plans. “I believe it is of the utmost urgency that we do all in our power to prevent the realignment from happening,” wrote Conway, “as it will destroy for all time the character and integrity of this valuable historic site.”¹⁷⁷ Three months later, District Engineer L. R. Treat, Jr., appeared before the Board with a revised plan, assuring that “the new 627 would run in about the same place as the old 627 when it passed through Five

Forks and the Highway Department was doing this at the request of the National Park Service, and he believed this would satisfy the majority of the people.”¹⁷⁸ Although Gilliam and the National Park Service managed to stave off disaster with the re-alignment project, the widening and improvement of Route 627 increased the volume and speed of traffic on the historic road, removed the stop sign at the intersection, and added drainage ditches along either side of the road.

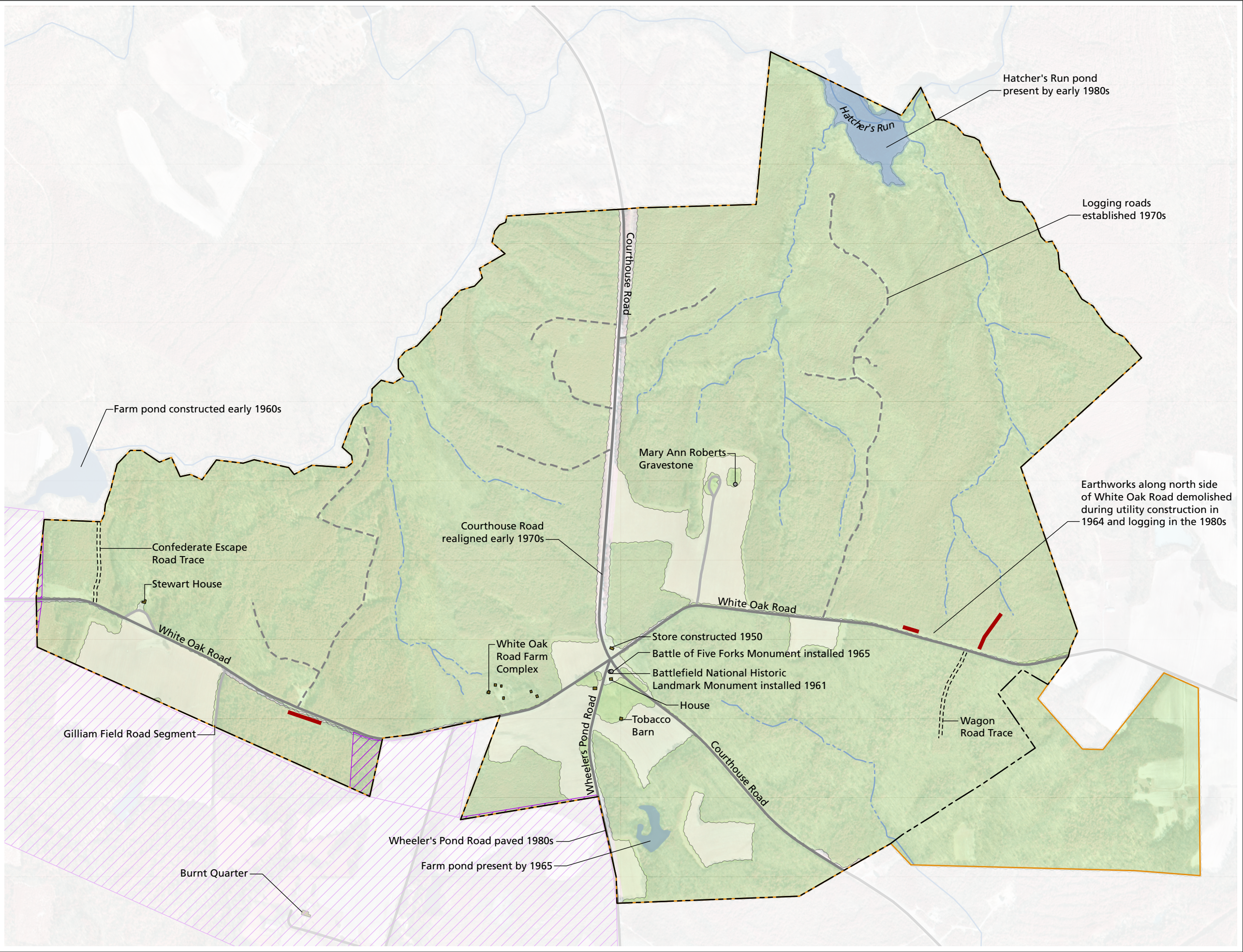
The last of the unpaved roads into Five Forks, State Route 645 (formerly Scotts Road, now Wheeler’s Pond Road) was paved at some point shortly after 1984. In 1978 the re-named Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation proposed improvement Route 645, at the time a gravel road, to better serve the county landfill site that was proposed for a location approximately 1.15 miles south of Five Forks. A National Historic Landmark status report of Five Forks conducted in 1984 noted that Route 645 had been widened and was scheduled for paving in near future.¹⁷⁹

Between 1926 and 1991, significant changes to the road network into Five Forks had transformed the dirt or hardpacked wagon roads to asphalt-paved thoroughways for cars, busses, and trucks. The pace and low-volume of horse-powered or foot traffic that had characterized travel on the roads into Five Forks for over a hundred years had been replaced by motorized vehicles travelling (legally) up to 60 miles per hour without having to stop at the intersection. Although alterations to the roads diminished the association with the Civil War-era setting, the alignments still conveyed the importance of the location as a strategic waypoint, one that controlled access to the railroad to the north and the Confederate army’s position on the far western edge of the Petersburg siege lines.

Landscape Summary, 1991

Refer to Figure 44, 1991 Period Plan.

By 1991, much of the land around the Five Forks intersection had been abandoned in terms of use for cultivation and pasture and was being logged instead. While much of the area remained wooded, the forest composition was very different than that present at the time of the Civil War due to the introduction of pine tree plantings in support of timbering operations. Many of the areas that had been cleared at the time of the Civil War battle in association with farm precincts, namely those associated with the Boisseau and Sidney/Syndor farms, had been claimed by successional woodland growth, while the antebellum buildings had been lost to abandonment. Several roads had been cut through the landscape to the north of White Oak Road to support logging. In the 1960s, the installation of utilities along White Oak Road also led to the destruction and loss of the majority of the Confederate earthworks, while logging operations led to further deterioration due to compaction, gouging, and erosion. The Five Forks intersection was also altered during the 1960s through the addition of two commemorative monuments recognizing the importance of the battle and the designation of the battlefield as a National Historic Landmark. Further change occurred in the 1970s when a portion of Courthouse Road was realigned. The Five Forks Unit of Petersburg National Battlefield was established through an initial acquisition of land by the National Park Service through the Conservation Fund.



Cultural Landscape Report

Petersburg National Battlefield
Dinwiddie, Virginia

Five Forks Battlefield
1991 Period Plan



National Park Service
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
www.nps.gov/oclp

SOURCES

1. USGS Aerial Photographs 1971, 1989, 1994
2. NPS Landsnet Boundaries and Tracts

DRAWN BY

Christina Osborn, ArcGIS Pro 3.1, 2023

LEGEND

- CLI Boundary
- Legislative Boundary
- Burnt Quarter Conservation Easement
- Woods
- Road
- Unpaved road
- Earthworks
- Building

NOTES

1. Projection: WGS84 / UTM NAD83 / State Plane NAD83 / etc.
2. All features shown in approximate scale and location

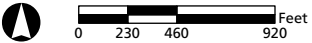


Figure 44

National Park Service Stewardship, 1992–2023

The Five Forks National Battlefield was acquired in an era of renewed national interest in the Civil War. One indication of the groundswell was the popularity of James McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom*, an epic history of the Civil War published in 1988. It sold over 100,000 copies in its first year, made the *New York Times* "Bestsellers List," and won the Pulitzer Prize for History the following year. The defense of Manassas National Battlefield in the late 1980s against proposed development put battlefields and preservation in particular into the limelight. Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan announced a campaign in July 1990 to preserve America's historic battlefields through cooperative efforts with states and private groups. In prepared remarks for a speech at the Manassas National Battlefield, Lujan declared: "Let us begin with a clear understanding of the situation. Battlefields -- especially Civil War battlefields -- are a particularly important part of our national heritage, and they are worthy of our best efforts to protect them."¹⁸⁰ A few months later Ken Burns' *The Civil War* documentary first aired after five years of production. An editor on the project recalled later that "No historical documentary has ever had the impact of *The Civil War* when it was first broadcast by PBS a quarter of a century ago. More than 40 million people watched its first run. It won more than 40 major television and film awards. Millions more have seen it in classrooms or on videotape."¹⁸¹ Burns' *The Civil War* reflected, and to some degree shaped, an approach to the war that brought individual experiences, whether foot soldier, home front family, politicians, or officers into the foreground. It set a bar for what kind of information visitors to Civil War sites and museums might expect or want to receive. Given the rising tide of public interest in the Civil War, the addition of Five Forks to the Petersburg National Battlefield came at a fortuitous time.

After taking ownership of the Five Forks property, the National Park Service set about prioritizing first steps. Within the framework of the overall mission to first preserve and protect, and second to interpret the site, an initial assessment noted a number of deficiencies. The site lacked visitor facilities and had poor accessibility. Roads leading into Five Forks were dangerous and affected the battlefield's integrity. Several abandoned, post-Civil War buildings were within the property boundaries, including three near the historic intersection. The important section of the original Confederate breastworks at the Angle was not within the donated property lines. To tackle these issues with a General Management Plan, several studies such as a forest plan, archaeological survey, historic structures report, and landscape inventory were needed to lay the foundation.¹⁸² These projects would occupy much of the decade of the 1990s.

While the Petersburg National Battlefield staff worked on implementing its mission to preserve, protect, and interpret at Five Forks, the enthusiasm for the Civil War brought an old fad to the battlefield: a reenactment. The first reenactment of the Battle of Five Forks took place not on the historic battlefield but the property of Robert Ragsdale eight miles south of Petersburg on US Highway 1. The idea came from Christine Sorenson, a local who saw the commemoration of Five Forks as "something to give the area a shot in the arm economically."¹⁸³ Newspapers reported that the committee sponsoring the reenactment on the April 1, 1996 anniversary of the battle dug "breastworks that are generally laid out as they were at Five Forks and will be attacked the way they were in 1865."¹⁸⁴ The faux battlefield would actually host two reenactments, the Battle of White Oak Road and Five Forks. Field commander Gary Baker organized a dozen artillery pieces to defend the trench line. As the day of the reenactment approached, unlike the actual battle, the committee found plenty of Confederates taking the field but Yankee numbers lacking.¹⁸⁵

Typically, the National Park Service refrained from allowing reenactments on federal grounds, but the year after the reenactment on the Ragsdale property Petersburg National Battlefield hosted its own re-enactment at Five Forks in 1997. According to Petersburg National Battlefield Historian Chris Calkins, it was "first time that an event has been held at Five Forks to commemorate the battle."¹⁸⁶ Between 50 and 75 reenactment groups from as far away as Maryland and Georgia were expected to attend. Reenactment of the Battle of Five

Forks may have been one of the few carried out on a national battlefield. Later, the National Park Service explained its prohibition policy:

Battle reenactments and demonstrations of battle tactics that involve exchanges of fire between opposing lines, the taking of casualties, hand-to-hand combat, or any other form of simulated warfare are prohibited in all parks. Even the best-researched and most well-intentioned representation of combat cannot replicate the tragic complexity of real warfare. Respect for the memory of those whose lives were lost at these sites and whose unrecovered remains are often still interred in these grounds precludes the staging of inherently artificial battles at these memorial sites. Battle reenactments create an atmosphere that is inconsistent with the memorial qualities of the battlefields and other military sites placed in the Service's trust. The safety risks to participants and visitors, and the inevitable damage to the physical resource that occurs during such events are also unacceptably high when seen in light of the NPS mandate to preserve and protect park resources and values.¹⁸⁷

Aside from whether reenactments were inappropriate for memorialized grounds such as Five Forks, they may have served as conduits to recast the present in terms of old prejudices. In a study of the larger reenactment phenomenon, Rory Turner found the “hobby largely a white affair,” and that the “Civil War has different symbolic resonances for blacks and whites.” When asked about motivations, one Confederate reenactor impersonating Robert E. Lee recalled that he saw a common cause between secession and the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Integration in his estimation “would destroy our way of life—and it has . . . [it’s] taken away what we call our rights you know, our Southern rights.”¹⁸⁸ The view of reenactor Lee was but one of a multitude of reasons why the various thousands of reenactors took the field, but Turner—a reenactor himself—concluded that reenactment ultimately “perpetuates identities and ideologies rather than to question them.”¹⁸⁹

Although the 1997 Battle of Five Forks may have been the last and only reenactment on the actual battlefield, the idea partially lived on through demonstrations of Civil War era artillery, cavalry, and infantry units and living history events often sponsored at the national battlefields as part of anniversary commemorations and “heritage days.” Although such demonstrations and living histories were meant to provide a different kind of snapshot of the past, they shared with reenactments an intent to provide value through authentic representation of history. Reenactments were just one touchstone for larger questions facing the National Park Service about what stories were being told, what kinds of activities were appropriate for a field of battle, and how to best foster public engagement and represent historical authenticity.

Management of the landscape was part of the conversation about representing the past. As earlier sections discuss, little remained of the original Five Forks breastworks by the time the private land was acquired by the National Park Service. Past Petersburg historians and superintendents had proposed reconstructing the field fortifications. Over time, National Park Service policies on the preservation or reconstruction at the national battlefields shifted. Between 1976 and 1997, the National Park Service commissioned four studies on the management of earthworks, which looked closely at the Virginia parks. Although the main Confederate field fortifications at Five Forks were originally breastworks (logs and rails laid horizontally and supported by vertical posts with dirt thrown up in front) rather than earthworks, and no wood remnants of the works were readily visible, some of the findings of the earthworks analyses were still applicable to Five Forks. The 1986 “Earthworks Management Manual” made it clear that “preservation, and not restoration, should be given the highest priority until and acceptable level of stabilization is achieved.” As part of preservation, the manual recommended limiting access to vulnerable earthworks and pursuing options that reduced maintenance demands. After surveying several parks, the evidence showed that it was “Almost axiomatic that, for all practical terms, access is equivalent to erosion.”¹⁹⁰ The study found that healthy, native plant communities stabilized earthworks, and that contrary to past practices, retaining rather than removing trees better preserved earthworks. Although on the face of it, limiting access to historic resources and obscuring original viewsheds with trees and vegetation may have seemed counter to the National Park Service interpretation

mission, the manual elevated as its guiding tenant the charge to perpetuate historic resources unimpaired for future generations. “Despite the mandate to integrate preservation and interpretation,” the manual’s authors concluded, “the situation in the parks today is one of consistent conflict between these values.”¹⁹¹ The manual sided with practicality in resource management, advocating an approach to preservation that reduced maintenance costs. It was a lesson that had wider import beyond earthworks.

If preservation and interpretation were in conflict at the parks, the publication of *Holding the High Ground: Principles and Strategies for Managing and Interpreting Civil War Battlefield Landscapes* in 1998 served as an earthworks management manual for interpretation. *Holding the High Ground* was a reassessment of Park Service interpretation in light of new trends in historical and material culture scholarship and approaches to cultural landscapes. Whereas past interpretation had focused too closely on military aspects, *Holding the High Ground* recommended “placing battlefield stories within the social, economic and political context of the period” and proposed themes and strategies to carry out the recommendation.¹⁹²

A year after the publication and circulation of *Holding the High Ground*, the Petersburg National Battlefield staff completed a new five-stop driving tour at the Five Forks unit with turnouts and wayside exhibits. The tour and exhibits were sorely needed, as prior to that, the only way to learn about site was if someone on duty at the visitor station, the former Hunt Club converted for Park Service use. To supplement the tour, a cannon was placed to mark and memorialize the death of Confederate Col. William Pegram. Making use of contemporary technologies, Petersburg National Battlefield also produced a cassette-based 37-mile driving tour of sites related to Petersburg campaign.¹⁹³ The Five Forks tour and wayside exhibits likely relied on work that predated *Holding the High Ground*, for it retained a military-centric approach that stuck largely to unit movements and battlefield leadership. Because of the tactical and strategic significance of the single-day battle at Five Forks, telling a broader story of social, economic, and political contexts proved an elusive task.

The anniversary commemoration of the battle in 2000 featuring artillery, cavalry, infantry demonstrations and encampments showed that some version of reenactment still had a place in interpreting the site—at least for one day a year.¹⁹⁴ Another consistent feature of the anniversaries were walking tours and lectures developed by Petersburg National Battlefield historians, rangers, and interpretive specialists.

By 2004 the National Park Service had re-evaluated some of the preservationist principles laid out in the “Earthworks Management Manual.” Plans for Five Forks’ future considered a more interventionist approach, advising that “Without active management, a significant feature of the battle landscape, the pattern of open and wooded terrain that determined where the armies moved and camps settled, is obscured. Important vistas and viewsheds are integral to a visitor’s understanding of troop movements and events. Vegetation, such as brush and trees, impede not only the view of the earthworks and battlefields, but also accessibility for maintenance, interpretation, and protection of archaeological resources from relic hunters.”¹⁹⁵ In one potential alternative called “Landscapes Tell The Stories,” the Petersburg National Battlefield proposed rehabilitating the landscape to its 1865 condition.¹⁹⁶ Admitting that interpretation was challenging at Five Forks because there were few resource to orient visitors to the site, the National Park Service optimistically pointed to its “good” integrity, defined as a battle site “essentially unchanged from the historic period with respect to terrain, land use, road network, and mass and scale of buildings,”¹⁹⁷ and recommended acquiring another 1,047 acres including the 435-acre scenic easement held by the Izaak Walton League and areas to the east that contained the original marshalling grounds and initial attack.¹⁹⁸

The difficulty of balancing the demands of preservation and interpretation at Five Forks was exacerbated by the hard reality that the unit lacked the funds to take on either task adequately. After 16 years, Five Forks still lacked some basic features of a national park. In congressional appropriation hearings, the National Park Service laid out the many problems: the visitors station was a poorly situated converted grocery and gas station with no running water or restrooms; visitors had to cross roads carrying traffic at up to 55 miles per

hour without any protection from stop signs, cross walks, reduced speed limits, or lights; deteriorated, unsafe and unstable non-historic structures were located near the monuments site; an inadequate parking area led to dangerous and destructive situations; and the park had no maintenance facilities or storage. To further justify a request for a new visitor complex at Five Forks, National Park Service officials contrasted the inattention with what private sources of funding had accomplished: “Heralded at its dedication by local officials as a cornerstone in the county’s tourism development, the lack of National Park Service development at the site has generated increasing criticism from state, county and local officials while privately funded organizations have made multi-million dollar investments in tourism, marketing, exhibits, museums and infrastructure in the area to meet the public’s needs and expectations.”¹⁹⁹

The appeal for a new visitor center succeeded and in 2008 the National Park Service commissioned architect Allen Reed for the design. The location of the visitor center complex reflected a more recent trend to avoid affecting battlefield viewsheds compared to earlier approaches that prioritized close proximity to important features. Reed sought to both “meld into the environment,” and evoke the local vernacular of functional, simple barns in designing the structure, which closely resembled an extant barn near the Five Forks intersection. The complex included an “education shelter,” picnic tables, large parking lot, benches, landscaping, and tucked out of easy sight, a metal maintenance and storage facility. Constructed on the northern edge of the historic James Boisseau plantation some quarter mile from the where Union cavalry units faced the Confederate line at the Five Forks intersection, the visitor center complex greatly improved usability and interpretation at some cost to a strict preservationist approach. John Talmage, chairman of the Dinwiddie County Board of Supervisors endorsed the project with a statement that underscored the economic calculus that characterized the board’s approach to the battlefield: “Dinwiddie County is proud of its Civil War heritage. Hopefully this will be of great economic and historic value for Dinwiddie.”²⁰⁰ Dave Schulte, Petersburg Area Regional Tourism, added a different take on the same idea: “Civil War history is the major product we have to sell.”²⁰¹

At the same time the visitor center was under construction, an 8-mile-long trail system was added to the park, built largely by volunteers including equestrian clubs, Eagle Scouts, individual volunteers, and New Outlook Pioneers, a corporate volunteer organization. Recreational trails within the Petersburg National Battlefield had a long history—the first built during the 1930s. According to Tim Blumenschine of the National Park Service, the intent of the trail system was “to open up this battlefield and make it more visitor-accessible.”²⁰² Although the trail system attracted greater numbers of visitors to the park, the routes had little connection to the battle and minimal historical value. To assist with trail maintenance, the park offered a formal “Adopt-A-Trail Program” after its completion in 2009.²⁰³ That the National Park Service sought volunteer involvement where feasible spoke to the continued burden of maintaining the parks in the absence of adequate funding. Allied organizations such as the Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT) helped coordinate volunteer efforts with events such as Park Day, established in 1999 to organize volunteer trail maintenance and trash pickup in the national battlefields. With over 60,000 members, the CWPT was largest nonprofit battlefield preservation organization in the United States.²⁰⁴

Between 2011 and 2015, the Five Forks unit continued to have a role in the larger Dinwiddie County celebration of “Heritage Days” that tried to recreate with living histories what life was like during Civil War era. With exhibits like “What Women Wore,” dramatized discussion of conference between Lincoln, Grant, Sherman, and Porter, living history, bus tours and walking tours, military demonstrations, lectures, re-enactments and encampments at the many battle sites within the county, Dinwiddie looked to draw visitors into the area.²⁰⁵

Outbreak of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 in early 2020 resulted in closure of the Five Forks visitor center and severely curtailed visitation. The following year, the National Park Service moved forward with plans to convert the maintenance facility into a museum collections storage facility, but the project is yet unrealized.

In 2023, little has changed physically at the Five Forks Battlefield since 2009 in terms of preservation and interpretation. The site has lost most of its interpretive resources with the closure of the visitors center, and what remains, the five-stop driving-tour panels, offer the briefest introduction to the site's history, one that still focuses on the two armies' movements and leaders.

Revisiting Ken Burns' *The Civil War* some 23 years later provides one bookend to changes in historical interpretation of Civil War battlefields since 1990. As one critic put it "In romanticizing the Confederacy, obscuring the role of slavery, and refusing to grapple with the war's devastating racial repercussions, the much-loved documentary is complicit in a long tradition of distorting the meaning of the Civil War."²⁰⁶ Shelby Foote, a prominent narrator in the documentary, has been characterized as a modern re-teller of the Lost Cause. Reassessment of *The Civil War* has coincided with the movement to remove various Confederate symbols in the wake of racial violence and suppression of civil rights. The image of a crane lifting the statue of Robert E. Lee from its pedestal on Monument Avenue in Richmond in September 2021²⁰⁷ signals a new era of complexity in memorializing the Civil War at battlefields such as Five Forks.

Five Forks Battlefield, 1992–2023

The built environment and landscape at the Five Forks Battlefield have undergone few major changes since the Cultural Landscape Inventory of site in 2020. The discussion below is generally drawn from the Cultural Landscape Inventory except where updated for conditions since 2020 and focuses on relevant historical developments. See the Existing Conditions sections for more detailed accounts of current conditions.

Breastworks and Other Defenses

Although periodic proposals were forwarded by the National Park Service to reconstruct the Confederate breastworks over the years, to date no such projects appear to have been carried out. The primary remnants of the main Confederate breastworks are found in the section known as the Angle and consist of the excavations and earth movement associated with the construction of the wood field fortifications, which are no longer extant. The ground depressions show signs of the traverses that were described in contemporary accounts of the Confederate defensive positions. The condition of other defensive works noted in the Warren Testimony are unknown, and to date have not been comprehensively documented.

Buildings and Structures

After acquiring the Five Forks battlefield property in 1990, the National Park Service converted the defunct grocery store and hunt club to a visitor station (Figure 45). The 2020 Cultural Landscape Inventory noted that "In 2001, the National Park Service removed the abandoned tenant house on the south side of the Five Forks intersection, as well as its privy, shed, and chicken house, after the house was struck by a car and moved off its foundation, creating a safety hazard," and completed improvements in 2003 to make the visitor contact station more functional and attractive.²⁰⁸

Between 2008 and 2012 several changes were made to the built environment at the Five Fork unit. The major project involved construction of the visitor center complex between 2008 and 2009, which includes maintenance facility, picnic tables, education shelter, landscaping, and parking lot. In the following year, the National Park Service razed the original converted grocery store/clubhouse visitor station. The Martin House, a tenant farmhouse that stood northeast of the Five Forks intersection in an agricultural clearing that likely dated to the late nineteenth century, was demolished in 2008. A comfort station was built near the demolished house site to serve a trail network that was added to the battlefield in this period. Another farm structure taken down (c.2012) was a barn just southwest of the Five Forks crossroads that served as the design inspiration for the new visitor center.

Site History

The Stewart House, a tenant farmhouse, still stands at 15314 White Oak Road, west of the Five Forks intersection on the north side of White Oak Road (Figure 46). The farmhouse likely dates to the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries, built to house tenant farm families working the Gilliam fields. The house originally was located within an agricultural clearing that has reverted to forest. According the 2020 Cultural Landscape Inventory, the National Park Service plans to remove the farmhouse and associated structures in the near future.²⁰⁹



FIGURE 45. Five Forks National Battlefield Visitor Station, converted from Bridgeman Grocery/Hunt Club, circa 1995. (Source: Petersburg National Battlefield Archive)



FIGURE 46. Stewart House at 15314 White Oak Road.

Landscape

National Park Service acquisition of the park altered some of the previous land use. Farming continued on approximately 97 acres through an agricultural lease program until about 2019. Logging within the park boundaries was discontinued. As a result, some non-historic clearings were maintained, and some historic agricultural clearings returned to forest. Not much effort was made to restore the landscape's 1865 condition.

Agricultural clearings associated with the Benjamin Boisseau, Thomas Bass, and Sydnor properties are now covered with pine forests. Conversely, areas that were forested in 1865 near the Five Forks intersection and associated with the Martin House are cleared. The addition of parking areas and turnouts in 1999, 2009 and 2012, and cutting a trail network in 2008 brought smaller scale changes to the historic landscape.

Roads

Few alterations have been made to main roads into the Five Forks intersection since 1991. In 2008 the National Park Service improved an existing farm road to facilitate demolition of the Martin House. As described in the 2020 Cultural Landscape Inventory, the road was extended an additional 375 feet to the entrance of a trail system for hikers and horseback riders, and then looped back to the original farm road. An access road for the new visitor complex was completed in 2008. A short access loop was added as part of construction of a six-car, two-bus parking lot southwest of the intersection, between White Oak Road and Wheeler's Pond Road in 2014. The unimproved Confederate "escape road" appears to have been maintained up until relatively recently (Figure 47). Some trees have fallen across the road. The name implies all Confederate forces retreated along this path; however, evidence shows that Confederates retreated along several different routes, including west down White Oak Road.



FIGURE 47. Confederate escape road.

Landscape Summary, 2023

Refer to Figure 48, 2023 Period Plan.

National Park Service administration of the Five Forks Battlefield has led to several changes within the landscape. Among these include the establishment of a trail system within the heavily wooded areas north of White Oak Road, some of which follow logging routes dating to the 1970s and 1980s. Additionally, pullouts, parking areas, and wayside exhibits were added along the road corridors to support visitor interpretation of the battlefield in 1999. Several buildings constructed after 1865, including a circa 1895 house, 1950s store, and a nineteenth-century barn, were removed from the park unit in the early 2000s, while a visitor contact station, education pavilion, and maintenance facility were built south of the intersection along Courthouse Road in 2009 to further support administration and interpretation of the historic battlefield landscape. Forest patterns

Site History

remain similar to those present in 1991, with several areas purposefully maintained in open vegetative cover to facilitate interpretation.



National Park Service
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
www.nps.gov/oclp

SOURCES

- 1. USGS Aerial Photographs 1971, 1989, 1994
- 2. NPS Landsnet Boundaries and Tracts

DRAWN BY

Christina Osborn, ArcGIS Pro 3.1, 2023

LEGEND

- CLI Boundary
- Legislative Boundary
- Burnt Quarter Conservation Easement
- Woods
- Road
- Trails
- Earthworks
- Building

NOTES

- 1. Projection: WGS84 / UTM NAD83 / State Plane NAD83 / etc.
- 2. All features shown in approximate scale and location

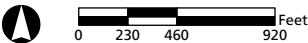
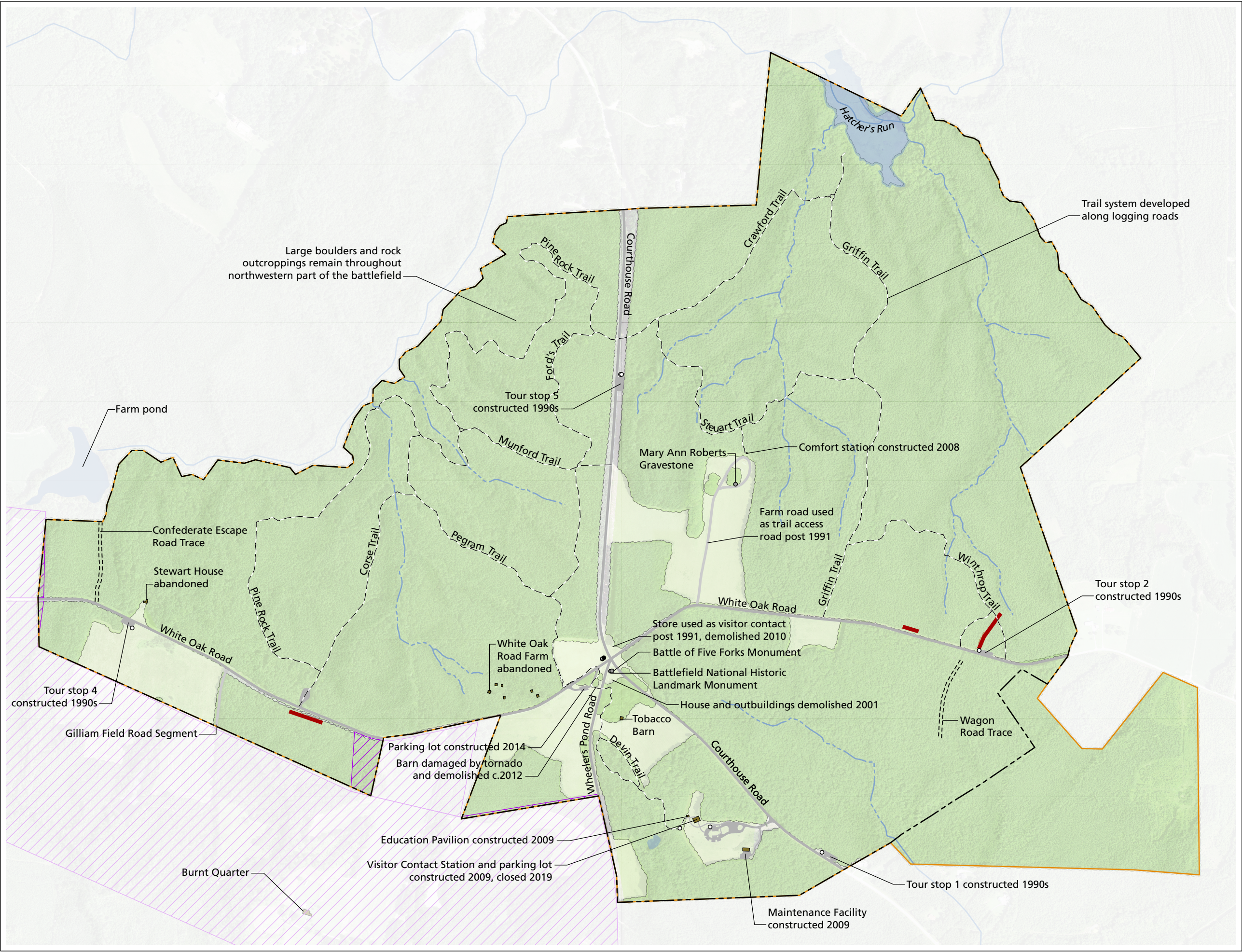


Figure 48



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Existing Conditions



FIGURE 49. Double wayside exhibit and a display cannon mark the Five Forks intersection. View is looking west along White Oak Road.

The following section focuses on the 1,115 acres that the National Park Service acquired in the 1990s to preserve and protect the Battle of Five Forks landscape. At the end of the twentieth century, the battlefield still existed within a larger landscape context dominated by agriculture and forestry practices and roads that saw little vehicular traffic. This condition was absent from many of the battlefields acquired by the National Park Service during the twentieth century, where rapid and radical land use changes were occurring across the South.

As a small unit of the larger Petersburg National Battlefield, where development pressures are felt on all sides, Five Forks has largely escaped these pressures due to its location. Although the actual conditions of the battle are not currently reflected in the field and forest patterns marked on the period maps and plans, they continue to evoke a nineteenth century landscape that has been protected by the larger, intact agricultural setting. Intense development pressures persist for Petersburg National Battlefield, and Five Forks Battlefield must face the reality of development pressures within the landscape context of Dinwiddie County.

This chapter presents—through narrative text, photographs, and labeled base mapping—the site setting, description, and landscape features associated with Five Forks Battlefield within the rural landscape of Dinwiddie County, Virginia (Figure 49).

Environmental Setting

Physiography/Geology/Soils

Dinwiddie County is divided by the Fall Zone into two physiographic provinces: the Piedmont and the Coastal Plain. The greater part of the county is in the Piedmont province, which is a highly dissected plateau, sloping gently seaward. Most of its soils are derived from acid crystalline material, as the Piedmont Plateau is underlain by igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic rocks. Major rivers, the Appomattox and Nottoway, flow through this area, occupying narrow floodplains with only minor meandering.

The far eastern portion of the county is in the Coastal Plain province, which is often referred to as the “Tidewater Area.” The Coastal Plain Province is a low, flat plain and is underlain mainly by unconsolidated or partially consolidated sands, clays, and gravels.

East of the fall line, where Piedmont materials have an overlay of sandy Coastal Plain material, Chesterfield and Bradley series are the dominant soils. In the Piedmont section, the Cecil-Applying association is the most common soil group. The Cecil series is found on the higher parts of the upland, which have good to excessive drainage. The Applying series is somewhat less mature because of its relatively lower position from the well-drained upland. Both soils have yellowish red to reddish clay subsoils. The bottomlands of the several small streams are composed of fairly deep alluvial soils. Some terrace soils occur along the Nottoway River. The sandy loams are found in all positions from the tops of divides to the bottom of the valleys (Figure 50).²¹⁰

Hydrology

River Basins

Dinwiddie County is located between two major river basins, the James and Chowan Basins. In the northern part of the county (about 16 percent of the total county land area), water drains into the Appomattox River, flows through the James River, and eventually reaches Chesapeake Bay. The southern portion (approximately 83 percent) of the county, is within the Nottoway River basin, while the extreme eastern portion (approximately 1 percent) of the county lies in the Blackwater River Basin. The tributaries of these rivers include Stony Creek, Sapony Creek, Buttonwood Creek, and White Oak Creek. The Nottoway and Blackwater flow into the Chowan, and its final receiving estuary is the Albemarle-Pamlico Sound.²¹¹

Surface water

Surface water in Dinwiddie County primarily consists of streams, rain, run-off, impounded lakes, and reservoirs. Dinwiddie County’s northern and southern boundaries are formed by the Appomattox and the Nottoway Rivers respectively. A series of palustrine wetlands is associated with Hatcher’s Run and its smaller tributaries in Five Forks Battlefield. The wetlands extend along the western and northern boundaries of the unit and smaller branches reach into Five Forks. Most of the National Wetland Inventory designations for Five Forks identify the wetlands as persistent palustrine wetlands that are either forested or shrub/scrub. Several have been created by beaver (*Castor canadensis*) activity in the area. Flood hazard zone maps for Petersburg National Battlefield show Five Forks flood plains are associated with the Appomattox River along Dinwiddie County’s northern border and the 100-year flood plain for Hatcher’s Run (Figure 51).

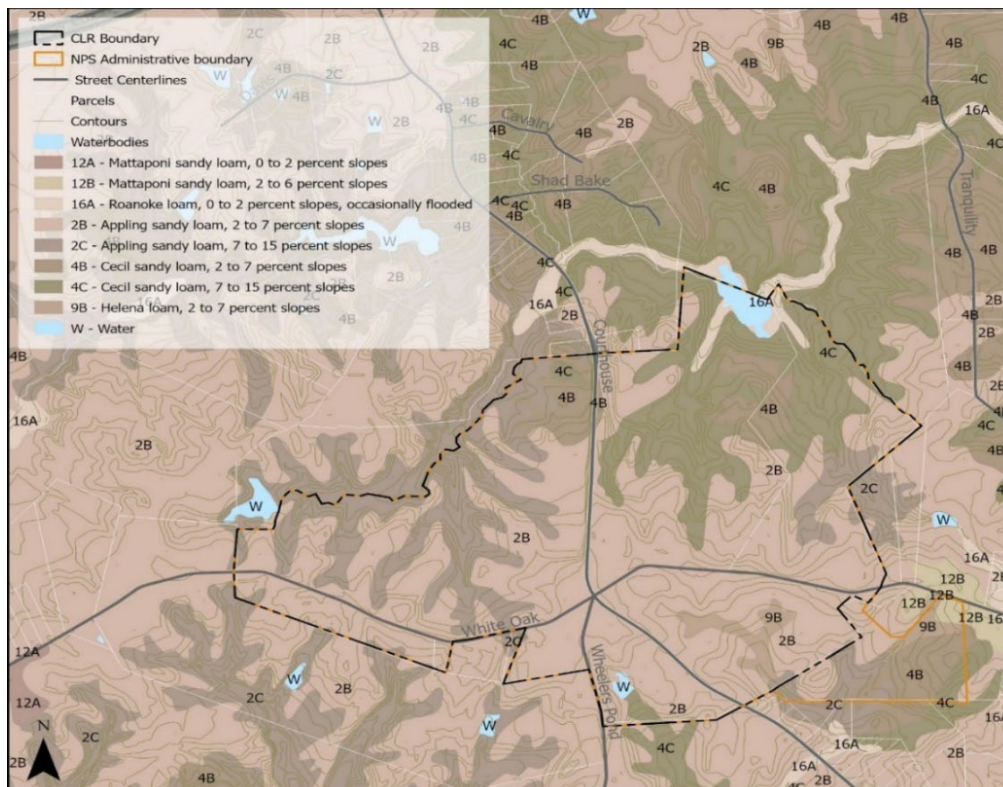


FIGURE 50. Soils groups and associated slopes are shown within the boundary of Five Forks Battlefield. (Source: *Dinwiddie Forward: 2043, Draft Comprehensive Plan*, annotated by LSHLA)

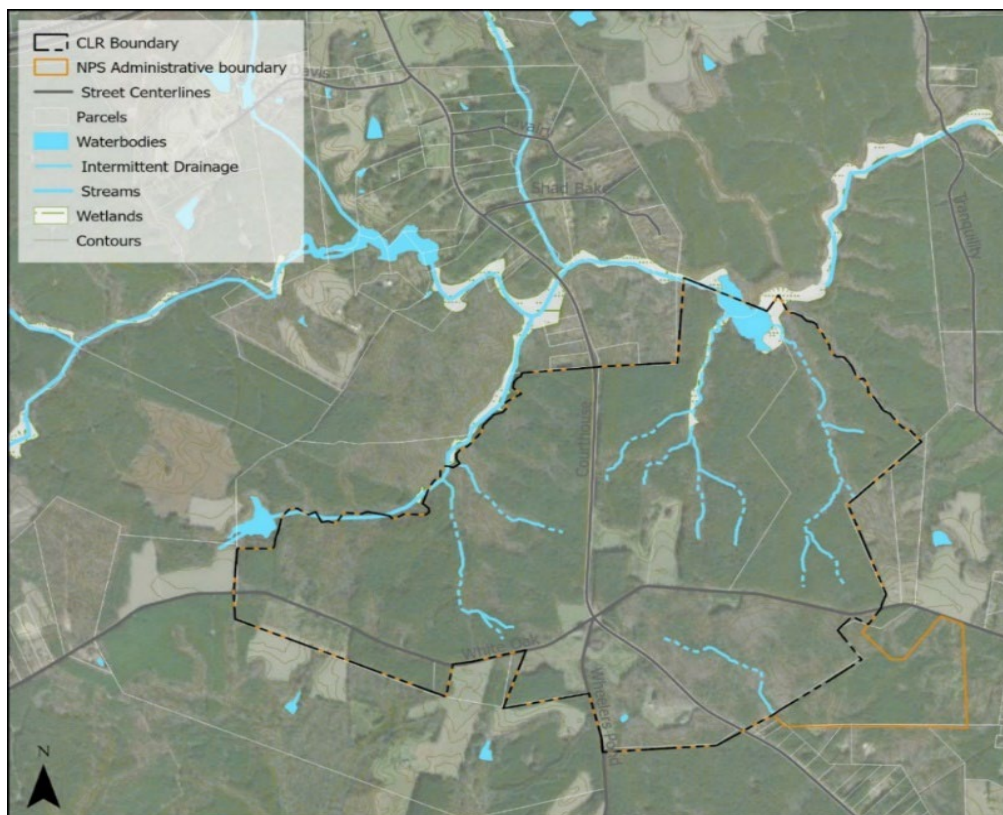


FIGURE 51. Water bodies, intermittent drainageways, streams, and wetlands are shown within the boundary of Five Forks Battlefield. (Source: *Dinwiddie Forward: 2043, Draft Comprehensive Plan*, annotated by LSHLA)

Climate

Resilience to Natural Hazards

A national park vulnerability assessment completed in 2021 by the Natural Resource Stewardship and Science Directorate found that nearly 75 percent of national parks are at risk from either the gradual effects of climate change or a more high-impact climate event like sea level rise or fire. In Virginia and particularly within the battlefield cultural landscapes, climate change has led to increased potential for extreme precipitation events and erosion, extreme heat, invasive species, and a northward shift in species ranges. Invasive species can overtake native vegetation, along with non-native pests and pathogens such as the emerald ash borer, and have a substantial impact on natural communities in the cultural landscape of the battlefields. In the coming decades, the region's changing climate is likely to reduce crop yields, harm livestock, increase the number of unpleasantly hot days, and increase the risk of heat stroke and other heat-related illnesses.

In Petersburg National Battlefield, severe storm events result in significant scouring of streams that flow through the park, increasing erosion and impacting natural communities. The intensity and frequency of these events will probably increase in the future due to climate change. Additional impacts from projected climate change may alter biotic communities due to shifts in the ranges of species (including invasive).²¹²

Cultural Setting

Petersburg National Battlefield is composed of multiple units encompassing the cities of Petersburg and Hopewell and the counties of Prince George and Dinwiddie. Grant's Headquarters at City Point is within the city limits of Hopewell. The Home Front and portions of the Eastern Front are within the city limits of Petersburg; the remainder of the Eastern Front is located in Prince George County. The Western Front and Five Forks are located in Dinwiddie County. These four jurisdictions are considered to be the region of influence for potential socioeconomic impacts affecting Five Forks Battlefield.²¹³ Dinwiddie County serves as a geographic transition area between the Richmond metropolitan region and the more rural Southside Virginia region. This is evident when regional population change over the past decade are considered. Dinwiddie County's neighbors in the Richmond Metropolitan Statistical Area all experienced population growth, except for Sussex County, while the Southside Counties all experienced population decline. Meanwhile, Dinwiddie County's population has remained stagnant, declining by only 54 people between 2010 and 2020. This is reflective of statewide slowed growth as well, although the county expects a slow increase in population in future years, which may impact Five Forks Battlefield.²¹⁴

The lands associated with Five Forks Battlefield are entirely within an unincorporated area of Dinwiddie County. As the road names suggest, institutions beyond the boundaries of the present-day park—White Oak Church and the Dinwiddie Courthouse—were important destinations that lent their names to associated battles and present-day destinations. Several engagements were fought in Dinwiddie County, including the Battle of Dinwiddie Court House, the Battle of Sutherland's Station, and the Battle of White Oak Road (Figure 52).

In contrast to the suburban sprawl that is radiating east and southeast from the City of Petersburg along the I-85 corridor, the roads that make up the Five Forks intersection—Courthouse Road, White Oak Road and Wheelers Pond Road—retain some historic character in their casual alignment and simple asphalt topping without curb and gutter. However, without intervention on behalf of the county and the National Park Service, this relative condition cannot withstand the development pressures that are occurring just outside the park boundaries.

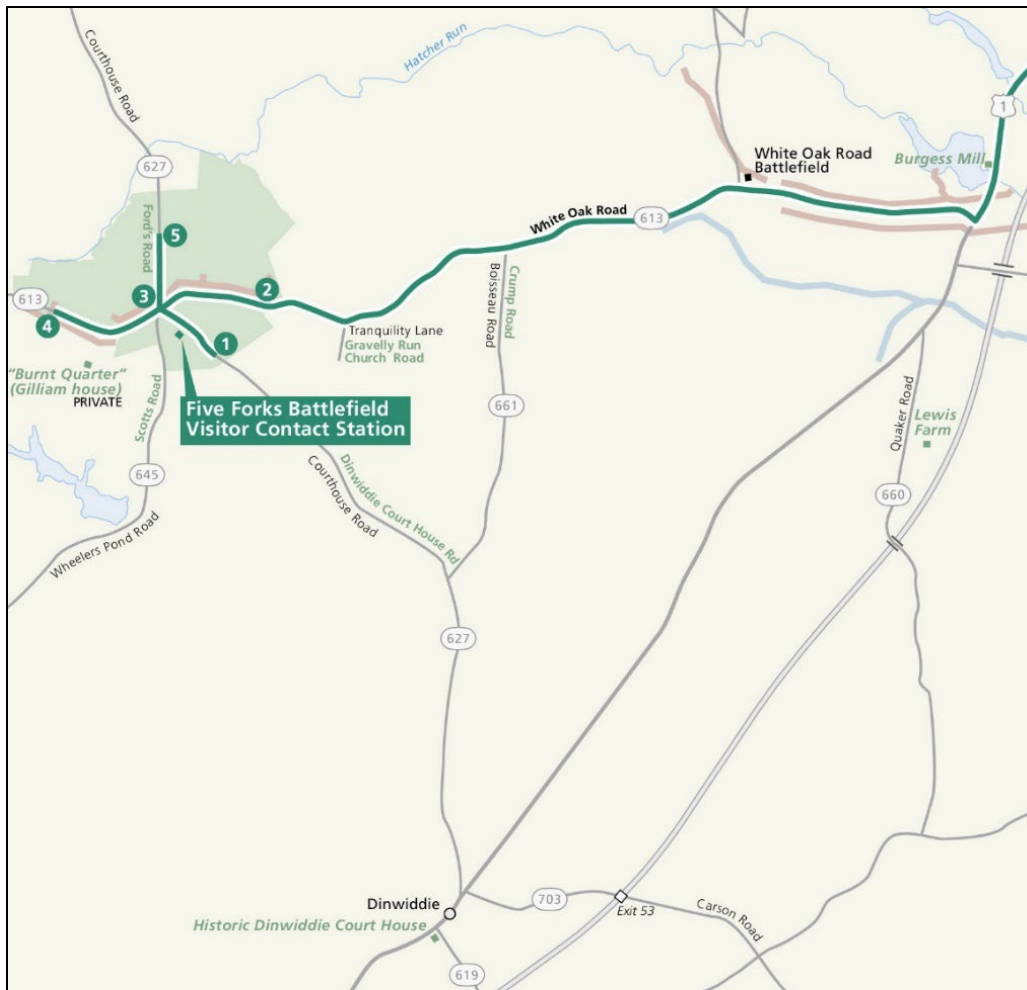


FIGURE 52. Location of Five Forks Battlefield in relation to the White Oak Road Battlefield and Dinwiddie County Court House Battlefield. (Source: Petersburg National Battlefield)

Five Forks Battlefield Landscape

Refer to Figure 72, Existing Conditions Site Plan.

Site Description

Natural systems and resources within the battlefield boundary include wooded drainageways that appear to have generally retained their appearance and function in the landscape since 1865. Wooded drainageways run north along the western property boundary, and west along the northern property boundary, joining at a pond and ultimately emptying into Hatcher's Run to the north. Neither drainageway appears to contain perennial surface flow. Today, while the western drainage is still evident, it may be reduced in size, and the northern drainage is far less prominent. The manmade pond, constructed sometime in the 1970s, is located adjacent to the property on the north but it is outside the project area. A series of palustrine wetlands is associated with Hatcher's Run and its smaller tributaries. The wetlands extend along the western and northern boundaries of the unit and smaller branches reach into Five Forks. Most of the National Wetland Inventory designations for Five Forks identify the wetlands as persistent palustrine wetlands that are either forested or shrub/scrub.

In addition, a distinct natural feature in this area of the county exists in the northwest portion of the battlefield. Clusters of large boulders, present at the time of the battle, remain on the battlefield today. These natural phenomena exist in this area of the county and give their names to places like Stony Creek, southeast of the battlefield, which flows southeast from Boynton Plank Road (Figure 53).



FIGURE 53. Large boulder outcrops can be seen from trails in the northwest portion of the battlefield.

Three north–south ravines drain the site to the south, dissecting the rolling upland that makes up most of the site. No significant human modifications to the topography are apparent. The topography of the site is generally level or slightly rolling with very small variations in elevation in the eastern section. In the western three-fourths of Dinwiddie County, the surface of the Piedmont Plateau exhibits a more rolling terrain. Within the vicinity of Five Forks, the rolling uplands are dissected by numerous steep drainages. The topography is steep, and the soils, underlain by igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic rocks, create significant erosion potential along steep stream channels. This condition is evident along the streams throughout the north sections of the battlefield.

Much of the battlefield contains level uplands between drainages. The locations and sizes of fields on these flatter areas have changed since the battle era. Scattered areas among the steep drainages are no longer being managed as fields. Field areas within the boundaries of Five Forks Battlefields exhibit gently sloping to flat topography extending to the surrounding forest edges (Figure 54).



FIGURE 54. Rolling landscape with small variations in topography visible south of White Oak Road.

The Five Forks Battlefield is a mosaic of forest cover with stands of mixed pine and hardwood and some remnant pine plantations. Grassy fields are transitioning to mixed pine and hardwood forest for lack of mowing or burning. In 2008, the National Park Service completed a *Vegetation Inventory* that contained the broader plant communities and associated plant materials within the boundaries of Five Forks Battlefield. In the fifteen years that have passed since the vegetation study was completed, the forest stands have aged and there has been some loss of old and diseased trees, but for the most part the vegetative cover has not been altered by the park. Currently, the battlefield is predominantly covered in a mixed canopy of successional forest with a wide array of native understory—woody and herbaceous shrubs and perennials (Figure 55). Mown grass fields dominate the landscape around the Five Forks intersection (Figure 56). Remnant agricultural fields that are associated with twentieth century ownership and use are reverting to woody species through the benign process of old field succession.



FIGURE 55. Early successional loblolly growth occurs in the field west of the access loop road, north of White Oak Road.



FIGURE 56. Mown fields dominate the landscape around the Five Forks intersection.

Roads and Road Traces

Five Forks Battlefield is named for the confluence of three roads in north central Dinwiddie County. The primary spatial organization of the battlefield is associated with the three historic roads that travel through it and together form the Five Forks intersection. At the intersection it is possible to have a 360-degree view of the landscape where visitors gain a sense of the scale and character of the battlefield. No curbing is present at the intersection, and a grass swale is mown to control storm water along the asphalt paving (Figure 57).



FIGURE 57. The central organizing feature of Five Forks Battlefield is the historic road system that forms the intersection.

The battlefield landscape interfaces each of the historic corridors that has county-controlled road rights-of-way that determine the widths, surfaces, and striping, and to some extent the amount of traffic that flows along these routes. The general alignment of the contemporary two-lane asphalt surfaced routes approximates the condition where opposing forces met along entrenched battle lines that followed the edge of White Oak Road. In contrast to the busier and more trafficked areas of Dinwiddie County, White Oak Road, Courthouse Road, and Wheelers Pond Road retain their rural character due to their setting, materials, widths, and alignments (Figure 58).

Vehicular access is provided to three areas of the Five Forks Battlefield cultural landscape in addition to the tours stops. From two of these areas, visitors can access trails and enjoy interpretive waysides and kiosks. One area is the visitor contact station and maintenance complex (currently closed to the public) and the others are parking areas north of White Oak Road with access to trails on the northeast and northwest sides of Courthouse Road (Figure 59).



FIGURE 58. View along White Oak Road leading west past the entrance drive to Burnt Quarter.



FIGURE 59. The access road loops around wooded vegetation and leads to vehicular and horse trailer parking as well as the trailhead for Steuart Trail.

There are three remnant historic road traces that function as part of the unpaved trail system. The Confederate Escape Road trace is located at the far western end of the battlefield on the north side of White Oak Road. It is marked with an informational kiosk and gate and from there continues north as a mulched surface to the National Park Service boundary. The Gilliam Field Road segment is an earthen road farther east on the south side of White Oak Road and leads south to the battlefield boundary. The Wagon Road trace is currently a mulched trail at the eastern end of the battlefield south of White Oak Road and across from Tour Stop 2. It connects near its terminus in the woods with the Winthrop Trail (Figure 60).



FIGURE 60. The entrance to Wagon Road Trace is located at the eastern end of the battlefield, south of White Oak Road and Tour Stop 2.

Trails

There is an extensive multi-use trail network through the two northern zones of the battlefield, coinciding with the area of significant action during the battle. It also represents the area with the greatest acreage owned by the National Park Service. The multi-use (pedestrian, equestrian, and bicycle) trail system extends through the forested areas of the park, providing visitors with a variety of undulating terrain along the way. A few of the routes are marked and named for officers involved in the battle of April 1, 1965. The trails include Corse Trail, Crawford Trail, Ford's Trail, Griffin Trail, Munford Trail, Pegram Trail, Pine Rock Trail, Deven Interpretive Trail, and Winthrop Hike/Bike Trail. Trail corridors are defined by pine woodlands, with trail surfaces of mulch and pine needles. The approximately 8 miles of trail are in good condition and open to the public for recreational purposes (Figure 61 and Figure 62).

A trailhead with parking is provided by way of a short gravel road north of White Oak Road. The trailhead in this location is for Corse Trail and Pine Rock Trail. A second trailhead with parking is provided from the access loop road, also north of White Oak Road. Horse trailers can park here and access the Stuart Trail.



FIGURE 61. Trail corridors are defined by the pine woodlands.



FIGURE 62. Stream crossings associated with the Stuart Trail.

Signage and Interpretation

Integrated along the historic roads of the Five Fork Battlefield are small vehicular tour stop pull-offs, paved with asphalt and numbered in interpretive sequence, 1 through 5. They are identified with low, circular green signs with a number in the center, readable to approaching traffic. Each tour stop offers interpretation of the battle from its specific location. Significant viewsheds associated with the road alignments are available and integrated into the interpretation of the battlefield at the tour stops (Figure 63).

Due to the open landscape surrounding the Five Forks intersection, there is an expansive view north to northwest from the monuments that encompasses the roads and the intersection. The area is managed as mown grass and contains the gun carriage and cannon, worm fencing, and wayside exhibits.

By spring 1865, forces on either side of the conflict had built a line of defensive earthworks to defend against assault. These earthworks provided cover and strategic locations from which to fend off opposing forces. Although very little of the earthworks remain at Five Forks Battlefield today, the remnant line and angle of Confederate earthworks that survive under forest cover and in deep leaf litter, at the far east end of White Oak Road at Tour Stop 2, are among the last remaining battle features to interpret the Battle of Five Forks.



FIGURE 63. View looking north along Courthouse Road from Tour Stop 1. (Source: Petersburg National Battlefield)

Visitor Contact Station/Maintenance Building Complex

The visitor contact station complex is a component landscape of the Five Forks Battlefield. It is composed of the visitor contact station, maintenance building, and associated roads and parking. It is accessed from the west side of Courthouse Road, south of the Five Forks intersection. A gated access drive extends through the designed landscape to and through the asphalt parking lot. Concrete sidewalks link the parking area to the visitor contact station and visitor amenities at the north end of the developed area. At the south end a drive connects to a maintenance building area that is well screened with berms and plantings (Figure 64).

The planting plan implemented in association with the visitor contact station and maintenance area included mixed hardwood and natives to help blend the area into the surrounding forest cover. Areas of mown grass exist around the buildings and parking lots, and those areas transition to taller grass fields and mixed forest cover that were extant at the time of construction.



FIGURE 64. Visitor Contact Station complex includes vehicular access, circulation, and parking to accommodate visitors and the specific needs associated with the maintenance building.

Structures

Structures in fair to poor condition remain on the battlefield site. The tobacco barn is located south of the Five Forks intersection between Courthouse Road to the east and Wheelers Pond Road to the west. The barn, which is rectangular in shape, has a stone and brick foundation. Portions of the north and south walls have collapsed, as has the roof (Figure 65).



FIGURE 65. Tobacco barn, view from northwest.

The White Oak Road Farm complex is located on the north side of White Oak Road west of the Five Forks intersection. Six structures survive within the complex, all in poor condition. There are three small log structures, an animal pen, a collapsed shed, and a log barn (Figure 66 and Figure 67).



FIGURE 66. Partially collapsed log structure, view from the northwest.



FIGURE 67. Barn at White Oak Road Farm, view from southeast.

The Stewart House is located north of White Oak Road northeast of Tour Stop 4. The two-story house is L-shaped in plan, with the north wing only one story in height. The Stewart House sits on a stone pier foundation and has wood siding at the exterior walls and a standing seam metal gable roof over the two-story portion of the house. A wood porch is centered on the south elevation at the front door to the house. A wood-frame ramp provides access from the existing grade to the porch (Figure 68).



FIGURE 68. Stewart House, view from south.

Commemorative features

In the 1960s, two monuments were erected at the Five Forks intersection to commemorate the site and the soldiers who fought there. In 1961, before the Five Forks Battlefield was added to Petersburg National Military Park, the National Park Service erected the Five Forks Battlefield National Historic Landmark Monument on a cleared half-acre of land located directly south of the intersection.²¹⁵ The rough-cut granite marker stands 22 inches high and 25 inches wide, and has a slightly arched top. A bronze plaque mounted on the polished face bears an inscription describing the designation of the site (Figure 69).



FIGURE 69. The Landmark Monument was erected south of the Five Forks intersection in 1961.

Four years later, in 1965, the Dinwiddie Confederate Memorial Association donated the Battle of Five Forks Monument as a memorial to soldiers who fought in the Battle of Five Forks, particularly those from Dinwiddie County. The monument was placed as a recognition of the centennial of the battle as well as the conclusion of the war. It consists of a 6-foot-high rough-cut granite slab on a 1-foot-high rectangular granite base with rough-cut sides and a finished top. The smooth face of the monument features an inscription describing its dedication and showcases an engraving of crossed United States and Confederate flags (Figure 70).

A small gravestone stands in the wooded area enclosed inside the access loop road north of White Oak Road and is inscribed with the name “Mary Ann Roberts.” While no other gravestones are immediately apparent, it is possible that the area was used as a cemetery, and other unmarked graves could be present at the site. The gravestone is currently surrounded by the trunk and root growth of an adjacent tree. It is in danger of complete displacement or destruction as tree growth continues (Figure 71).



FIGURE 70. The Battle of Five Forks Monument was erected in 1965.



FIGURE 71. The grave marker is threatened by the roots and trunk growth of the large adjacent tree.

Cultural Landscape Report

Petersburg National Battlefield

Dinwiddie, Virginia

Five Forks Battlefield 2023 Existing Conditions



National Park Service
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
www.nps.gov/oclp

SOURCES

1. VGIN Digital Elevation Model, 2021
2. USGS National Hydrology Dataset, 2021
3. VGIN Orthoimagery, 2021
4. NPS Landsnet Boundaries and Tracts
5. Field Review, February 2023

DRAWN BY

Kelsey Little, ArcGIS Pro 2.9, 2022
Christina Osborn, ArcGIS Pro 3.1, 2023

LEGEND

	CLI Boundary		Trail
	Legislative Boundary		Road Trace
	Lawn		Gravel Road
	Field/Meadow		Earthwork
	Woods		Wayside/Sign
	Road		Monument
	Building		Cannon
	Stream/Creek		Tour Stop
	Intermittent Stream/Creek		

NOTES

1. Projection: NAD83 UTM Zone 18N
2. Contour Interval = 5'
3. All features shown in approximate scale and location

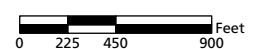
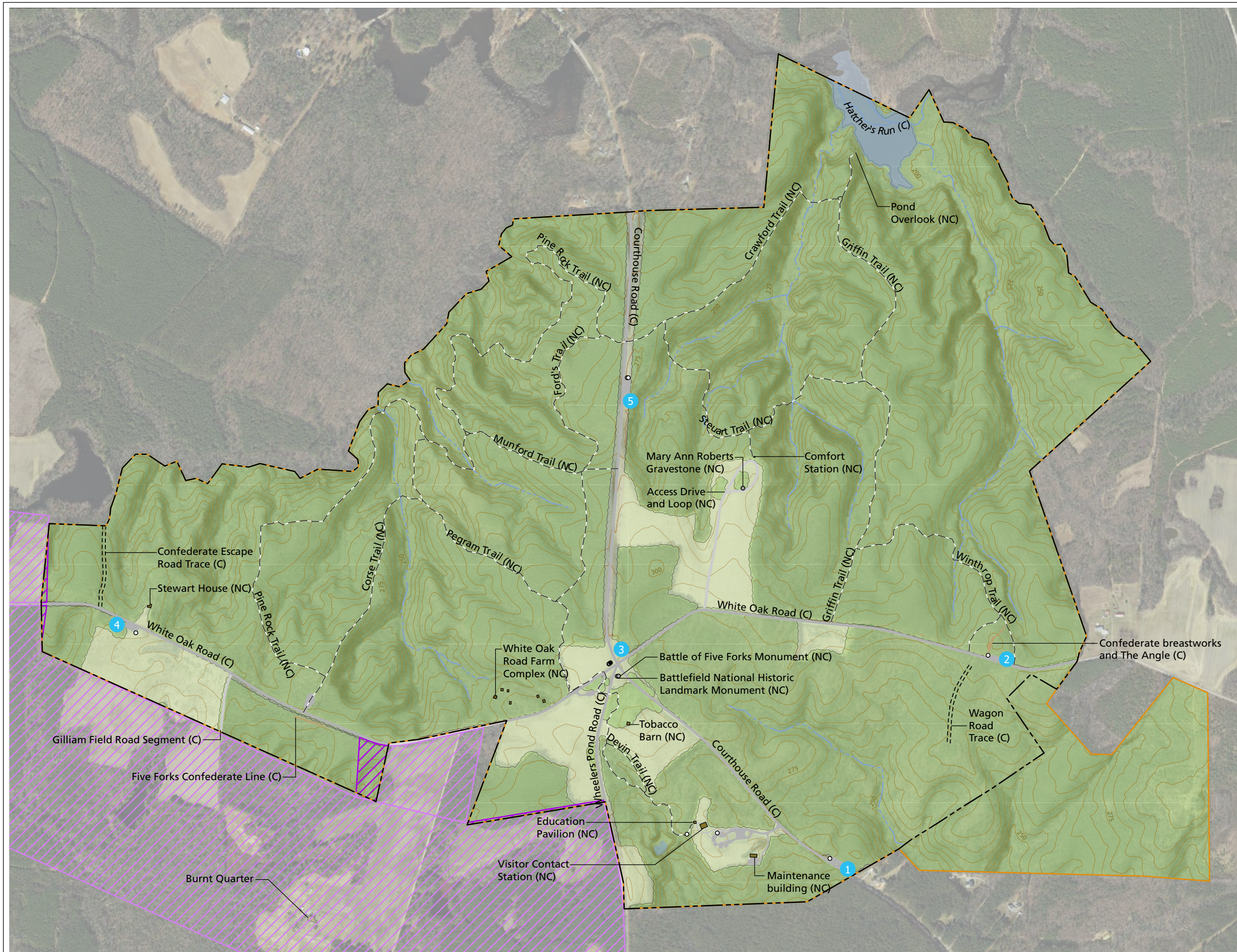


Figure 72



Endnotes

210. Berkley Group, “*Dinwiddie Forward: 2043, Draft Comprehensive Plan*,” Dinwiddie County, Virginia (2023), 55.
211. *Dinwiddie Forward: 2043, Draft Comprehensive Plan*, 51.
212. National Park Service, *Foundation Document for Petersburg National Battlefield* (2016), 37–38.
213. National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, “*Petersburg National Battlefield Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*” (March 2004), 115.
214. *Dinwiddie Forward: 2043, Draft Comprehensive Plan*, 29.
215. Petersburg National Military Park was redesignated Petersburg National Battlefield in 1962.

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Analysis and Evaluation

Introduction

The battle at Five Forks, often referred to as the Waterloo of the Confederacy, was a limited but crucial engagement across a rain-soaked landscape in the late afternoon of April 1, 1865. The Union Army's success in routing the hastily entrenched Confederate troops along White Oak Road, one of the roads that made up the eponymous spoke intersection, allowed Major General Philip Sheridan's cavalry to drive the Confederate troops off the battlefield and to ride a few miles north along Courthouse Road to claim their prize; the Southside Railroad. The Confederate troops who could escape traveled northwest to try to slow down the inevitability of the war's end.

Then as today, the battle's importance was overshadowed by General Robert E. Lee's direct engagement with Gen. Ulysses S. Grant in the preceding months at Petersburg and ultimately, Lee's surrender to Grant at Appomattox Courthouse just days after the Union Army's capture of the Southside Railroad. These two leaders, whose names have become synonymous with the Civil War, were directly involved in what is today referred to as the Appomattox campaign, which lasted from March 29 to April 9, 1865. Without the hearings that Union officer General Gouverneur Kemble (G. K.) Warren—the hero of Gettysburg Little Round Top—pursued for more than a decade to clear his name after his co-officer on the field, General Phillip Sheridan, had him removed from the command of the V Corps, Five Forks might have been forgotten. Even then, by the turn of the twentieth century as Civil War battlefields were being commemorated and set aside for the first time in history as historic landscapes, the simplicity of Five Forks Battlefield—an undeveloped road intersection with few surviving battle features and that returned to its pre-battle use as mixed agriculture and woodlands—could not measure up to nearby Petersburg's stories and resources, both of which were disappearing to time and development.

First listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1960, Five Forks Battlefield was listed again in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. At that time, the federal government did not elect to protect land at Five Forks Battlefield, assuming that it, like so many other rural battlefields that remained privately owned properties in agricultural use and were far from mid-century pressures of urban and suburban growth, would remain undisturbed before others stepped in to protect what seemed to be an unthreatened battlefield. Within fifteen years, however, when the property was entered into the National Park System, much had changed—historic structures had been lost, once-open fields succeeded to woodlands while other wooded areas were cleared to establish fields, and a line of Confederate earthworks was destroyed by road projects and power line corridors. These changes notwithstanding, National Park Service historian Chris Calkins described the battlefield in 1991 as “pristine” because “[V]ery little adverse development has affected the site in the last century and a quarter.”²¹⁶

In the following section, the historic condition of the Five Forks Battlefield as recorded after the war's end in 1865 and later for the G. K. Warren inquiry and hearings in 1875, is compared to existing conditions as found in February 2023 within that portion of the battlefield included in Petersburg National Battlefield at the time field survey was conducted in support of the Cultural Landscape Report. Comparison of historic and

contemporary conditions must rely on Civil War era military engineer maps, later maps and twentieth-century aerial photography, and descriptions of the battlefield available for the period between 1865 and the 1960s. No period ground photographs have been located and there are only a few artist sketches and one painting of the battle event, all of which are too generic to really understand the character and composition of the Five Forks landscape in a detailed manner. Where the comparative analysis section of a cultural landscape report would typically demonstrate the degree of physical change over time within a landscape using “then and now” photograph pairs, the lack of this type of documentation means that this section has very few images to illustrate the discussion. The analysis conveyed below remains an important part of the Cultural Landscape Report for the way it identifies and recognizes the importance of landscape characteristics and features that might have been previously overlooked or remain important to understanding the connection between military events and environmental conditions but are not typically considered to contribute to historic places in the National Register of Historic Places, such as terrain, hydrology, and vegetation.

It is also critical to note that, while the roads that form the spoked intersection are a major consideration of the analysis that follows and are contributing features of the National Historic Landmark and National Register of Historic Places nominations that listed the property, they fall outside of National Park Service ownership associated with Petersburg National Battlefield and remain public thoroughfares. The National Park Service does not own the road corridors, nor does it seem to have formal agreements in place with Dinwiddie County or the Virginia Department of Transportation to limit traffic or manage change and improvements along the routes. Therefore, the entity responsible for road maintenance and engineering of traffic needs is to be consulted on proposed changes that the National Park Service might propose for the routes.

The pages that follow include three sections: a National Register of Historic Places-level evaluation of the significance of the property, an integrity assessment, and a comparative analysis that articulates which characteristics and features survive from the period of significance, and which postdate it. Features surviving with integrity from the period of significance are assessed as contributing, while those postdating the period of significance are indicated as non-contributing.

Evaluation of Significance

National Register of Historic Places Status

Petersburg National Military Park was established on July 3, 1926, under the authority of the War Department. The property was transferred to the National Park Service on August 10, 1933. At the time, the park did not include the Five Forks Battlefield unit.

On December 19, 1960, Five Forks Battlefield was designated as a National Historic Landmark. The 1,500-acre site comprising the battlefield was identified as possessing exceptional historic value under National Historic Landmark Theme XIV: The Civil War, 1861–1865.²¹⁷ According to the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings form prepared in support of the designation, the site is where, on April 1, 1865, “. . . in an overwhelming onslaught by cavalry and artillery, [General Ulysses S. Grant] swept aside a weak Confederate force to outflank the Confederate army and force [General Robert E.] Lee from the Richmond-Petersburg defenses.”²¹⁸

Petersburg National Military Park was redesignated as a National Battlefield on August 24, 1962. At that time, Congress authorized the acquisition of 1,200 acres at Five Forks.²¹⁹ The transfer of property was not completed until 1990 and 1991, at which time Five Forks Battlefield became part of the Petersburg National Battlefield.

Petersburg National Battlefield was administratively listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 15, 1966, with passage of the National Historic Preservation Act. Although there is no National Register of Historic Places documentation for the park as a whole, with several sites within the park, including Five Forks Battlefield, are individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places based on documentation that has been accepted by the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1972, National Register of Historic Places documentation for Five Forks Battlefield was prepared by the National Park Service. The documentation identified the boundaries of the battlefield as comprising approximately 600 acres, consisting of various tracts in private ownership.²²⁰ The documentation indicated the area of significance as “Other: History (Civil War),” and the Statement of Significance briefly noted, “Here, on April 1, 1865, Grant outflanked the Confederate army to force Lee from the Richmond-Petersburg defenses.”²²¹

On July 2, 1975, the Keeper accepted National Historic Landmark documentation for Five Forks Battlefield (NRIS #66000830). The documentation identifies an area of 1,300 acres.²²² The significance of the site was indicated as Military, with the documentation noting that on April 1, 1865, “Philip Sheridan’s Union forces crushed the defenders under George E. Pickett and Fitzhugh Lee; the defeat led to Federal seizure of the Confederate’s last supply line, the Southside Railroad, and their final surrender a few weeks later.”²²³ The documentation accepted in 1975 also described the crossroads at Five Forks intersection, a general store at one of the corners, and the Gilliam Mansion, or “Burnt Quarter.”²²⁴ It noted that little if any Confederate breastworks remained, and that most of the area consisted of wooded tracts interspersed with fields cleared for cultivation.²²⁵

On February 18, 2000, a Multiple Property Documentation Form titled, “The Civil War in Virginia, 1861–1865: Historic and Archeological Resources,” was accepted by the Keeper.²²⁶ The Multiple Property Documentation Form identified property types and historic contexts with which to evaluate historic and archeological resources related to the Civil War, including battlefields, earthworks, campsites, military hospitals, military headquarters, and military prisons. Resources at Petersburg National Battlefield were identified under the battlefields and earthworks property types and determined to be significant under Criteria A for association with the history of the Civil War in Virginia. The historic contexts provided in the Multiple Property Documentation Form were organized by the Civil War campaigns in Virginia, most of which were conducted along principal transportation routes. The Five Forks Battlefield was described as part of the Appomattox Campaign.

In March 2014, Public Archeology Laboratory, Inc., prepared draft National Register documentation for the entirety of the 2,761-acre Petersburg National Battlefield. At the time the Five Forks Battlefield Cultural Landscape Inventory was prepared in 2020, the 2014 draft documentation had not yet been submitted to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources for review. The 2014 draft documentation found Petersburg National Battlefield to be significant under National Register of Historic Places Criteria A, C, and D, in the areas of significance of Military, Politics/Government, Ethnic Heritage (Black), Conservation, Other (commemoration), Landscape Architecture, Engineering, Architecture, and Archeology, and Criterion B for its association with Generals Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant. The draft nomination documentation for Petersburg National Battlefield identified Five Forks Battlefield as a contributing site comprising 1,115-acres. Other contributing resources associated with Five Forks Battlefield identified in the nomination documentation included the Five Forks Civil War Road Network (structure) that included the Five Forks intersection, Confederate Escape Road Trace, Gilliam Field Road Segment, and Wagon Road Trace (historic associated features), as well as the Five Forks Civil War Earthworks (structure) comprised of the Five Forks Confederate Line and the Five Forks Confederate Forward Outpost (historic associated features). Non-contributing resources included four buildings and two objects: Five Forks Dwelling at 15314 White Oak

Road, Five Forks Tobacco Barn, Five Forks Visitor Contact Station, Five Forks Maintenance Building, Battle of Five Forks Monument, and the Five Forks Battlefield National Historic Landmark monument.²²⁷

As summarized in the 2020 Cultural Landscape Inventory:

The 2,761-acre Petersburg National Battlefield is nationally significant for its association with the ten month long Appomattox Campaign, which culminated in the abandonment of Petersburg and Richmond by the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia by April 3, 1865, and led directly to the Army's surrender to Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant and the Union Army of the Potomac at Appomattox Court House one week later. The Five Forks Battlefield was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960 for its exceptional historic value under Theme XIV: The Civil War, 1861–1865. The 1,115-acre property also possesses significance under National Register of Historic Places Criteria A and C in the areas of Military History and Engineering as the location of the Battle of Five Forks and for the remains of the earthen Civil War fortifications. The property may be significant under Criterion D in the area of Archeology for its potential to yield information about the organization, operation, and experiences of both the Union and Confederate armies, as well as pre-contact settlement. . . .²²⁸

The Cultural Landscape Inventory identified the following landscape characteristics and associated features as contributing to the park's historic character, although not all are considered countable resources according to the guidelines established by the National Register of Historic Places:

Natural Systems and Features:

- Hatcher's Run
- Intermittent drainages

Circulation:

- Five Forks Civil War Road Network: Five Forks Intersection
- Five Forks Civil War Road Network: White Oaks Road
- Five Forks Civil War Road Network: Courthouse Road
- Five Forks Civil War Road Network: Wheelers Pond Road
- Five Forks Civil War Road Network: Confederate Escape Road Trace
- Five Forks Civil War Road Network: Gilliam Field Road Segment
- Five Forks Civil War Road Network: Wagon Road Trace

Buildings and Structures:

- Five Forks Civil War Earthworks: Confederate Line Earthworks
- Five Forks Civil War Earthworks: Confederate Forward Outpost Earthwork

Vegetation:

- Historic Fields and Meadows
- Historic Woodlands

Views and Vistas:

- Views east from White Oak Road
- Views south from Five Forks intersection²²⁹

The Cultural Landscape Inventory also identified the following landscape characteristics and associated features as non-contributing to the park's historic character:

Circulation:

- Access drive and loop at Steuart Trailhead
- Parking area at Corse Trailhead
- White Oak Road pull-off
- Interpretive pull-offs
- Five Forks Visitor Contact Station parking
- Maintenance parking area
- Pedestrian walks
- Multi-use trails
- Interpretive trails
- Hike/Bike trails

Buildings and Structures:

- Five Forks Visitor Contact Station
- Five Forks Maintenance Facility
- Five Forks dwelling (Stewart)
- Five Forks Tobacco Barn
- Comfort station
- Education pavilion

Vegetation:

- Non-historic fields and meadows
- Successional woodlands

Small-scale Features

- Battle of Five Forks monument
- Five Forks Battlefield National Historic Landmark monument
- Interpretive waysides
- Cannon at Five Forks intersection
- Worm fence along White Oak Road
- Metal gates
- Lights²³⁰

The Cultural Landscape Inventory also identified the following landscape characteristics and associated features as undetermined in terms of contributing status:

Buildings and Structures:

- White Oak Road Farm complex

Small-scale Features

- Mary Ann Roberts gravestone²³¹

The 2020 Cultural Landscape Inventory prepared by the National Park Service was submitted for review and concurrence to the State Historic Preservation Officer in 2020.

National Register Significance

The significance of Five Forks Battlefield was established by the 1975 National Register of Historic Places nomination for Five Forks Battlefield, augmented by the Multiple Property Documentation Form, “The Civil War in Virginia, 1861–1865: Historic and Archeological Resources” (2000), and the draft National Register of Historic Places documentation for Petersburg National Battlefield (2014). Assessment of significance is informed by guidance afforded in the National Register Bulletin: *Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating and Registering America’s Historic Battlefields* (1991; revised 1999), and work performed by the National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program.²³² The bulletin and program have provided expertise to battlefield preservation that is reflected in the Cultural Landscape Inventory for Five Forks Battlefield, prepared by the National Park Service Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation in 2020, which is also cited herein.

Based on review of available significance assessment documents and *Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating and Registering America’s Historic Battlefields*, Five Forks Battlefield is nationally significant under National Register of Historic Places Criterion A, association with events significant to broad patterns of our history, as the site of the Battle of Five Forks on April 1, 1865. The victory by Union forces at this strategic junction of roads severed the last remaining rail line serving Confederate forces in Richmond and Petersburg, marked the final breakthrough of Confederate lines, and led to abandonment of Petersburg and the capital at Richmond by the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia on April 3, 1865. The surrender at Appomattox Court House occurred a week later, on April 9, 1865.

Five Forks Battlefield is also nationally significant under Criterion C, as it embodies distinctive construction, work of a master, or high artistic values. Specifically, Five Forks Battlefield is significant in the area of Engineering for the remains of the earthen fortifications present in the unit. These earthworks were part of an extensive network of field fortifications constructed during the Civil War and represent the most discernible feature of the battlefield. The earthworks “. . . convey through their location, design, and setting the pivotal role that engineering played in determining battlefield strategy and, ultimately, the outcome of the Appomattox Campaign.”²³³

Citing the 2014 draft National Register of Historic Places documentation for Petersburg National Battlefield, the Five Forks Battlefield Cultural Landscape Inventory notes that the property is significant in the areas of Military History and Engineering. The findings of the Cultural Landscape Report concur with the Cultural Landscape Inventory. The 2014 draft National Register of Historic Places documentation for the overall battlefield also notes that Petersburg National Battlefield is significant in the area of Commemoration. For Five Forks Battlefield, however, the 1960s monumentation present does not convey significance in this area.

The 2020 Cultural Landscape Inventory notes that the Five Forks Battlefield property may be also significant under Criterion D in the area of Archeology for its potential to yield information about the organization, operation, and experiences of both the Union and Confederate armies, as well as pre-contact settlement.²³⁴ However, evaluation of archeological significance was beyond the scope of the Cultural Landscape Inventory as well as this Cultural Landscape Report.

Period of Significance

The 2014 draft National Register of Historic Places nomination for Petersburg National Battlefield identifies periods of significance for the National Battlefield as 11,000 BCE–1600 CE, circa 1650–1750, and 1763–present.

Using the broad periods of significance suggested by the nomination form in use at the time, the 1972 National Register of Historic Places documentation and the 1975 National Historic Landmark

documentation, identified Five Forks Battlefield as significant during the nineteenth century, and specifically noted the date of April 1, 1865. The findings of the Cultural Landscape Report concur with those of the Cultural Landscape Inventory, which identifies the period of significance for the Five Forks Battlefield as 1865. The period of significance focuses on the military operations of March to early April 1865 in the vicinity of Five Forks, ending with the conclusion of military activity in the area during the first week of April.

Integrity Assessment

Establishing the integrity of a property to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places is an essential component of the evaluation and assessment process. Integrity is the ability of the historic property to convey its significance. The National Register of Historic Places identifies seven qualities or aspects of integrity that should be present in various combinations, depending on the property type. Aspects of integrity are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. As stated in the *Guidelines For Identifying, Evaluating and Registering America's Historic Battlefields*, “A basic test of integrity for a battlefield important for its association with a historic event or person is whether a participant in the battle would recognize the property as it exists today.”²³⁵ The bulletin also notes that the most important aspects of integrity for battlefields are location, setting, feeling, and association.²³⁶

Integrity of Five Forks Battlefield

Five Forks Battlefield retains overall integrity. When park historian Chris Calkins described the battlefield as “pristine” in 1990, he was reacting to the larger unchanged rural condition in and around the intersection where the rural roads still converged and continued through the intersection. These routes were critical to the battle’s unfolding on the afternoon of April 1, 1865, and the Five Forks intersection—a spoked arrangement of three roads meeting at a point in the landscape—was known to both armies. Once the Union army broke out of Petersburg in the last days of March 1865, a race was on for the Confederate troops to block the inevitable Union assault at the intersection, which, if successful, would give the Union army its shortest and easiest access to the Southside Railroad just a few miles to the north.

Also contributing to the integrity of the battlefield was the return to agricultural practices post-battle, which, although it resulted in a different configuration of fields and forests, preserved the key terrain of the battlefield, including the deep drainages, swampy ground, and scattered boulders that affected troop movements and military engagement during the battle. Little has changed since the National Park Service took ownership of the core battlefield, with the exception of limited development related to the introduction of interpretive features and opportunities, and the establishment of a visitor contact station and maintenance facility, which were carefully sited and designed to avoid impacts to the historic battlefield scene.

Integrity by Aspect

The following is an assessment of each aspect of integrity with respect to the Five Forks Battlefield. The findings of the Cultural Landscape Report concur with previous assessments included in National Register of Historic Places documentation and the National Park Service Five Forks Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report: Five Forks Battlefield retains historic integrity, but that integrity is diminished by several changes that occurred post-1865. The changes and their impact on integrity are described below by aspect.

Location

Historic Condition - The Five Forks intersection was a well-established crossroads location by the time of the Civil War Battle of Five Forks. The extent of the action on April 1, 1865, was also understood because of natural and cultural features that existed in the battlefield. The northern boundary of the battle was largely set by Hatcher’s Run, which meandered east/west with an extensive flood plain across Court House Road. Along

the park's eastern edge, the Confederate breastworks and the feature known as the Angle, built to fend off an attack from the east, served as a locator of the battle action. To the south, where less of the battle action occurred, there were fewer identifying features, although the Burnt Quarter plantation was an important landscape in the southwest along with its many buildings and structures. Along the western side of the battlefield was the trace of the Confederate Retreat Road that extends north from White Oak Road. This road trace, too, located a key event of the battle. All of these features were discernable on maps of the 1865 landscape, which also located the Southside Railroad line that was the Union Army objective to take and the reason the Confederate Army tried to hold the Five Forks intersection as the most logical approach (Figure 73 and Figure 74).

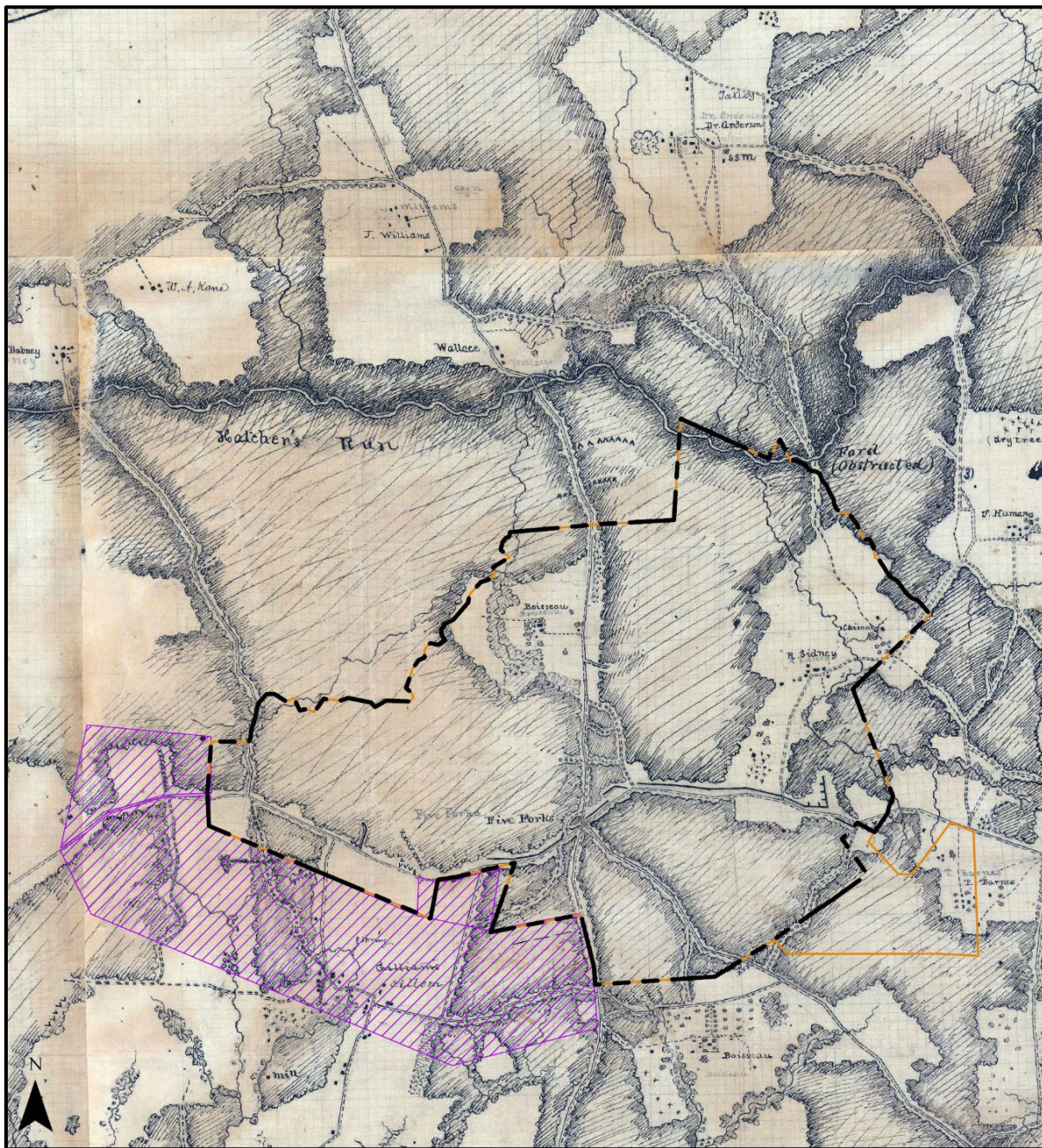


FIGURE 73. Detail from 1866 map showing area that includes Five Forks Battlefield and to the north, Hatcher's Run and the Southside Railroad line at the upper left corner. The Burnt Quarter Conservation Easement is shown at the bottom left (purple hatch) with the boundary of the Five Forks Battlefield unit (dashed line) and administrative boundary (orange line) also shown. (Source: NARA, annotated by authors)

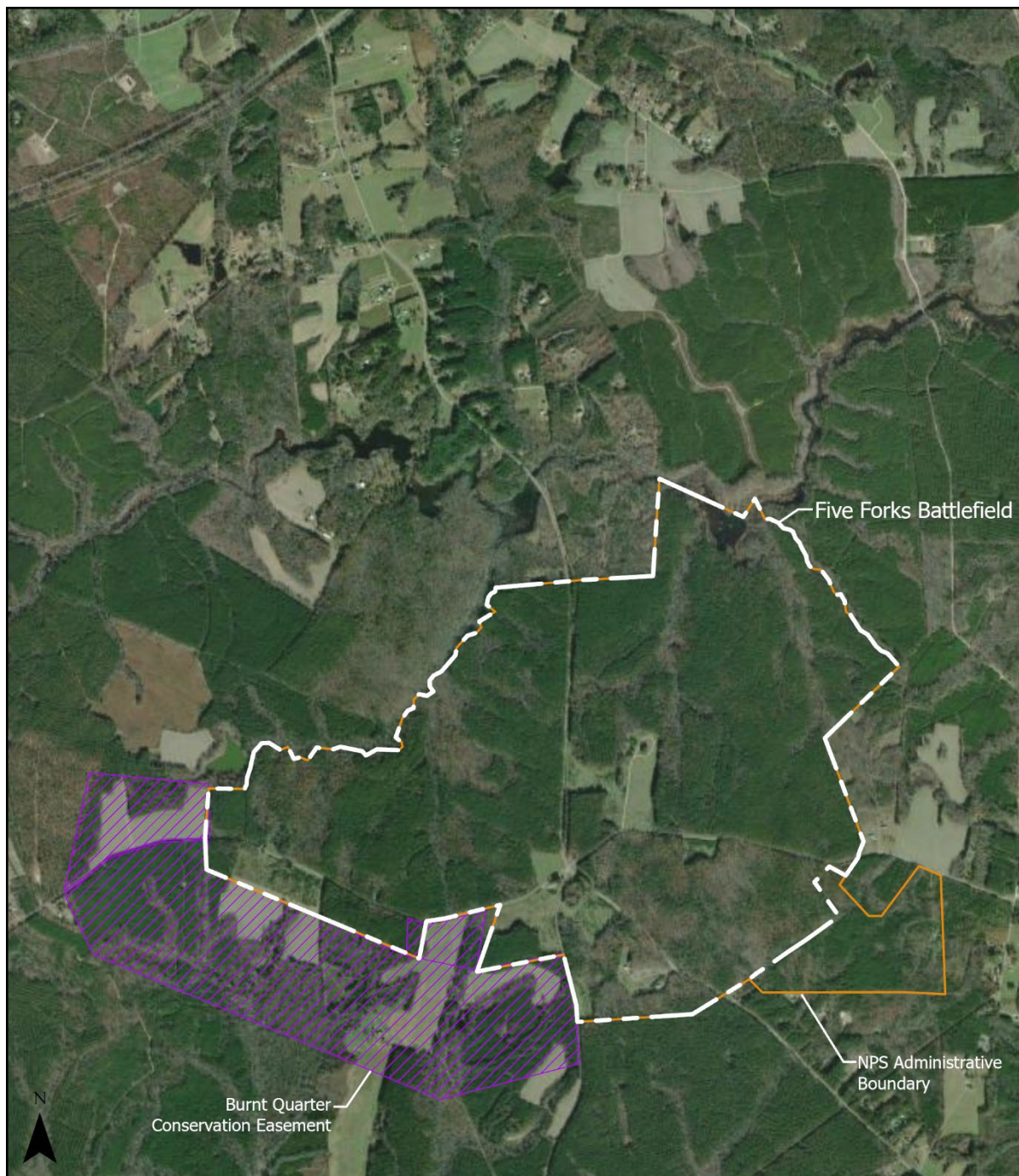


FIGURE 74. Detail of a circa 2023 aerial map showing the same general area. Note the Five Forks intersection, the road alignments that make up the intersection, and the railroad line in the same location at the upper left corner of the image. Aerial also shows the changes in locations of open fields across the battlefield. (Source: ArcGIS Imagery Database citing Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community; annotated by authors)

Existing Condition – Although diminished or modified by time and adjacent development, all of the features associated with the Five Forks Battlefield are still present in the existing landscape as of 2023. The three roads that gave Five Forks its name remain extant although they have been improved and sometimes given formal names when the way in which they were referenced in the 1860s was more fluid. For instance, White Oak Road was also referred to as Butternut Road and Wheeler’s Pond Road. The later name also exists today as a route that seems to have been an unnamed plantation road. Hatcher’s Run, while mostly outside the property administered by the National Park Service, remains a part of the landscape and forms a natural northern

boundary that runs west to east across Court House Road. The low, earthen and leaf-littered line of the Confederate breastworks that survive at the eastern edge of the battlefield at Tour Stop 2 serve as a location marker, while the dirt trace of the Confederate Retreat Road at the western end of White Oak Road marks the edge of the battlefield in that direction. Burnt Quarter, which is only related to the park property as a narrow easement along White Oak Road, offers a clear location marker for the battle and can be referenced for the key role it played as a Union headquarters and hospital.

Five Forks Battlefield, although relatively late in being set aside as a unit of Petersburg National Battlefield, was continually referenced and remarked on throughout the twentieth century as a key component of the events leading to the end of the Civil War, and its intactness as an agricultural landscape surrounding a highly-recognizable three-road intersection was undisputed. It was only as traffic and development picked up as county facilities were added directly south of the battlefield, such as a high school complex along Court House Road and county landfill along Wheeler's Pond, that action was taken to secure the core battlefield for protection as part of Petersburg National Battlefield. Overall, Five Forks Battlefield retains a high degree of integrity of location.

Design

Historic Condition – With General Lee's orders to defend Five Fork intersection at all costs in order to prevent Union troops from continuing north along Court House Road to take the Southside Railroad, the Confederate Army responded by throwing up a line of hasty entrenchments the morning of the battle. Cutting trees and stacking the logs to form the basis for a line of earthworks, reinforced with shovels of dirt and stone, the troops built the line of breastworks along an east-west line defined by White Oak Road at what was considered a site marking key military terrain. The design of the line began at a point east of the Five Forks intersection on the north side of White Oak Road where the Confederates anticipated Union soldiers would approach and continued west across the intersection and Burnt Quarter drive and field. Different period maps show the terminus of the line in varying locations. None, however, show it extending past the Confederate Retreat Road. With introduction of rifled artillery during the Civil War, earthworks, even hastily constructed lines like these, became essential defensive elements on the battlefield that could withstand the impact of projectiles that would otherwise break through masonry. Earthen fortifications became an essential component of defensive military positions during the Civil War and can be found throughout Petersburg National Battlefield as representative of the siege. At Five Forks, the line is further marked at the eastern end with a fortified angle to further enhance the side where the Confederates expected the Union troops to attack.

Existing Condition - The surviving locations of historic east-west trending Confederate breastworks are an example of a designed element surviving from the battle that contributes to the integrity of the battlefield. Although little of the line survives west of the intersection, there are segments, particularly at the east end where the Angle was constructed, that survive. Everywhere else, the line has disappeared as a result of a combination of factors including erosion, road improvements, and power line installation. It is likely that all three of the roads that meet at the Five Forks intersection have undergone some realignment as a result of Virginia Department of Transportation's efforts to enhance the safety and efficiency of the travel ways. These changes, associated with road widening and paving, occurred as late as the 1960s.

Nonetheless, the road alignments still represent the critical importance of the intersection, one that Gen. Robert E. Lee recognized with his instructions for General George Pickett to "hold Five Forks at all hazards" to protect the Army of Northern Virginia's right flank and the South Side Railroad—the last rail line supplying Petersburg. Overall, Five Forks Battlefield retains a modest degree of integrity of design.

Setting

Like location, the setting of the Five Forks Battlefield survives based on the presence of the adjacent Burnt Quarter plantation and the historic road corridors with their important views and vistas still intact. Along the interpretive trails that traverse the battlefield landscape, visitors can gain a good understanding of the terrain that guided troop movements, including the presence of steep drainages and boulder-strewn open spaces that served as obstacles to movement, along with the pine-hardwood forests that limited visibility and sound. The persistent agricultural use of lands beyond the park helps convey integrity of setting. Overall, the general area of the battlefield retains its historic rural character due to the absence of residential, commercial, or industrial development and thus possesses a high degree of integrity of setting.

Materials and Workmanship

There are few cultural features present within the Five Forks Battlefield landscape to express integrity of materials and workmanship. The prime example is the line of earthen breastworks hastily constructed by Confederate forces to protect their position, which in turn was intended to protect the nearby railroad line supplying Petersburg. The surviving earthworks, which are important to the battlefield's integrity, survive today due to the protection afforded by forest cover and the leaf litter generated and deposited by overhanging trees. The roads that intersect at Five Forks were surfaced with hard-packed earth at the time of the battle. They were paved during the twentieth century, diminishing integrity of materials and workmanship.

Feeling

Five Forks Battlefield retains integrity of feeling for the property's association with the historic event that occurred there due to the ongoing presence of terrain features, fields and forests, the Five Forks intersection, and the ongoing presence of the adjacent Burnt Quarter plantation and house. The forest cover that dominated the battlefield in 1865 continues to characterize the area, along with a rural agricultural character, thus helping to convey a modest level of integrity of feeling.

Association

The integrity of association of the property with the Battle of Five Forks is strongly conveyed by the continued field and forest cover across the landscape of the core battlefield and the ongoing presence of the adjacent Burnt Quarter plantation and house and is reinforced by the continued agricultural use of adjacent lands.

Comparative Analysis of Historic and Existing Conditions

The Five Forks Battlefield was relatively well documented post-battle for the G. K. Warren hearings of 1881, with written descriptions and soldiers' accounts, accompanied by maps produced as part of the military court proceedings.²³⁷ As Petersburg National Battlefield was being established during the early twentieth century out of the siege works and landscapes of that long stalemate, Five Forks Battlefield was recognized for its importance and evocative setting—rural crossroads surrounded by agricultural lands—but its intactness and isolation prevented its being acquired for inclusion in the park by the National Park Service. By 1960, Congress authorized its addition to Petersburg National Battlefield, but it would take another thirty years before the federal government would act to acquire battlefield property because there was no perceived threat to the integrity of the battlefield. Other efforts conducted to support recognition of its importance to the history of the Civil War included designation as a National Historic Landmark in 1960 and listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. Although the National Register of Historic Places nomination from this time features photographs of the house at Burnt Quarter, it does not include photographs of the battlefield.²³⁸ The National Register of Historic Places nomination indicated the battlefield as extending over

1,300 acres “delineated on the USGS survey maps for ‘Church Road.’” The two nomination documents say little about the existing condition of the battlefield except to note that it was being preserved by the continuation of agriculture and timbering practices by private owners. The comparative analysis below articulates what is known about historic landscape conditions beyond what was included in the above-mentioned documents and serves as a guide for future protection.

In the following discussion, each of the relevant landscape characteristics is described under three headings: *Historic Condition*, which includes a short description of how the landscape characteristic was represented in 1865, or was subsequently recorded during the early twentieth century; *Existing Condition*, which describes how the Cultural Landscape Report team recorded the landscape characteristic in 2023; *Level of Contribution*, which evaluates how the landscape characteristic contributes to the significance of the Five Forks Battlefield. To indicate the degree to which each landscape characteristic is important to the understanding of the historic battlefield landscape, each is rated “High,” “Moderate”, or “Low.”

Natural Systems and Features

Historic Condition - Each of the natural systems and features present at the time of the battle is considered contributing for the role it played in troop movements and military engagement during the battle. The natural systems and features of Five Forks Battlefield that existed on the eve of the battle included gently rolling topography and a setting composed of cut-over woods, creek drainages, boulders and rock outcroppings, some cleared fields, and spots of swampy ground. On April 1, 1865, the day of the battle, early spring rains had swelled Hatcher’s Run and the many creeks that ran into it from the northern portion of the battlefield leading to many soldiers and horses getting stuck in the swampy ravines. A thick layer of low-growing vegetation in these ravines, including brambles, saplings, grasses, and forbs, which had resulted from tree clearing and an increase in the amount of sunlight reaching the forest floor, served to protect portions of the Confederate defenses. Although not often discussed in the military descriptions of the events of April 1, 1865, the large boulders that were characteristic of this area of Dinwiddie County were also a factor in the events of the battle. Their size and location north of White Oak Road would have afforded good cover for those hoping to avoid incoming artillery and rifle fire and to serve as a place of cover and concealment from which to shoot.

Existing Condition – The natural systems in place in 1865 remain largely intact in 2023. Over time, the land continued to support agricultural uses, although it also began to serve as a site for growing and harvesting timber commercially. While timbering practices led to a change in the composition and character of the forest, the introduction of gas-powered farm machinery did not significantly alter the terrain. Since the land was taken out of agricultural and timbering production through its inclusion in Petersburg National Battlefield, the forest stands have evolved through secondary succession, with new undergrowth emerging and hardwoods becoming a greater component of the woodlands.

One specific change to the composition and character of natural features and systems has been the establishment of a lake in association with Hatcher’s Run due to the introduction of a dam near the northeast corner of the park unit on the site of a former broad wetland. Since the lake occupies only a small area within the park boundary and occurs in a relatively unvisited area, it does not significantly detract from the integrity of the historic battlefield.

High Level of Contribution – The ravines, wetlands and vegetation that characterize the northern half of the battlefield remain intact and essential to understanding the terrain where most of the battle occurred. The scattered boulders—slightly more concentrated on the western side of Court House Road—are more apparent in 2023 than they might have been previously given the loss of nearby farm buildings and structures.

Spatial Organization

Historic Condition - The primary spatial organization of the battlefield is associated with the three historic roads that travel through the site and together form the Five Forks intersection. At the intersection it is possible to have a 360-degree view of the battle landscape. Except for contemporary small-scale features associated with the roads, which include signs, swales, power line poles, and commemorative and interpretive markers, and the frequent presence of vehicular traffic traveling through the area, visitors can gain a sense of the scale and character of the battlefield as it appeared in 1865.

The road corridors themselves also present a spatial character. Where edged by woodland vegetation, the road corridors are linear spaces. Where abutted by open fields, the road corridors afford more expansive views of the landscape that suggest the character of the terrain. Similarly, the trails that visitors can traverse within the park vary between linear corridors or cleared space and views across mown fields and understand the battlefield terrain.

A KOCO map of Five Forks Battlefield is shown in Figure 75. The map identifies key terrain, observation and fields of fire, cover and concealment, obstacles, and avenues of approach and withdrawal to depict spatial organization features of the battlefield landscape and what features survive today.

As shown, key terrain is marked as the five-way intersection at White Oak Road, Courthouse Road (Dinwiddie Court House Road/Ford's Road), and Wheelers Pond Road (Scott's Road), control of which was essential for the Confederates as they worked to protect the South Side Railroad, located to the west and north, from Union capture. In fact, on March 31, the day before the battle, Gen. Robert E. Lee had instructed Gen. George Pickett to hold Five Forks at all costs.

Observation and fields of fire are associated primarily with the Angle, the earthwork that the Confederates used to defend against the approach of the Union army along White Oak Road, which was also a component of the entire Confederate defensive line of earthworks that edged White Oak Road west of the Angle.

Cover and concealment were afforded to the Confederate forces stationed behind the earthworks, where the earthen berms could protect the troops from incoming fire. Buildings associated with individual residential properties within the battlefield were also used for cover and concealment during the battle. Forest stands present throughout the battlefield also provided cover and concealment.

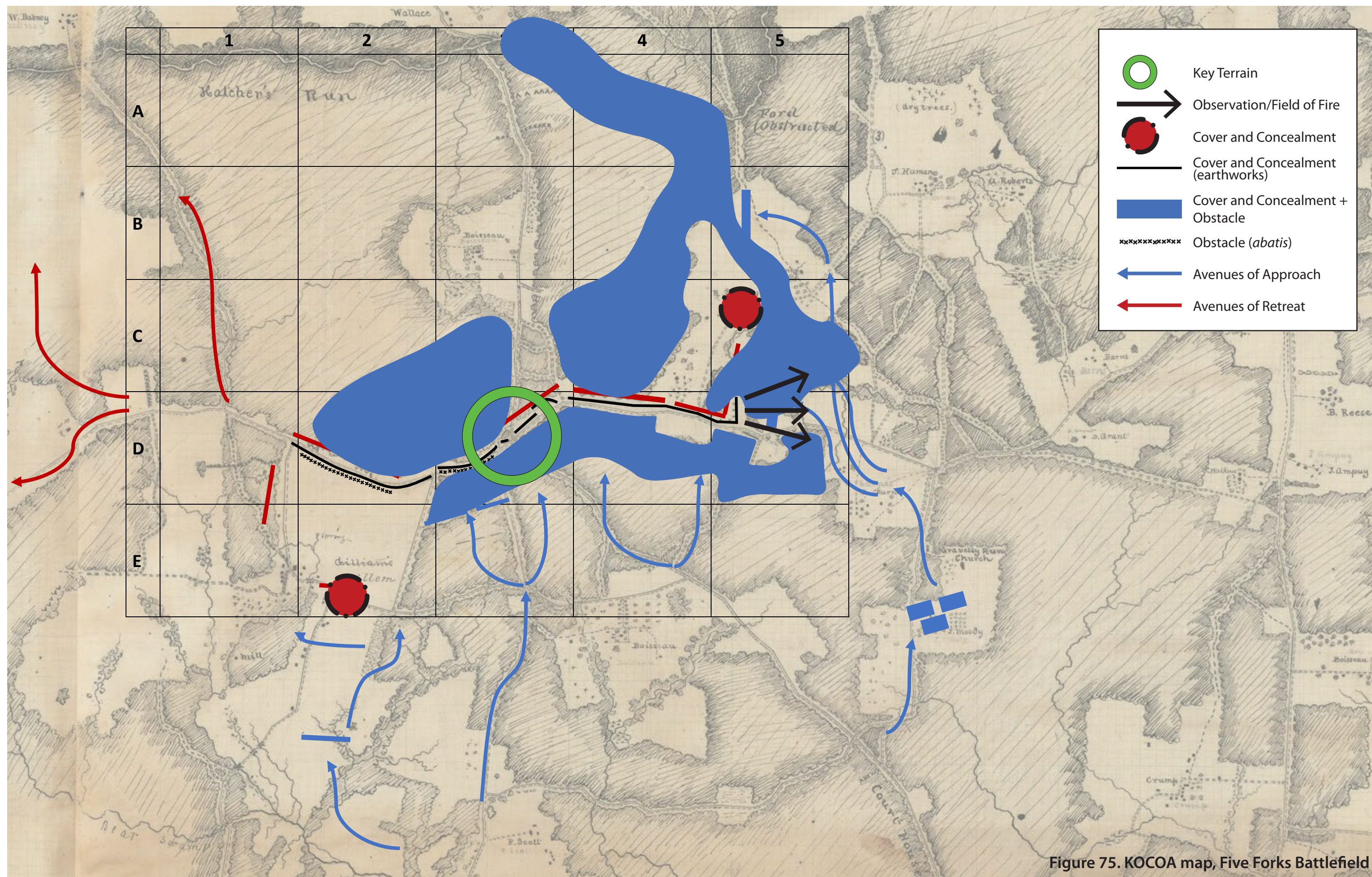
At the same time, forest cover, along with marshy and high relief topography and terrain, also served as an obstacle to the troops as they moved through the landscape and engaged in combat. Another obstacle put in place by the Confederates as part of their construction of earthen field fortifications were abatis, sharpened tree trunks and branches that were set with the pointed ends toward the outside of the fieldworks where Union forces would be approaching.

Several avenues of approach, as well as avenues of retreat, were used during the Battle of Five Forks. Union troops followed the alignments of Dinwiddie Court House Road as well as Scott's Road, White Oak Road, Gravelly Run Road, and farm roads such as those associated with the Gilliam "Burnt Quarter" property to reach the Confederate position along White Oak Road from the south and southeast. In their retreat, Confederate forces that were not captured followed White Oak Road to the west as well as a farm road that extended northwest toward Hatcher's Run, although many troops also bushwacked through the woods as they moved north and west away from the Union army.

Existing Condition - Besides mown fields, the only other open space associated with the park landscape at the Five Forks Unit is the Five Forks Battlefield Visitor Contact Station and associated maintenance facility. Developed in 2009, this area was selected after a thoughtful evaluation of alternatives and by design and

location. The area has minimal impact on the core battlefield. By its date of development, it is considered a non-contributing area to the Five Forks Battlefield.

High Level of Contribution – The Five Forks crossroads intersection, which gave its name to the battle, is the organizing feature of the landscape and the battlefield. The three historic roads that cut across the landscape gave access to land parcels that were developed into farms and plantations while also leading to markets, institutions, and faster modes of transportation—like that Southside Railroad—control of which drove the action of the battle. The spatial organization of the “five forks” is critical to locating and interpreting the battle and the battlefield.



Land Use

Historic Condition - The primary land uses associated with the battlefield before and after the Battle of Five Forks were residential, agricultural, and transportation. Cultivated agricultural fields associated with individual farmsteads were typically sited on relatively level ground between natural drainages that was first cleared of tree cover. Livestock were likely free roaming. Many farmsteads likely also included woodlots where wood for construction of buildings and fences and for fuel could be harvested. Clearing of the forest cover was an ongoing practice. Twentieth-century farming, however, introduced the planting of monocultural stands or plantations of pine trees to harvest for cash. After the Civil War, the Gilliam family, who owned Burnt Quarter, purchased much of the land that is now part of the park battlefield landscape and continued to farm the property, with cultivated fields interspersed with pine plantations that were regularly harvested in several locations north of White Oak Road. Beyond the park boundary, agriculture remains an active land use. Some former farm properties along Courthouse Road, however, are being developed as residential subdivisions. In 1960, Five Forks Battlefield was designated a National Historic Landmark. To mark the designation, a plaque was installed in the 1960s, introducing a commemorative land use to the battlefield. Park establishment later introduced several new land uses to the landscape, such as interpretation, maintenance storage, recreation, and visitor services.

Existing Condition - Although the county continues to take pride in and purpose from its agricultural heritage, the area around the battlefield is slowly changing from fields and farms to single-family suburban residential developments. Some of the development occurring in the vicinity of Five Forks has been driven by Dinwiddie County expansion of school and governmental centers along Court House Road and the establishment of a county landfill off of Wheeler's Pond Road. These developments are leading to an increase in traffic as well as subdivision of former agricultural land, and the establishment of businesses along primary road corridors.

Moderate Level of Contribution - The articulation of farms and fields as a reflection of the primary land use of agriculture at the time of the Battle of Five Forks has been lost within the contemporary battlefield landscape and its context. Also lost have been the individual residential enclaves associated with the farm properties. Nonetheless, the loss of these land uses that defined the battle landscape are less important than the larger spatial patterns of field and forest that resulted from those land uses (see also Spatial Organization and Vegetation).

Circulation

Historic Condition - As previously described, the three roads that meet at the Five Forks intersection were critical to the military events associated with the Battle of Five Forks, including the location of the battle and how it unfolded. While this distinctive intersection and the roads that lead to the intersection are historic resources that contribute to the significance of the Five Forks Battlefield as a National Register listed and National Historic Landmark designated property, they are not owned by the National Park Service and thus exist outside of the park landscape. Because of their importance, the roads and the intersection are addressed throughout the Five Forks Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report. Post-battle, the roads returned to their use as important corridors of transportation and communication for the farmers and residents of the area. Early-twentieth-century improvements led to smoothed and graded corridors where previously the roads had been narrow, rutted, dusty or muddy lanes. Even so, the roads likely were not paved with asphalt until the early 1960s, relatively late for this type of change.

Existing Condition - As noted, it appears that all three of the roads have been altered since 1865 through road widening, realignment, and paving. Further research is being undertaken to consider whether the White Oak Road bed was once slightly south of the current roadway west of Five Forks intersection. It is possible that signs of the original roadbed have been mistaken for remnants of Confederate breastworks that were located

south of the road at this section of the battlefield. Confederates likely excavated along the south side of the road to form breastworks.

Three other road traces—the Confederate Escape Road, Gilliam Field Road Segment, and Wagon Road—do fall within the boundary of the park and are thus considered contributing to the park’s historic landscape. Other smaller roads and trails that were a factor in setting up the Confederate line of defense are no longer in evidence today. For example, Munford’s dismounted cavalry initially entrenched east of the Angle on White Oak Road, facing a road running southwest to northeast across top of James Boisseau property. It is possible that Munford’s entrenchment caused Sheridan to erroneously estimate the location of the Angle farther to the east, leading to some confusion for V Corps. Some Confederate troops retreated west after the V Corps attack using a farm trail between the R. Sydnor/L. Sidney plantation and the Boisseau/Young plantation, which is also not in evidence today.

Later additions to circulation within the park, which include tour stops, trails, and the access road and parking complex associated with the visitor contact station, postdate the period of significance and are assessed as non-contributing.

High Level of Contribution – Cleared corridors that functioned as roads in the mid-nineteenth century were essential elements of the landscape. In the case of the three roads that converged at the Five Forks intersection, these routes had been named and known to travelers and mapmakers for generations preceding the battle. In addition to the primary routes that today are known as White Oak Road, Court House Road and Wheeler’s Pond Road, there are other road traces that survive and contribute to the significance of the battle. Primary among them is the Confederate Escape Road.

Topography

Historic Condition - The rolling terrain of the lower Piedmont was the dominant landform of Dinwiddie County. Within the vicinity of Five Forks, the rolling uplands were dissected by numerous steep drainages, which played a key role in troop movements across the battlefield north of White Oak Road. Because the level uplands had been cleared to cultivate crops, these open spaces also were a factor in troop movements during the battle and became the places where the most intense fighting occurred.

Existing Condition – The rolling terrain of the battlefield survives intact to convey its role in how the battle unfolded. The biggest change occurring across the landscape is the natural reforestation of abandoned fields, and in some places the deliberate planting of pine trees for commercial timbering within some historic agricultural fields. There are also examples of places where forest has been cleared since 1865 and continues to be maintained in open fields. Steep drainage ditches still dissect the landscape north of White Oak Road and can be experienced by walkers on the trails that cross this landscape.

High Level of Contribution – The terrain is an essential characteristic of the landscape that helps to convey historic associations with the Five Forks Battlefield.

Vegetation

Historic Condition - By the mid-nineteenth century, the native vegetation of the Five Forks Battlefield landscape had been largely changed by colonial and post-colonial agricultural and building practices that dominated the area. Flat areas at the top of, and between, drainages were cleared for crops, while trees throughout the site were cut for construction of homes and farm structures, fences, and fuel and industrial uses. The 1879 G. K. Warren hearings provide some of the best descriptions of battle-era vegetation because the scrubby, second- or third-generation woody growth along the drainages and in the low wet areas were thickets of shrubs, vines, and herbaceous plants and were noted by the veterans as having had a role in how

the battle progressed. Chris Calkins's 1991 report included "Grid References from the Warren Court of Inquiry," which used soldiers' testimonies and overlaid them on a grid of the battlefield to locate areas of distinct vegetation.²³⁹

Existing Condition - By 1995, Petersburg National Battlefield received useful contemporary vegetation survey and descriptions in *Forest Management and the Reforestation of Historic Scenes, Petersburg National Battlefield, Virginia*, by Rantis and Johnson, which used Calkins's work to validate many of the plants in the battlefield, taking the veterans' common name descriptors and providing current botanical names.²⁴⁰ The map prepared by Rantis and Johnson suggests that the most extensive area of pine plantings were in the fields that had been opened in association with the Simmons plantation and the Chimneys, which are shown as contiguous (Figure 76).

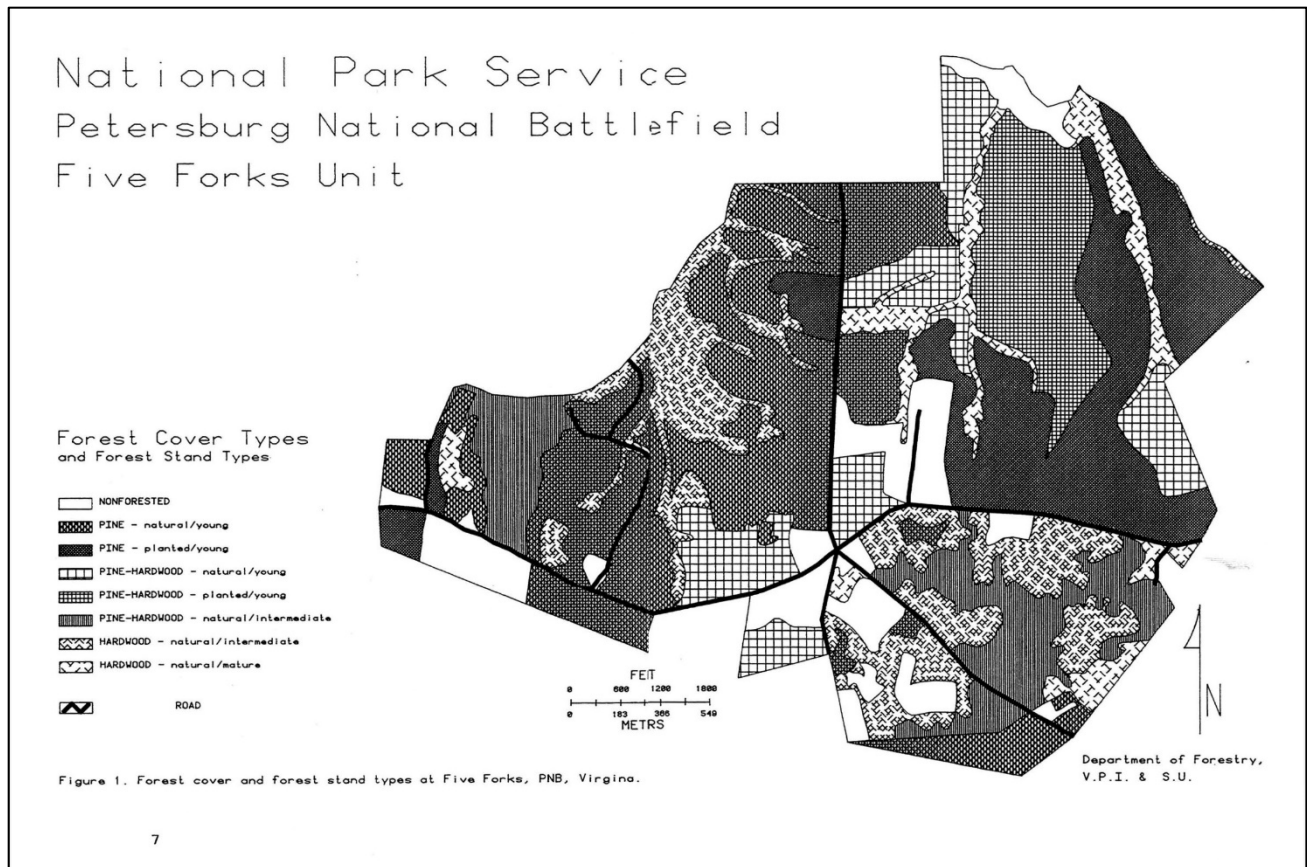


FIGURE 76. Map of forest cover types and forest stand types at Five Forks Unit. (Source: Polly-Anne Rantis and James E. Johnson, *Forest Management and the Reforestation of Historic Scenes, Petersburg National Battlefield, Virginia*, January 1996.)

The 2023 Cultural Landscape Report survey found that the Five Forks intersection has more cleared areas than existed at the time of the battle. Most maps show woods up to the southern edge of White Oak Road at the intersection, with only a small clearing (approximated by the current clearing but probably smaller) to the northwest (behind the Pegram marker). Union soldiers described this area as "a small open field northwest of the Forks." Union troops would not have had to cross any significant clearings to assault Confederate breastworks in this section of the front. Nevertheless, dismounted Union cavalry here (Pennington, Fitzhugh, Stagg) did not carry Confederate lines until supported by infantry attacks on the Confederate left near the Angle.

Generally, based on comparison of historic documentation with contemporary conditions within the four quadrants of the park, all areas appear more wooded than historical maps illustrate, as follows:

Northeast Quadrant: R. Sydnor/L. Sidney clearings with the Chimneys have reverted to forest. A farm on north side of White Oak Road east of the Angle has preserved some of the 1865 clearings in this area, but modern farm buildings are located where Ayres's 2nd Division of V Corps would have wheeled left to assault the Angle and faced withering fire from Confederates behind the breastworks. After retreating from the Angle, Confederates tried to throw up another hasty defensive line along the west side of the Sidney/Sydnor field, as one Union officer recalled: "At the west of the Sidney or Sydnor field, along the edge of the woods, it did not require much imagination to make a good line along there; the logs and trees and remnants we found there, and I was told that there was a line, but there was no earth upon it, and nothing by which I could determine it satisfactorily." The growth of forest in this area obscures the progress of the battle across the field.

Southeast Quadrant: T. Bass/Barnes field and Gravelly Run Church/J. Moody clearing, where V Corps under Warren formed for attack, have also reverted to forest. A cleared field was necessary for the divisions to organize lines and advance in good order. This field was specifically selected by Capt. George L. Gillespie, Sheridan's chief engineer, who was ordered to find "suitable grounds" for V Corps. A proper staging area at this location was the first step in Sheridan's plan to mass the infantry for a flank attack on the Confederate left. Residential development in the vicinity of the former Gravelly Run Church has also adversely affected the setting of the important staging area and use of church during the battle as a hospital.

Northwest Quadrant: The Boisseau/C. Young field and plantation have reverted to forest. The Boisseau/C. Young clearing allowed Union troops to roll up the Confederate left flank speedily, as the Confederates lacked prepared defensive positions in this area. Confederates under McGregor (Mayo, Coulter, Steuart) tried to reform a defensive position along the trees edging the southside of the Boisseau/C. Young field that is no longer discernible.

Southwest Quadrant: Gilliam's field fronting White Oak Road is currently much smaller than in 1865 and lacks the peach orchard and outbuildings that initially formed the line of Confederate defense here. Confederate artillery positioned near a tobacco barn at position "N" on the Cotton map harassed Union cavalry as they formed up to the south. The dismounted cavalry wisely did not want to charge across this open field (now partially wooded) at Confederate breastworks.

As for the adjacent Burnt Quarter plantation, William Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry held a defensive line at Burnt Quarter house and outbuildings until the final hour of the battle. S. Y. Gilliam testified that McGregor had three artillery pieces near the tobacco barn at position "N" on the Cotton map. This is important because it suggests that the Confederates did not man entrenchments or at least need to do much defending from the breastworks along White Oak Road adjacent to Gilliam field during the battle.

The clearing west of the main Burnt Quarter field (with the plantation home) that Custer's cavalry used to feint and ultimately attack the Confederate right flank is still partially a field but may currently seem like difficult ground over which to conduct a cavalry charge. The field and forest patterns do not quite match 1865 conditions in this area.

Since the National Park Service took over management of the battlefield, agricultural leases have allowed hay to be grown and harvested in some of the fields in order to keep them open and evoke a battle-era appearance. Other contemporary fields that were not open during 1865 have been released to succession and are in the process of returning to a mosaic of pine and hardwood forest. A decrease in mowing frequency by the park and an increase in woody growth within open fields contributes to the vegetation mosaic. While the

CLI proposed that historic fields and meadows and historic woodlands that were identified in the 1975 National Register listing be considered contributing resources, no documentation has been identified to suggest that an evaluation of the field and forest cover was done during the 1970s to determine if vegetation survived from the mid-nineteenth century or that contemporary fields and forests reflected historic locations. Through review of reports and studies completed since 1990, beginning with Chris Calkins's work, the Cultural Landscape Report proposes that no historic vegetation survives, and that locations of fields are different than those recorded after the battle and therefore should not be considered a contributing resource at this time.

High Level of Contribution – Vegetation played a key role in how the battle proceeded over the dissected terrain. The scrubby undergrowth described by veterans who participated in the battle continues to characterize the low areas north of White Oak Road. The field and forest pattern are unlike that which existed at the time of the battle, however, although this is a reversible condition that could be recaptured through clearing and mowing to reestablish historic field patterns. The pine plantations are a relic of late-twentieth-century commercial timbering. Over time, the pine stands could be selectively thinned to encourage hardwoods to become reestablished and more closely approximate the character of historic forest cover at the time of the battle.

Buildings and Structures

Historic Condition - Historic maps of the Five Forks Battlefield show several clusters of buildings and structures associated with farms and plantations around which the action of the battle occurred. With the exception of Burnt Quarter, which is not owned by the National Park Service, none of the antebellum buildings or structures survives today. During the battle, some of the farm buildings were used for cover and concealment by the opposing forces, including the L. Sidney/R. Sydnor House and the Burnt Quarter house and outbuildings. Nonetheless, the fast moving action of the battle did not allow the soldiers to remain in one place for long.

Existing Condition - The only surviving structure associated with the battle is the line of Confederate earthworks constructed along White Oak Road in anticipation of the Union attack in 1865 (Figure 77 and Figure 78). A short segment of the earthworks along White Oak Road, along with the Angle and associated traverses that turns north into the existing woodland, survive and are interpreted at Tour Stop 2. The earthwork is the only contributing building or structure within the battlefield landscape. The hasty breastworks that were thrown up during the morning of the battle may have featured rifle pits, abatis, and other features typical of field defenses. None of these remain discernible in the landscape today, however.

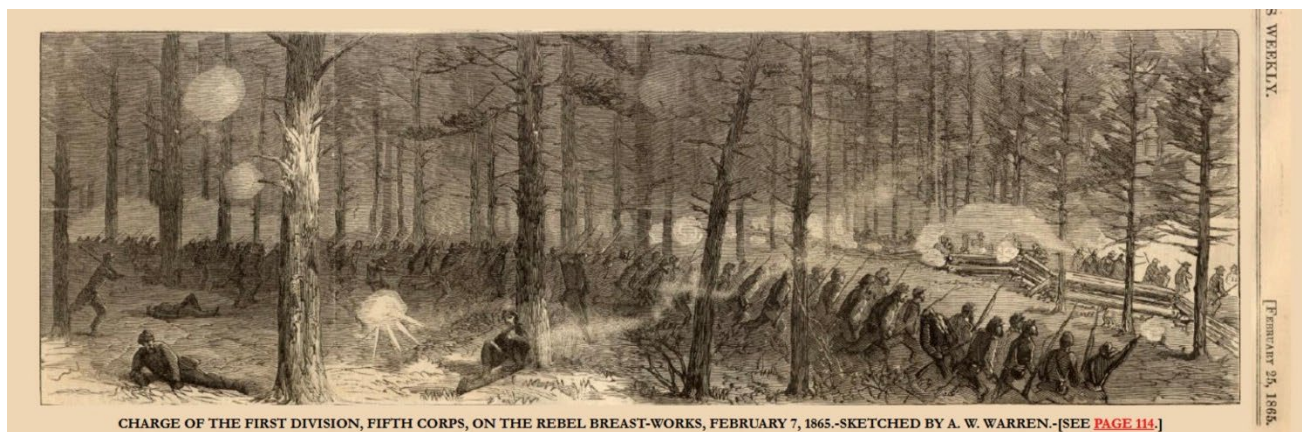


FIGURE 77. Detail from *Harper's Weekly*, February 25, 1865, that illustrates "Rebel Breast-works" at Rowanty Creek (a few miles southeast of Five Forks) as sketched by A. W. Warren. The setting and construction technique is remarkably close to what was described by veterans at the Battle of Five Forks.

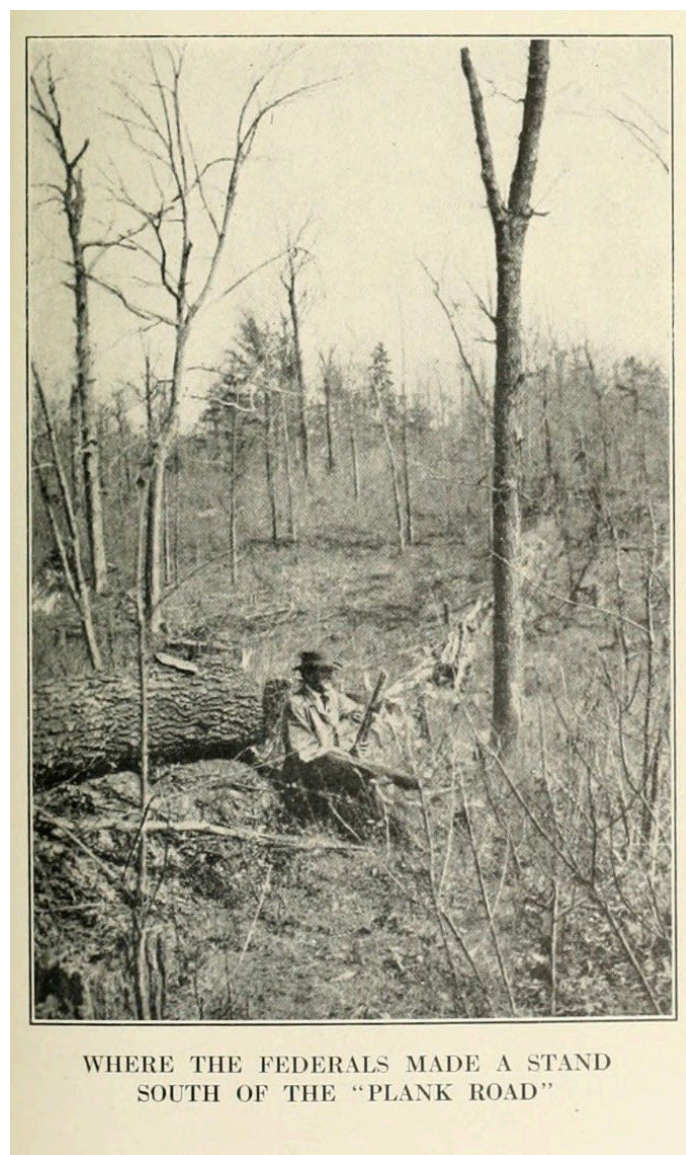


FIGURE 78. Image from *The Photographic History of the Civil War*, edited by Francis Trevelyan Miller (1911), of a line of hasty entrenchments south of the "Plank Road" circa 1864.

Although no buildings and structures survive from 1865, there are examples of late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth-century buildings and structures constructed in association with later farming activity. All are currently abandoned and in relatively ruinous condition. Determinations of Eligibility have not been prepared for the Stewart House or the cluster of agricultural structures along the north side of White Oak Road west of the Five Forks intersections. Based on National Park Service consultation with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, these buildings and structures are not contributing to the April 1, 1865, battle context but may contribute in other ways yet to be determined.

The National Park Service has added a small grouping of contemporary buildings to the park landscape to accommodate visitor services, maintenance, and educational uses since acquiring the property. These buildings are non-contributing.

Low Level of Contribution – With all of the farm buildings and structures that made up the farms and plantations located within the park unit missing today, nothing remains from this landscape characteristic type to contribute to the significance of the Battle of Five Forks. Because of the thorough study undertaken by

the National Park Service, the contemporary, non-contributing buildings and structures, which include the visitor contact station and maintenance area, south of White Oak Road are well sited and screened from view from interpreted areas of the battlefield and do not detract from the interpretive experience.

Views and Vistas

Historic Condition - Few of the views and vistas that characterized the battlefield landscape in 1865 remain in evidence in 2023. Important views south from the line of Confederate earthworks constructed along White Oak Road are mostly obscured by dense twentieth-century mixed pine-hardwood woodland or loblolly pine plantations. Although most of these areas were shown as wooded at the time of the battle on period maps, they must have been more open than at present since soldiers were able to move through them and entrenched soldiers are known to have been able to see approaching enemy forces. Views and vistas along the road corridors were important at the time of the battle, particularly along Court House Road and to the east from the intersection along White Oak Road.

Existing Condition - Key historic views that remain present in 2023 occur primarily around the Five Forks intersection, even though the present-day open fields at all the corners of the intersection do not appear to have been present in 1865 based on review of period maps. The large field at the northwest corner of the intersection, marked by interpretive waysides and cannon, allows for excellent views east and west along White Oak Road and north and south along Courthouse Road, as well as southwest along Wheelers Pond Road. Although not in National Park Service ownership, an important battle-era view that is protected by an easement exists across the Burnt Quarter tract due to the current open field and historic road along a surviving tree line that continues to parallel the Burnt Quarter drive as it appeared on historic maps. The five tour stops afford views of nearby roads and terrain that are interpreted for visitors (Figure 79 and Figure 80).

Moderate Level of Contribution – Although many of the views and vistas that existed at the time of the battle have been lost, primarily as a result of reforestation, the views and vistas that survive are important for understanding the location of the battlefield and troop movements across the fields. These views are best accommodated at the tour stops along the historic roads, but the amount of traffic prevents pedestrian access to areas around the intersection where the views and vistas are concentrated.



FIGURE 79. Detail of Burnt Quarter drive and tree line from historic map illustrating the area around Five Forks Battlefield, 1866. (Source: NARA)



FIGURE 80. Looking south along the same Burnt Quarter drive and tree line at Burnt Quarter shown on historic map.

Small-Scale Features

Historic Condition – Nothing is known of the small-scale features (e.g., fences and gates) that must have existed in association with the farms that dotted the landscape in 1865 and later. The only remaining features are a 1907 headstone for Mary Anne Roberts, which maybe in the vicinity of other graves that exist in a small, wooded circle near a trail head, and the two commemorative markers placed in 1961 and 1965 at the intersection to commemorate the Battle of Five Forks.

Existing Condition – No small-scale features that were present in 1865 survive on the property in 2023. Except for transportation signs installed by VDOT (directional, identification, and speed signs), many of the small-scale features present today relate to park operations and postdate park establishment in 1990. These features are associated with the visitor contact station, tour stops, trails, and park boundaries. Two monuments present on the battlefield date to the 1960s. One marks the designation of the battlefield as a National Historic Landmark (1961) and the other was erected by the United Daughters of the Confederacy to commemorate the centennial of the Civil War (1965). Worm fencing is used along the open field at the Five Forks intersection to suggest the location of former Confederate earthworks, but its short length and lack of interpretation prevents it from being explicitly understood as such by visitors.

Low Level of Contribution – Small-scale features do not appear to have influenced the events as they played out on April 1, 1865. The accounts of veterans who recalled the events of the battle later do not include descriptions of any small-scale features of importance to the day's events. The historic grave marker (1907)

present within the battlefield does not contribute to the battle context. The contemporary additions that relate to National Park Service administration of the park unit to facilitate visitor access and interpretation around the battlefield and at the visitor contact station also do not contribute to the battle context. The two commemorative markers at the Five Forks intersection were placed in recognition of Five Forks Battlefield's listing as a National Historic Landmark and its contribution to the Civil War during the centennial remembrance activities. Although important cultural resources, they do not contribute to the battlefield's significance.

Archeological Resources

Historic Condition – Pre-battle archeological resources, most likely associated with Indigenous people prior to English settlement, were not known at the time of the battle. Other archeological sites potentially relate to former eighteenth- and nineteenth-century settlement sites, farmsteads, and family cemeteries. One known site of early-twentieth-century graves is north of White Oak Road in a circle of trees near a park trail head. In the decades after the war, the Gilliam family allowed local residents to retrieve battle debris from their fields. This activity became more pronounced by the mid- to late 1900s.

Existing Condition – Despite earlier impacts to the battlefield by returning farmers and sanctioned collecting of artifacts by local residents, there are still important artifacts to be recovered by future archeological efforts.

Moderate Level of Contribution – Battlefield archeology is a critical area of study. Five Forks Battlefield is likely to contain evidence of the engagement that occurred on April 1, 1865, in the form of ordnance, equipment, personal items left by soldiers, and other items that may be discovered as part of future investigations. There is also the potential for the battlefield to contain information about the antebellum farms and lifeways of residents in the area at the time of the battle.

Summary

The integrity and significance of the Five Forks Battlefield's cultural landscape is critically tied to its location, which is established by the Five Forks intersection and the three roads that form the intersection along with other key battlefield remnants that include Hatcher's Run to the north—largely outside the park boundary—the Confederate breastworks and Angle that survive east of the intersection, the Confederate Retreat Road trace to the west and the historic entry road to Burnt Quarter plantation—also outside the park boundary. Inherent to the significance of the location are the road corridors that were both essential to the battle but were critical in bringing the battle to this landscape. The intersection and roads define the spatial organization of the battlefield landscape and provide access to the non-extant component landscapes—period farms and fields missing from the contemporary landscape—within the five land bays defined by the three roads. The terrain is relatively unchanged within the battlefield while the vegetation, although none is original to the battlefield landscape, contributes to the feeling and association of the event because of the makeup of species and its general location, particularly in the ditches and slopes north of White Oak Road. As a living component of the landscape, vegetation is anticipated to change over time; the significance of vegetation to the battlefield can also often be recovered through contemporary management practices. Because the scattered farms of the battlefield landscape have been lost over time, there are no historic buildings or structures or small scale features to contribute to the battlefield's significance, but because of the short duration and fast-moving nature of the event, they were not as character-defining to this battle as they might have been in other locations.





Endnotes

216. Chris Calkins, Park Historian, “Physical History and Site Analysis, Cultural Landscape Report, Five Forks Unit, Petersburg National Battlefield,” 1991.
217. The National Historic Landmark designation addresses an area comprising 1,500 acres.
218. National Park Service, *Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Five Forks Battlefield / Petersburg National Battlefield* (2020); Five Forks National Battlefield National Historic Landmark designation, accepted by the National Register of Historic Places, December 19, 1960.
219. The legislation authorized by Congress in 1962 included 1,200 acres, an area 300 acres smaller than the battlefield as noted in the 1960 National Historic Landmark designation two years earlier.
220. Frank S. Melvin, Virginia State Office, National Park Service, Five Forks Battlefield National Register of Historic Places nomination, June 30, 1972. Unsigned. This documentation identified the battlefield as comprising 600 acres, half the area authorized by Congress in 1962.
221. Frank S. Melvin, Virginia State Office, National Park Service, Five Forks Battlefield National Register of Historic Places nomination, June 30, 1972.
222. The 1975 National Historic Landmark documentation identified an area of 1,300 areas for the battlefield.
223. National Park Service, *Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Five Forks Battlefield / Petersburg National Battlefield* (2020); Five Forks National Battlefield National Register nomination documentation, accepted by the National Register of Historic Places, July 2, 1975.
224. The Burnt Quarter property was also individually listed in the National Register in 1969 (NRIS #69000235).
225. National Park Service, *Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Five Forks Battlefield / Petersburg National Battlefield* (2020); Stephen L. Lissandrello, Historian, Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service, Five Forks National Battlefield National Historic Landmark documentation, accepted by the National Register of Historic Places, February 20, 1975; accepted by the National Register of Historic Places, July 2, 1975.
226. John S. Salmon, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Multiple Property Documentation Form, “The Civil War in Virginia, 1861–1865: Historic and Archeological Resources,” December 28, 1999; accepted by the National Register of Historic Places, February 18, 2000.
227. National Park Service, *Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Five Forks Battlefield / Petersburg National Battlefield* (2020); Public Archeology Laboratory, Inc., Petersburg National Battlefield National Register nomination, draft (March 2014).
228. National Park Service, *Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Five Forks Battlefield / Petersburg National Battlefield* (2020), 29.
229. National Park Service, *Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Five Forks Battlefield / Petersburg National Battlefield* (2020), 13.
230. National Park Service, *Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Five Forks Battlefield / Petersburg National Battlefield* (2020), 13–14.
231. National Park Service, *Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Five Forks Battlefield / Petersburg National Battlefield* (2020), 14.
232. Patrick W. Andrus, National Register History and Education program historian, National Register Bulletin: *Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating and Registering America’s Historic Battlefields* (Washington, DC: 1992; revised 1999). (This National Register bulletin was original Bulletin No. 40; the National Register program has discontinued use of bulletin numbers and instead references them by title.) By the 1990s the National Park Service had also established the American Battlefield Protection Program to assist states and communities with battlefields outside park service ownership.
233. National Park Service, *Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Five Forks Battlefield / Petersburg National Battlefield*, 2020; Public Archeology Laboratory, Inc., Petersburg National Battlefield National Register nomination, draft (March 2014).
234. National Park Service, *Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Five Forks Battlefield / Petersburg National Battlefield*, (2020), 29.
235. Andrus, *Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating and Registering America’s Historic Battlefields*, 10.
236. Andrus, *Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating and Registering America’s Historic Battlefields*, 10.
237. The G. K. Warren inquiry, as described in Calkins, “Physical History and Site Analysis, Cultural Landscape Report, Five Forks Unit, Petersburg National Battlefield,” 1991.





238. The National Landmark nomination was completed in 1960 and the National Register listing was completed in 1975. At the time of the National Register listing, 782 acres of the 1,215 acres listed were owned by the Gilliam family, who also owned much of the same land at the time of the Civil War. Burnt Quarter was listed separately in the National Register of Historic Places in 1969.
239. Calkins, 5–20.
240. Polly-Anne Rantis and James E. Johnson, *Forest Management and the Reforestation of Historic Scenes, Petersburg National Battlefield, Virginia*, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Department of Forestry. Cooperative Agreement 4000-9-8014 Supplemental Agreement #20 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: National Park Service, Chesapeake System Support Office, Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, January 1996), 8–26.

Landscape Features Inventory Table







Natural Systems and Features


Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1865-1867)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
NSF-1. Drainages to Hatcher's Run	CLI Feature ID: 187996	—	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition (pre-1865 to Present): The articulated landscape north of White Oak Road was a key factor in how the battle unfolded in this area both by its soggy condition and the associated vegetation in these unplowed areas of the landscape. to be defined by drainages to Hatcher's Run.</p> <p>Evaluation: The drainages that continue to define the landscape north of White Oak Road are significant to the battlefield terrain protected within Petersburg National Battlefield.</p>	
NSF-2. Hatcher's Run	CLI Feature ID: 187995	—	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition (Pre-1865 to present): Hatcher's Run was an important natural feature that defined the north edge of the battlefield. Because of the heavy rain, it and its associated drainages slowed the movement of troops across the field.</p> <p>Evaluation: Only a small portion of Hatcher's Run falls within the park unit boundary at the northeast corner. In that area, the run is dammed and forms a lake. Although not consistent with the historic scene, the lake does mark an important location to the battle.</p>	
NSF-3. Rock Outcroppings (Boulders)	—	—	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition (Pre-1865 to present): Natural features on the field, particularly in the northwest area (west of Court House Road and north of White Oak Road) were large, naturally occurring boulders that occurred singly and in groups. Too big to move by humans or farm animals, they might have provided cover to soldiers or impediments to advancing troops and cavalry.</p> <p>Evaluation: The boulders are still scattered on the battlefield and are natural features that remain from the period of significance.</p>	 

Spatial Organization




Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1865-1867)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
SO-1. Five Forks intersection and associated landscape	—	—	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: The land bays created by the Five Forks intersection were critical for the location, staging, and movement of the armies across the battlefield.</p> <p>Evaluation: Although there have been minor realignments of the intersecting roads as they were improved in the mid-twentieth century, they essentially maintain their vertical and horizontal alignments.</p>	
SO-2. Open Fields	—	—	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: The historic field patterns, although slightly different among the various period maps, are consistent in locations of farms and plantations.</p> <p>Evaluation: None of the historic open field patterns survive to present and the existing configuration is a post-bellum condition that does not contribute to the historic significance of the Five Forks Battlefield.</p>	
SO-3. Five Forks Battlefield Visitor Center and Maintenance Facility Cluster	—	—	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: This contemporary National Park Service area does not contribute to the historic scene.</p>	—
SO-4. Wooded road Corridors	—	—	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Except for a few locations, the landscape encompassing the three road corridors comprising the Five Forks intersection were wooded at the time of the battle, which contributed to the action on the field of battle.</p> <p>Evaluation: The spatial quality of wooded road corridors contributes to the Five Forks battlefield.</p>	
SO-5. Trail Corridors	—	—	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: The existing recreational trails throughout the battlefield were formalized by the National Park Service since 1990 and do not contribute to the Five Forks battlefield.</p>	



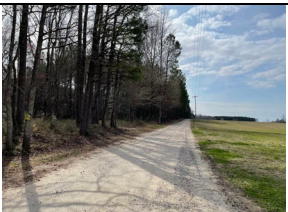



Land Use

Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1865-1867)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
LU-1. Agriculture	—	—	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: By 1865, all of the land around the Five Forks intersection was privately owned and the level, cleared ground was cultivated in various crops. Other areas were wooded, with the forest composed of mixed pine and hardwoods.</p> <p>Evaluation: Field and forest patterns that convey agricultural use contributes to the historic scene.</p>	
LU-2. Commemoration	—	—	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Non applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: The two monuments that occupy space at the Five Forks intersection to commemorate the Five Forks battle and its status as a National Historic Landmark do not contribute to the historic scene.</p>	
LU-3. Interpretation	—	—	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: Use of park land to interpret the Battle of Five Forks postdates the battle period of significance and does not contribute to the historic scene.</p>	
LU-4. Recreation	—	—	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: Use of park land for recreational purposes postdates the battle period and does not contribute to the historic scene.</p>	
LU-5. Commercial timbering	—	—	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable</p> <p>Evaluation: The areas of the battlefield that were planted in pine for late-twentieth century commercial logging do not contribute to the historic scene; logging is no longer being undertaken within the park.</p>	
LU-6. Transportation	—	—	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Use of the three-road network of roads, along with historic road traces, for travel and transportation, was an essential land use that was a factor in why the battle occurred where it did.</p> <p>Evaluation: The primary three-road configuration that created the Five Forks intersection, along with surviving trace roads, and their ongoing use for travel and transportation are critical to the historic scene and landscape of the battlefield.</p>	






Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1865-1867)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
LU-7. Visitor Services	—	—	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: The visitor service land uses that have been added by the National Park Service do not contribute to the historic scene.</p>	

Circulation



Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1865-1867)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
C-1. Five Forks Intersection	CLI Feature ID: 187997	—	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: The Five Forks road intersection existed as early as 1821 and had become a known and well-traveled hub by the Civil War.</p> <p>Evaluation: The battle is named for the intersection. It is critical and contributes to the historic scene.</p>	
C-2. White Oak Road	—	—	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: White Oak Road was a known and important east/west route that connected to Petersburg by way of the Boydton Plank Road. It is also along this stretch that the Confederate army through up hasty entrenchments on the morning of the battle expecting the Union army to strike from the south and east.</p> <p>Evaluation: This road contributes to the historic scene but has been improved (widened and paved) since the early to mid-twentieth century.</p>	
C-3. Courthouse Road	—	—	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Courthouse Road is the important north/south corridor through the battlefield and was the fastest route to the Southside Railroad, the objective of both the Union and Confederate armies, located just a few miles north of the intersection.</p> <p>Evaluation: This road contributes to the historic scene but has been improved (widened and paved) since the early to mid-twentieth century. With the construction of a county school complex and the enlargement of the Dinwiddie County government services a few miles south of the intersection, traffic has recently begun to increase along this route.</p>	

Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1865-1867)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
C-4. Wheeler's Pond Road	—	—	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Wheeler's Pond Road is a minor but important route that may have been associated with the Gillam Plantation, which was just west of the corridor and functioned as a Union officer's headquarters and hospital during and after the battle.</p> <p>Evaluation: The surviving road trace contributes to the historic scene but has been improved (widened and paved) since the early to mid-twentieth century. With the construction of a county landfill along this route southwest of the intersection, traffic, and truck traffic increasingly uses this route.</p>	
C-5. Confederate Escape Road Trace	—	—	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: The origins of this road trace remain unclear, but the route that extends north from White Oak Road at the western extreme of the battlefield was used by Confederate troops to withdraw from the battle in order to reconnoiter with other troops to slow the Union advancement.</p> <p>Evaluation: This road trace still exists within the boundaries of the park and contributes to the historic scene.</p>	
C-6. Gilliam Field Road Segment	—	—	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: The alignment and location of this road appears on most historic period maps and may have served as a transportation corridor by Union troops.</p> <p>Evaluation: The unpaved location and alignment of this route is an important historic resource and contributes to the historic scene.</p>	
C-7. Wagon Road Trace	—	—	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: This minor trace road was mapped and used during the battle.</p> <p>Evaluation: Surviving trace road continues to locate troop movement and contributes to the historic scene.</p>	
C-8. Tour Stops (1-5)	—	—	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: The National Park Service developed these visitor service resources, and they are not considered historic or contributing to the historic battlefield landscape.</p>	
C-9. Access Drive and Loops at Steuart Trailhead	—	—	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: The National Park Service developed this visitor service resource, and it is not considered historic or contributing to the historic battlefield landscape.</p>	



Analysis and Evaluation





Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1865-1867)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
C-10. Parking Area at Corse Trailhead	–	–	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: The National Park Service developed this visitor service resource, and it is not considered historic or contributing to the historic battlefield landscape.</p>	 
C-11. Five Forks Contact Station Access Road and Parking Area	–	–	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: The National Park Service developed these visitor service resources, and they are not considered historic or contributing to the historic battlefield landscape.</p>	
C-12. Visitor Contact Station Walks to the Building, Education Pavilion, Devin Trailhead Multi-use Trail (Corse Trail, Crawford Trail, Ford's Trail, Griffin Trail, Munford Trail, Pegram Trail, Pine Rock Trail, Devin Interpretive Trail, and Winthrop Hike/Bike Trail	–	–	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: The National Park Service developed these visitor service resources, and they are not considered historic or contributing to the historic battlefield landscape.</p>	 

Topography


Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1865-1867)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
T-1. Rolling Piedmont Terrain	—	—	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition (Pre-1865): The rolling piedmont terrain that defines this area of Dinwiddie County existed at the time of the battle and remained largely unchanged.</p> <p>Evaluation: The rolling terrain of the battlefield contributes to its historic character.</p>	
T-2. Steep Drainages	—	—	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition (Pre-1865): The steep drainages that define the northern half of the battlefield (north of White Oak Road) existed at the time of the battle and remained largely unchanged.</p> <p>Evaluation: The steep drainages of the battlefield contribute to its historic character.</p>	
T-3. Level Uplands between Drainages	—	—	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition (Pre-1865): The level uplands between the drainages that define this area of Dinwiddie County existed at the time of the battle and remained largely unchanged.</p> <p>Evaluation: The level uplands contribute to the historic character of the battlefield.</p>	—






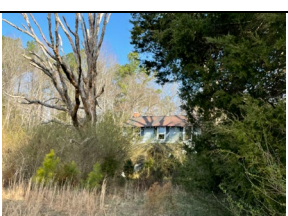
Vegetation


Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1865-1867)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
V-1. Successional Fields and Woodlands	—	—	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: Old field succession has occurred in various locations around the battlefield. These successional fields and woodlands postdate the battle period and do not contribute to the historic landscape.</p>	
V-2. Mixed Pine and Hardwood Forest	—	—	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable</p> <p>Evaluation: Mixed pine and hardwood forest in various locations around the battlefield is a contemporary, non-contributing resource that does not contribute to the historic landscape.</p>	

Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1865-1867)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
V-3. Pine Plantations	—	—	Non-Contributing	Historic Condition: Not applicable. Evaluation: Commercially planted pine plantations are present in various locations around the battlefield. These plantations represent a contemporary addition that does not contribute to the historic landscape.	
V-4. Open Grass Fields	CLI Feature ID: 188001	—	Non-Contributing	Historic Condition: Not applicable. Evaluation: Open grass fields in various locations around the battlefield are a contemporary feature that do not contribute to the historic landscape.	
V-5. Trees at the Visitor Contact Station	—	—	Non-Contributing	Historic Condition: Not applicable. Evaluation: Trees in association with the visitor contact station were planted by National Park Service and do not contribute to the historic landscape.	
V-6. Shrubs, Perennials, and Grasses around the Visitor Contact Station	—	—	Non-Contributing	Historic Condition: Not applicable. Evaluation: Plants in association with the visitor contact station were planted by National Park Service and do not contribute to the historic landscape.	—
V-7. Meadow Areas around the Visitor Contact Station	CLI Feature ID: 188001	—	Non-Contributing	Historic Condition: Not applicable. Evaluation: Meadows in association with the visitor contact station were planted by National Park Service and do not contribute to the historic landscape.	




Buildings and Structures





Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1865-1867)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
BS-1. Comfort Station	—	—	Non-Contributing	Historic Condition: Not applicable. Evaluation: This National Park Service addition does not contribute to the historic landscape.	


Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1865-1867)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
BS-2. Five Forks Battlefield Visitor Contact Station	—	—	Non-Contributing	Historic Condition: Not applicable. Evaluation: This National Park Service addition does not contribute to the historic landscape.	
BS-3. Education Pavilion	—	—	Non-Contributing	Historic Condition: Not applicable. Evaluation: This National Park Service addition does not contribute to the historic landscape.	
BS-4. Maintenance building	—	—	Non-Contributing	Historic Condition: Not applicable. Evaluation: This National Park Service addition does not contribute to the historic landscape.	
BS-5. Tobacco barn	—	—	Non-Contributing	Historic Condition: Not applicable. Evaluation: Dating to the early twentieth century, this barn has been determined ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and is slated for removal by the National Park Service. It does not contribute to the historic battlefield landscape.	
BS-6. White Oak Road Farm (complex of six structures and stone chimney)	—	—	Un-determined	Historic Condition: Not applicable. Evaluation: Dating to the early twentieth century, this complex has been determined ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and is slated for removal by the National Park Service. It does not contribute to the historic battlefield landscape.	
BS-7. Stewart House	—	—	Un-determined	Historic Condition: Not applicable. Evaluation: Dating to the early twentieth century, this house has been determined ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and is slated for removal by the National Park Service. It does not contribute to the historic battlefield landscape.	

Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1865-1867)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
BS-8. Confederate breastworks and The Angle	CLI Feature ID: 187998; CRIS-HS Resource Number: 081699	FMSS Record Number: 22813	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: On the morning of April 1, 1865, Confederate troops threw up hasty breastworks along White Oak Road to fend off the approaching Union army. They reinforced the eastern end with an angle. It was at the Angle that some of the earliest fighting of the battle was waged.</p> <p>Evaluation: The remnant earthworks at the eastern end of the battlefield (Tour Stop 2) appear to be all that remain from the line established by Confederate forces on April 1, 1865. The surviving earthworks are important tangible evidence of the battle and contribute to the historic landscape.</p>	




Views and Vistas

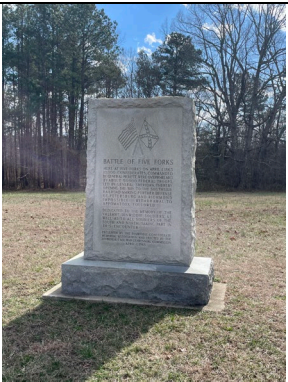

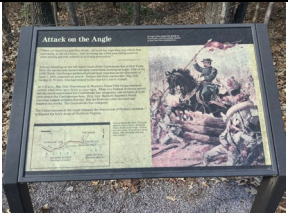


Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1865-1867)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
VV-1. Five Forks intersection views	CLI Feature ID: 188003 (east along White Oak Road); CLI Feature ID: 188004 (south from intersection)	–	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Views around the Five Forks intersection were important to both armies.</p> <p>Evaluation: Views around the Five Forks intersection contribute to the historic scene.</p>	
VV-2. Tour Stop 1 – Views north and south along Courthouse Road, views into woods where Union Cavalry assembled	–	–	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Views north and south along Courthouse Road and into the woods that edge the corridor were important to both armies.</p> <p>Evaluation: Views from Tour Stop 1 and along this section of Courthouse Road contribute to the historic scene.</p>	
VV-3. Tour Stop 2- Views to the remaining Confederate earthworks at The Angle and east/west along White Oak Road	–	–	Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Views from and to the hastily built entrenchments in this area along White Oak Road were important to the opposing armies.</p> <p>Evaluation: The views from Tour Stop 2 are contributing to the historic scene especially from the location of the only extant Confederate earthworks.</p>	





Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1865-1867)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
VV-4. Tour Stop 3- Views to and around Five Forks intersection, east/west along White Oak Road, views north/south along Courthouse Road, and south along Wheeler's Pond Road	CLI Feature ID: 188003 (east along White Oak Road); CLI Feature ID: 188004 (south from intersection)	—	Contributing	Historic Condition: Views around the Five Forks intersection and east/west along White Oak Road and north/south were critical to the opposing armies as they moved across the landscape. Evaluation: Views from Tour Stop 3 around the Five Forks intersection and east/west along White Oak Road and north/south contribute to the historic scene and for understanding how the opposing armies moved across the landscape.	
VV-5. Tour Stop 4- Views east/west along White Oak Road and to intersection of Confederate Retreat Road Trace at White Oak Road	CLI Feature ID: 188003 (east along White Oak Road); CLI Feature ID: 188004 (south from intersection)	—	Contributing	Historic Condition: Views from the west end of White Oak Road and north along the Confederate Retreat Road were critical to the opposing armies as they moved across the landscape. Evaluation: Views from Tour Stop 4 to the east along White Oak Road and to the north along the Confederate Retreat Road trace are contributing resources and important to the historic scene.	
VV-6. Tour Stop 5- Views north/south along Courthouse Road	—	—	Contributing	Historic Condition: Views north and south along Courthouse Road were critical to protecting the approach to the Southside Railroad just a few miles north. Evaluation: Views from Tour Stop 5 are critical to understanding the importance of Courthouse Road and why the Confederate troops were fighting so hard to protect access to the Southside Railroad just north of this location. These views contribute to the historic landscape.	
VV-7. View north from Five Forks Monument to Five Forks intersection	—	—	Non-Contributing	Historic Condition: Not applicable. Evaluation: The view that is associated with this monument is not historic and does not contribute to the historic landscape.	


Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1865-1867)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
VV-8. View north/south from White Oak Road to the loop access drive	—	—	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: This view occurs along a road established by the National Park Service to provide visitor access to a contemporary parking area, comfort station, and trail head, and does not contribute to the historic landscape.</p>	

Small Scale Features

Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1865-1867)	Existing Conditions Graphic Reference
SS-1. Trail Gates (wood pole, metal, and pole and chain gate types)	—	—	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: These additions were made by the National Park Service and do not contribute to the historic landscape.</p>	
SS-2. Worm (snake) fence	—	—	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: These additions were made by the National Park Service and do not contribute to the historic landscape.</p>	
SS-3. National Historic Landmark Monument	—	—	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: The monument was placed by the county (1961) in recognition of the battlefield gaining status as a National Historic Landmark and does not contribute to the historic landscape. It does merit being treated as a cultural resource.</p>	

SS-4. Battle of Five Forks Monument	CLI Feature ID: 188005	—	Non- Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: The monument was placed by the county (1965) in recognition of the Civil War centennial and does not contribute to the historic landscape. It does merit being treated as a cultural resource.</p>	
SS-5. Mary Ann Roberts Headstone	—	—	Non- Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: This simple stone headstone is associated with an early-twentieth century family cemetery. It post-dates the period of significance and does not contribute to the historic landscape.</p>	—
SS-6. Cannon Exhibits	—	—	Non- Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: These are interpretive additions made by the National Park Service that do not contribute to the historic landscape.</p>	
SS-7. Tour Stop Waysides	—	—	Non- Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: These are interpretive additions made by the National Park Service that do not contribute to the historic landscape.</p>	
SS-8. Park Identity/ Number Signs (NPS)	—	—	Non- Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: These are additions made by the National Park Service that do not contribute to the historic landscape.</p>	
SS-9. Visitor Contact Station Waysides	—	—	Non- Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: These are additions made by the National Park Service that do not contribute to the historic landscape.</p>	
SS-10. Directional and Information Signs (NPS)	—	—	Non- Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: These are additions made by the National Park Service that do not contribute to the historic landscape.</p>	

SS-11. Road Regulatory Signs	–	–	Non- Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: These are additions made by Virginia Department of Transportation and/or the National Park Service that do not contribute to the historic landscape.</p>	
SS-12. Benches (backless) – approx. 8	–	–	Non- Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: These are additions made by the National Park Service that do not contribute to the historic landscape.</p>	
SS-13. Picnic Tables – approx. 4	–	–	Non- Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: These are additions made by the National Park Service that do not contribute to the historic landscape.</p>	
SS-14. Flagpole	–	–	Non- Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: This is an addition made by the National Park Service that does not contribute to the historic landscape.</p>	See flagpole in C-12: Backless Benches image
SS-15. Lighting – Poles and Fixtures	–	–	Non- Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: These are additions made by the National Park Service that do not contribute to the historic landscape.</p>	See lighting poles and fixtures in C-12: Backless Benches image
SS-16. Trail Crossings	–	–	Non- Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: These are additions made by the National Park Service that do not contribute to the historic landscape.</p>	

SS-17. Trail Markers	–	–	Non-Contributing	<p>Historic Condition: Not applicable.</p> <p>Evaluation: These are additions made by the National Park Service and do not contribute to the historic landscape.</p>	
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Appendix A: Features Description and Resource Inventory Table

Features Description: This section of Appendix A provides detailed descriptions and conditions of the landscape of Five Forks Battlefield, organized by landscape characteristics ranging from large-scale patterns and relationships to site details and materials. Landscape characteristics include natural systems and features, spatial organization, land use, circulation, topography, vegetation, buildings and structures, views and viewsheds, small-scale features, and archeological resources.

Resource Inventory Table: This section of Appendix A presents, in table format, site features also organized by landscape characteristics. The table includes a condition assessment of each feature as well as the date of origin and contributing status.

Natural Systems and Features

Intermittent Drainages to Hatchers Run

The wooded drainageways appear to have generally retained their appearance and function in the landscape since 1865. The Cotton map of 1880 shows three drainageways, partly obscured on the map by tree cover. The upper reaches of the center drainage, dividing in a fork just west of the access drive from White Oak Road, are shown as having steeply cut banks and are not wooded. The southeasternmost drainage appears as a perennial waterway south of the site; the upper reaches of it on the parcel are obscured in woodland vegetation (Figure A-1).¹



FIGURE A-1. Wooded drainages within the landscape intersect with trails, where small wooden bridges traverse the stream. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Hatcher's Run

Wooded drainageways run north along the western property boundary, and west along the northern property boundary, joining at a pond and ultimately emptying into Hatcher's Run to the north. Neither drainageway appears to contain perennial surface flow. Today, while the western drainage is still evident, it may be reduced in size, and the northern drainage is far less prominent. The manmade pond, constructed sometime in the 1970s, is located adjacent to the property on the north, but it is outside the project area. The addition of the pond may have impacted hydrologic systems along the northern and western edges of the site (Figure A-2).



FIGURE A-2. View to the manmade pond adjacent to the north boundary of Five Forks Battlefield. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

1. John Milner Associates, *Cultural Landscape Assessment: Potential Sites for Proposed Multi-Use Facility for Five Forks, Petersburg National Battlefield*, 2005, 20–21.

Wetlands

A series of palustrine wetlands are associated with Hatcher's Run and its smaller tributaries in Five Forks Battlefield. The wetlands extend along the western and northern boundaries of the unit and smaller branches reach into Five Forks. Most of the National Wetland Inventory designations for Five Forks identify the wetlands as persistent palustrine wetlands that are either forested or shrub/scrub. Several have been created by beaver (*Castor canadensis*) activity in the area. ²

Rock Outcroppings

In addition, a distinct natural feature in this area of the county exists in the northwest portion of the battlefield. Clusters of large boulders, present at the time of the battle, remain on the battlefield today. These natural phenomena exist in this area of the county and give their names to places like Stony Creek, southeast of the battlefield, which flows southeast from Boynton Plank Road (Figure A-3).



FIGURE A-3. Large boulder outcrops can be seen from trails in the northwest portion of the battlefield. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Spatial Organization

Five Forks Intersection and Associated Landscape

The primary spatial organization of the battlefield is associated with the three historic roads that travel through it and together form the Five Forks intersection. At the intersection it is possible to have a 360-degree view of the landscape, where visitors gain a sense of the scale and character of the battlefield (Figure A-4).



FIGURE A-4. The central organizing feature of Five Forks Battlefield is the historic road system that forms the intersection. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

2. Draft Dinwiddie County Comprehensive Plan – 2043, 50-51.

Open Fields

Where abutted by open existing open fields, the road corridors afford more expansive views of the landscape that suggest the character of the terrain. Current fields are not consistent with historic field locations.

Wooded Road Corridors

For the most part, the road corridors define a secondary space associated with circulation through the battlefield. As there are no sidewalks or paths along these routes, the vegetated corridors are experienced when driving (Figure A-5).



FIGURE A-5. Forest vegetation forming the narrow spatial corridor along White Oak Road contrasts with the open cultivated field of hay immediately outside the west boundary of the battlefield. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Visitor Contact Station and Maintenance Facility Area

The area associated with the visitor contact station, maintenance facility, and associated parking and circulation was designed and constructed in 2009. The site was selected after a thoughtful evaluation of alternative designs and locations and has an internal spatial organization apart from the rest of the battlefield. The existing site has minimal impact on the core battlefield (Figure A-6).

A distinct spatial organization is associated with the component landscape of the visitor contact station, west of Courthouse Road. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)



FIGURE A-6. A distinct spatial organization is associated with the component landscape of the visitor contact station, west of Courthouse Road. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Trail Corridors

The trail corridors wind their way throughout Five Forks Battlefield within the dense mixed pine and hardwood forest. The forest edge abuts each side of the trails, forming a distinct spatial character within the battlefield boundary.

Land Use

The primary land uses currently associated with the CLR study area are recreation, transportation, interpretation, commemoration, and maintenance storage. When the visitor contact station opened to the public in 2009, land uses such as administration and museum/education/interpretation were viable within the battlefield landscape. When the contact station closed in 2019, these land uses were no longer in place in this location. Interpretation has remained a significant land use at the battlefield wayside exhibits located within each of the five Tour Stops.

Agriculture

Cultivated agricultural fields before and after the Battle of Five Forks associated with individual farmsteads were typically sited on ground between natural drainages that was first cleared of tree cover. Beyond the current park boundaries, agriculture remains an active land use. Some former farm properties along Courthouse Road, however, are being developed as residential subdivisions. After ownership of the land was transferred to the National Park Service, the National Park Service leased agricultural fields for cultivation. Currently there are no active agricultural leases within the battlefield boundary.

Commemoration

In the 1960s, two monuments were erected at the Five Forks intersection to commemorate the site and the soldiers who fought there. In 1961, before the Five Forks Battlefield was added to Petersburg National Military Park, the NPS erected the Five Forks Battlefield National Historic Landmark Monument on a cleared half-acre of land located directly south of the intersection. Four years later, in 1965, the Dinwiddie Confederate Memorial Association donated the Battle of Five Forks Monument as a memorial to soldiers who fought in the Battle of Five Forks, particularly those from Dinwiddie County.

Interpretation

Interpretive opportunities are afforded to visitors at the five tour stops. Wayside exhibits tell the story of the Battle of Five Forks within various areas of the landscape. Wayside exhibits are also provided at the visitor contact station (which remains closed to the public). Kiosks located at the access roads and parking areas provide trail maps, orientation and directions, and limited interpretation.

Maintenance Storage

Maintenance storage is provided within the maintenance building associated with the visitor contact station complex. Access is provided from Courthouse Road into the gated complex and a separate road extends to the maintenance building.

Recreation

An extensive trail system exists within the boundaries of the Five Forks Battlefield, providing hiking and equestrian activities for visitors. The trails extend throughout the forested landscape north and south of White Oak Road.

Timbering

Before and after the Battle of Five Forks, farmsteads likely included woodlots where wood for construction of buildings and fences and for fuel could be harvested. Clearing of the forest was an ongoing practice. Twentieth-century farming introduced the planting of monocultural stands or plantations of pine trees to harvest for cash. This land use practice continues outside the park boundaries but currently there is no commercial timbering within the battlefield landscape.

Transportation

Transportation land use includes the three roads that extend through the boundaries of Five Forks Battlefield. The roads include Courthouse Road, White Oak Road, and Wheelers Pond Road.

Recreation

The Five Forks Battlefield has an extensive unpaved multi-use (pedestrian, equestrian, and bicycle) trail system that extends through the forested areas of the park, providing visitors with a variety of undulating terrain along the way. The trails include Corse Trail, Crawford Trail, Steuart Trail, Ford's Trail, Griffin Trail, Munford Trail, Pegram Trail, Pine Rock Trail, Deven Interpretive Trail, and Winthrop Hike/Bike Trail.

Visitor Services

Visitor services include the interpretive tour stops, trailheads, comfort station and kiosks, providing trail maps and orientation to the battlefield and the extensive trail system. Monuments, waysides, and worm fencing within the Five Forks intersection afford visitors more information and orientation to the significance of the intersection and the battles fought there and along the roads beyond their confluence.

Visitor services are associated with the visitor contact station, and include interpretation, an accessible picnic area and educational pavilion, maintenance storage, and recreation. The visitor contact station was constructed in 2009 and has been closed to the public since 2019.

Circulation

The three roads that connect at the Five Forks intersection, along with the intersection itself, are notable features of both the 1865 and the 2023 landscape. The roads are the prime circulation routes to and through the battlefield and provide visual access to daily travelers. The roads also provide physical access to the battlefield for visitors who want more opportunities to experience Five Forks Battlefield. Other circulation remnants of the battle era include three historic road traces.

In contrast to the busier and more trafficked areas of Dinwiddie County, White Oak Road, Courthouse Road, and Wheelers Pond Road retain their rural character due to their setting, materials, widths, and alignments. At present, differences among the three roads are minor but development beyond the battlefield is generating traffic volumes that could impact the current historic rural character of the roads through future upgrades. The unavoidable tension between visitor experience and high-traffic road corridors is documented at multiple National Park Service battlefields in Virginia that should be used as cautionary examples to the county in considering changes to the historic roadways of the Five Forks Battlefield.

Five Forks Intersection

Five Forks intersection, an asphalt-paved confluence of three roads, affords views of the surrounding battlefield landscape. Like the roads, no curbing is present at the intersection, and a grass swale is mown to control storm water along the asphalt paving. Contemporary street signs are provided along with stop signs to control traffic coming from White Oak Road and Wheelers Pond Road. Posted road speed signs for vehicles entering the intersection indicate 45 miles per hour.

The southern point between Courthouse Road and Wheelers Pond Road contains two Civil War monuments set in turf grass, mowed regularly in contrast to fields around the intersection that are mown twice a year. There is no formal pedestrian walkway to access the monuments. Other interpretive features—a gun carriage with cannon and an interpretive wayside—have been placed in the mown turf grass near the western point

defined by Courthouse Road and White Oak Road, with an associated field providing a backdrop. There are no pedestrian crossings to these interpretive features at the intersection (Figure A-7).



FIGURE A-7. Confluence of roads with contemporary street signs at the Five Forks intersection, with surrounding mown grass and interpretive features. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Overhead power lines cross in two directions through the intersection, adding to the visual clutter of small-scale features. A primary pole with two guy wire lines is located near the mown turf grass between White Oak Road and Wheelers Pond Road. From that pole, lines cross in an easterly direction to a pole on the southeast corner of White Oak Road, where the lines continue east along the south side of White Oak Road and diagonally across the intersection to a guyed pole at the east side of Courthouse Road. From there, the lines continue along Courthouse Road.

White Oak Road runs generally east–west, Courthouse Road generally north–south, and Wheelers Pond Road terminates at the intersection with White Oak and Courthouse Roads from the southwest. The rural character of the roads is similar, and they are maintained in good condition by the Virginia Department of Transportation. All routes are two lanes, with asphalt surfacing and grass edging.

Courthouse Road

Courthouse Road runs generally north–south and terminates into Cox Road approximately 5 miles north of the Five Forks intersection, north of its crossing at the historic railroad line. Approximately 5 miles to the south of the intersection the road dead ends into Boydton Plank Road, which is also Route 1. Through the battlefield zone, the road has two lanes with asphalt surfacing, double yellow center stripes, and white shoulder stripes approximately 6 inches from the edge of pavement. All striping stops shy of the intersection and continues along the south side. Generally, there is a mown shoulder of varying widths—from approximately 5 to 12 feet wide—and successional mixed pine and hardwood forests beyond. There is one field along the northbound lane, north of the Five Forks intersection, that is in the process of transitioning to pine. A more established line of pine has been allowed to grow outside the mown shoulder, possibility as a method of screening the power line along this side of the road.

The Five Forks Battlefield boundary is marked on Courthouse Road at two locations with a standard double-faced National Park Service brown metal sign that reads “Entering (or Leaving) Petersburg National Battlefield,” with the NPS arrowhead logo in the bottom left corner (Figure A-8).



FIGURE A-8. View south along Courthouse Road as it enters the north boundary of Five Forks Battlefield. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

White Oak Road

White Oak Road is the primary east–west route through Five Forks intersection. It originates at Boydton Plank Road approximately 6 miles to the east and continues through Five Forks to the southwest for 15 miles, where it terminates at Darvills Road. Within the boundaries of Five Forks Battlefield, White Oak Road has no lane striping and a mown shoulder. White Oak Road has a drainage swale that parallels the road at a consistent distance from the edge of the asphalt. The swale is mown to the edge of a mixed pine and hardwood forest. The mown shoulder is wider where associated with wood pole power lines. The power poles run east from the Five Forks intersection along the south side of White Oak Road, and cross to the north at the west corner of the National Park Service trail access drive located approximately one-tenth of a mile from the intersection. Around the access drive at White Oak Road and extending into the battleground is one of the larger open fields currently managed by the National Park Service. Continuing eastward, there is a small mown field midway along the south side of White Oak Road (Figure A-9).



FIGURE A-9. View along White Oak Road looking west past the entrance drive to Burnt Quarter. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

The last indication of National Park Service management along White Oak Road is Tour Stop 2, which is located on the north side of the road and east of the line of Confederate earthworks inside the wood line. The pull-off for the tour stop also provides access to the Winthrop Trail going north. On the south side of White Oak Road there is a chain gate at the entrance to the Wagon Trace Road Trail. It appears that the brown National Park Service sign is missing at this end of White Oak Road (Figure A-10).



FIGURE A-10. Tour stop 2 at the east end of White Oak Road. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Wheelers Pond Road

Wheelers Pond Road begins at the Five Forks intersection and leads southwest to its terminus at Scotts Road, approximately 6 miles from the intersection. While little more than a trace on battle-era maps, it currently is a striped route with a double-yellow center line but no shoulder lines. Much of the traffic volume associated with the road appears to be generated by the Dinwiddie County landfill located on the east side of the road, just beyond the boundary of the battlefield. South of the mown grass at the intersection, a single field opens into a larger one that crosses to Courthouse Road, with another large field in the same general area that widens to White Oak Road. Other areas are forested with a mixed pine and deciduous hardwood cover. The park boundary extends further south along the east side of the road. A standard brown National Park Service double-faced sign is located on the east side of the road that reads in both directions “Entering or Leaving Petersburg National Battlefield.” There is no tour stop along Wheelers Pond Road (Figure A-11).



FIGURE A-11. Entrance at the south boundary of the battlefield along Wheelers Pond Road. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Historic Road Traces

There are three remnant historic road traces that function as part of the unpaved trail system.

Confederate Escape Road Trace. The road trace is located at the far western end of the battlefield on the north side of White Oak Road. It is marked with an informational kiosk and gate, and from there continues north as a mulched surface to the National Park Service boundary.

Gilliam Field Road Segment. The road segment is an earthen road farther east on the south side of White Oak Road. It leads south to the battlefield boundary.

Wagon Road Trace. The road trace is currently a mulched trail at the eastern end of the battlefield south of White Oak Road and across from Tour Stop 2. It connects near its terminus in the woods with the Winthrop Trail (Figure A-12).



FIGURE A-12. The entrance to Wagon Road Trace is located at the eastern end of the battlefield, south of White Oak Road and Tour Stop 2. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Tour Stops

Integrated along the historic roads of the Five Fork Battlefield are small vehicular pull-offs, paved with asphalt and numbered 1 through 5. They are identified with low, circular green signs with a number in the center, readable to approaching traffic. Parking spaces are identified by concrete wheel stops and painted parking stripes. Each tour stop has one or two interpretive waysides in proximity to the parking spaces. At some locations, the wayside exhibit signage has faded and it is difficult to read and understand the battle action at a specific location. Tour Stop 3, the largest of the five pull-offs and closest to the Five Forks intersection, does not provide orientation maps for the overall trail system. Without access to the Five Forks Visitor Contact Station, or a stop at one of Petersburg National Battlefield's visitor contact areas, it is difficult for visitors to understand the tour route or even know that it exists. A planned visit to Five Forks Battlefield with the aid of online sources and the park web site provides visitors with a more complete understanding of opportunities and experiences available within Petersburg National Battlefield, including the multi-use trails throughout the landscape.

Tour Stop 1

Tour Stop 1 is located near the south boundary of the battlefield, along the east side of Courthouse Road. It is a flat rectangular paved area with two concrete wheel stops at the north end and one interpretive wayside located nearby. From Courthouse Road, there are two access drives to enter or exit the tour stop. From this location, there is a view north to the National Park Service sign on the east side of the road identifying access to the visitor contact station west of Courthouse Road. A pipe culvert under each of the parking access drives allows stormwater to connect to the continuous grass swale along the east side of the road (Figure A-13 and Figure A-14).



FIGURE A-13. Tour Stop 1 identification sign and interpretive wayside with a quote from Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan: “I was exceedingly anxious to attack at once, for the sun was getting low and we had to fight or go back.” (Source: LSHLA, 2023)



FIGURE A-14. Tour Stop 1 has two access drives with pipe culverts under each for stormwater flow through the continuous grass swale. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Tour Stop 2

Tour Stop 2 is located at the eastern end of White Oak Road. It is a rectangular paved area slightly east of the terminus of the Confederate earthworks at the angle. There are two interpretive waysides adjacent to the west edge of the car park. A view is afforded to the west along White Oak Road and into the woods near the location of the “Attack on the Angle” (Figure A-15 and Figure A-16).



FIGURE A-15. Tour Stop 2 is located at the eastern end of White Oak Road. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)



FIGURE A-16. Tour Stop 2 has two wayside exhibits: one is the “Attack on the Angle” and the other provides an illustration of General Charles Griffin and his quote, “My command had to lament the loss of some of its bravest and best. . . .” (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Tour Stop 3

Tour Stop 3 interprets the Five Forks intersection, which was Grant’s strategic objective. The Southside Railroad is less than 3 miles to the north on Courthouse Road (known as Ford’s Road during the battle). Access to the parking area is from the south side of White Oak Road, west of the intersection. The identification sign for Tour Stop 3 is only visible to drivers approaching from the east. The access road leads to a paved area with faded or non-existent striping, but sufficient paving to hold four to six cars. The signature feature of the tour stop is a mature white oak near the tour stop exit onto White Oak Road. Tour Stop 3 accommodates two important trail-road crossings; the Devin Trail coming north from the visitor contact station crosses Wheelers Pond Road and then crosses White Oak Road and joins with the Pegram Trail on the north side of White Oak Road. The vegetation in this area contains a released area of landscape between the tour stop and White Oak Road, open fields, and old field succession, dominated by pines along the southern edge (Figure A-17 and Figure A-18).

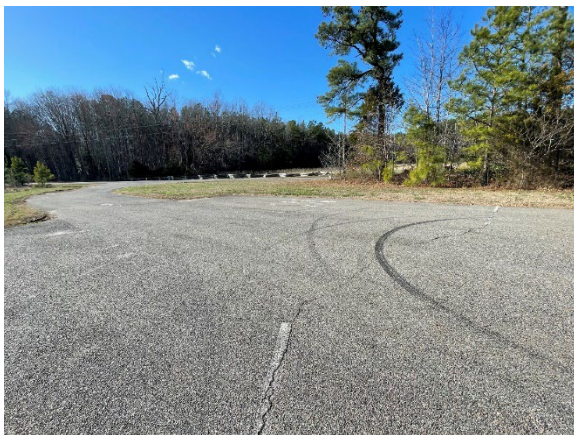


FIGURE A-17. Access to parking for Tour Stop 3 is from the south side of White Oak Road. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)



FIGURE A-18. In the mown grass of the intersection north of White Oak Road are two waysides and a small wood marker where Confederate Col. William R. J. Pegram is believed to have fallen. The waysides are “Death of Pegram” and “Digging In.” (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Tour Stop 4

Tour Stop 4 is located near the western limit of the battlefield along the south side of White Oak Road. It is composed of a rectangular asphalt paved parking area, with an interpretive wayside southeast in a former open field now transitioning to pines and surrounding hardwood trees. “A Final Stand” wayside marker at Tour Stop Four tells the story of the last stages of the battle, as the Confederates fought rear guard actions to allow the rest of the army to escape. There is a planted island of large pines and hardwoods between the two access roads into the tour stop. At the eastern access road, a view of the Stewart House is available across a landscape transitioning to pine and hardwood mix. Historically, the Confederate earthworks crossed from the north side of White Oak Road to the south side in the vicinity of Burnt Quarter, but these earthworks were significantly diminished overtime and are not interpreted with fencing as they are at the Five Forks intersection (Figure A-19 and Figure A-20).



FIGURE A-19. Tour Stop 4 is near the western boundary of the battlefield along the south side of White Oak Road. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)



FIGURE A-20. The wayside titled “A Final Stand” tells the story of the last stages of the battle. With their left at the Angle crashed and their center near the Five Forks intersection overrun, the Confederates made a final stand here, in and around Gilliam’s field. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Tour Stop 5

Tour Stop 5 is an asphalt rectangular pull-off near the north end of the battlefield and east of Courthouse Road. There are three parking spaces provided at the north edge of the car park and two waysides. Mixed pine and hardwood stands define the road corridor on both sides. The forest line is set back by the exposed power line right-of-way that runs along the east side of Courthouse Road from the Five Forks intersection. In this zone, the grass is mown along the right-of-way, exposing the poles. The mowing does allow visitors to park and walk north to a crossing where trails meet from the east and west (Figure A-21 and Figure A-22).



FIGURE A-21. Tour Stop 5 is located at the north end of the battlefield and east of Courthouse Road. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)



FIGURE A-22. The “Crawford’s Sweep” wayside marker at Tour Stop 5. Crawford’s lines swept westward to the Confederate rear, cutting the main Confederate escape route here along what was Ford’s Road. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Visitor Access and Circulation

Visitors are invited to three areas of the Five Forks Battlefield cultural landscape in addition to the tours stops. From these areas they can access trails and enjoy interpretive waysides and kiosks. One area is around the visitor contact station (currently closed to the public) and the others are parking areas off White Oak Road with access to trails on the northeast and northwest sides of Courthouse Road.

Access Drive and Loop at Steuart Trailhead

A vehicular access road is available to visitors from the north side of White Oak Road, east of the Five Forks intersection. The long drive paved with brown gravel continues north through a field that is transitioning to small pines and hardwoods. The drive ultimately loops around a small, wooded area that is preserved because of several graves that are marked with headstones in the woodlot. At the north end of the loop is an informal gravel parking area for vehicles and horse trailers. Just off the parking area is a comfort station within the mown grass landscape adjacent to the loop road. A kiosk provides trail maps and other park-wide information and directions to use at the head of the Steuart Trail, which leads north into a mixed pine-hardwood forest (Figure A-23).



FIGURE A-23. The access road loops around wooded vegetation and leads to vehicular and horse trailer parking as well as the trailhead for Steuart Trail. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Parking Area at the Corse Trailhead

The trailhead parking exists at the western end of White Oak Road. A short, gated gravel road connects to a large rectangular gravel space that is used for parking and as a staging area for equestrian access (vehicles and trailers). The area is surrounded by mixed pine-hardwood forest (Figure A-24).



FIGURE A-24. Access by way of a short gravel road to vehicular and trailer parking is north of White Oak Road. The trailhead here is for Corse Trail and Pine Rock Trail. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Visitor Contact Station Area

The Visitor Contact Station Area is a component landscape of the Five Forks Battlefield. It is composed of the visitor contact station, maintenance building, and associated roads and parking. It is accessed from the west side of Courthouse Road, south of the Five Forks intersection. A gated access drive extends through the designed landscape to and through the asphalt parking lot. Concrete sidewalks link the parking area to the visitor contact station and visitor amenities at the north end of the developed area. At the south end a drive connects to a maintenance building area that is well screened with berms and plantings. The site design was selected through a thoughtful and well-documented process in 2005 and constructed in 2009 to blend into the battlefield landscape. Most of the landscape is treated as an open field, with mown areas kept to a minimum.³ The area was selected because it was an open field that was and is screened from Courthouse Road, and from other battlefield areas beyond, by the mixed pine-hardwood forest around the site. Because this area functions mostly for circulating visitors to interpretive opportunities (classroom pavilion and picnic tables) and trail access, it is described in this Cultural Landscape Report as part of the park circulation (Figure A-25).



FIGURE A-25. Access and circulation specific to the visitor contact station and maintenance building. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Multi-use Trail System

The Five Forks Battlefield has an extensive unpaved multi-use (pedestrian, equestrian, and bicycle) trail system that extends through the forested areas of the park, providing visitors with a variety of undulating

3. John Milner Associates, *Cultural Landscape Assessment: Potential Sites for Proposed Multi-Use Facility for Five Forks, Petersburg National Battlefield*, 2005, 67.

terrain along the way. A few of the routes are marked and named for officers involved in the battle of April 1, 1965 (Winthrop, Griffin Pegram, etc.). The trails include Corse Trail, Crawford Trail, Ford's Trail, Griffin Trail, Munford Trail, Pegram Trail, Pine rock Trail, Deven Interpretive Trail, and Winthrop Hike/Bike Trail.

There is no single-loop trail that leaves the visitor contact station and only a few of the trails cross the paved roads. One crossing is located north of Tour Stop 5 along Courthouse Road. The southern end of Pegram Trail extends along the open field at the north side of White Oak Road and crosses to Tour Stop 3, where it connects to Devin Trail, which continues south to the visitor contact station.

Topography

Three north-south ravines drain the site to the south, dissecting the rolling upland that makes up most of the site. No significant human modifications to the topography are apparent.

Rolling Piedmont Terrain

Dinwiddie County has a land area of approximately 501 square miles or 320,640 acres. The topography is generally level or slightly rolling with very small variations in elevation in the eastern section. In the western three-fourths of the county, the surface of the Piedmont Plateau exhibits a more rolling terrain. Elevations vary from about 50 feet above sea level in the eastern portion of the county to 400 feet in the west (Figure A-26) The rolling Piedmont terrain is the dominant landform of Dinwiddie County.



FIGURE A-26. Rolling landscape with small variations in topography visible south of White Oak Road. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Steep drainages

Within the vicinity of Five Forks, the rolling uplands are dissected by numerous steep drainages. The topography is steep, and the soils, underlain by igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic rocks, create significant erosion potential along steep stream channels. This condition is evident along the streams throughout the north sections of the battlefield.

Level Uplands Between Drainages

The locations and sizes of fields on these flatter areas have changed since the battle era. Scattered areas among the steep drainages are no longer being managed as fields. Field areas within the boundaries of Five Forks Battlefield exhibit gently sloping to flat topography extending to the surrounding forest edges (Figure A-27).



FIGURE A-27. Open fields extending to surrounding forest edges occur in the vicinity of the old tobacco barn. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Vegetation

The Five Forks Battlefield is a mosaic of forest cover with stands of mixed pine and hardwood and some remnant pine plantations. Grassy fields are transitioning to mixed pine and hardwood forest for lack of mowing or burning. The one exception is the surviving open field and forest line along the property's entry drive along the south side of White Oak Road. This landscape is part of an outparcel owned by the Gilliam family that is under a conservation easement. It is the same easement that covers the land along the north side of White Oak Road, west of the battlefield property line.

An inventory of overstory vegetation across the site was completed in 1996 through a cooperative agreement with Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia. The report includes an inventory and assessment of the battlefield canopy, as well as a map to illustrate the locations of the described stands.⁴ In 2008, the NPS completed a *Vegetation Inventory* that contains the broader plant communities and associated plant materials within the boundaries of Five Forks Battlefield. In the fifteen years that have passed since the second vegetation study was completed, the forest stands have aged and there has been some loss of old and diseased trees, but for the most part the vegetative cover has not been altered by the park. Currently, the battlefield is predominantly covered in a mixed canopy of successional forest with a wide array of native understory—woody and herbaceous shrubs and perennials. The active timbering, predominantly in the eastern area of the battlefield north of White Oak Road, ended when the National Park Service assumed ownership. Open grass fields continue to diminish in acreage as they transition to early successional forest.

Early Successional Loblolly Pine Forest

This forest follows agricultural cropping or silvicultural site preparation on a variety of sites, and presumably is more likely on moderately dissected topography where fire is a rare occurrence. This community usually is not present on steep slopes and does not occur on wet soils. It occurs on well-to moderately well-drained soils on sites that formerly were under hardwood cover or subjected to agriculture. The tree canopy of loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) is at least 60 percent but may be considerably denser, up to and including closed canopies.

4. Polly-Anne Rantis and James E. Johnson, *Forest Management and the Restoration of Historic Scenes, Petersburg National Battlefield*, Department of Forestry, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia (1996).

Other species of pine, especially shortleaf pine (*Pinus echinata*) and Virginia pine (*Pinus virginiana*) may be sparingly present in the canopy (Figure A-28).⁵



FIGURE A-28. Early successional loblolly growth occurs in the field west of the access loop road, north of White Oak Road. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Mixed Pine and Hardwood Forest

Stands of this community type are strongly co-dominated by loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) and sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), resulting from past disturbance followed by forest succession. This community type is more influenced by past land-use history than by specific soil differences. However, this community type tends to occur on poorly drained and low-nutrient soils, especially in areas that were farmed heavily in the past. Some other species which may be present in stands of this association include willow oak (*Quercus phellos*), water oak (*Quercus nigra*), winged elm (*Ulmus alata*), and red maple (*Acer rubrum*) (Figure A-29).



FIGURE A-29. Mixed pine and hardwood forest edge defines the trail corridors. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Old Field Successional Fields and Woodlands

Old field succession includes abandoned plantations which, after a time with no active management, develop an understory of hardwood species. It can also occur on landscapes where forests have been recently cleared and allowed to naturally regenerate, leaving a dense shrubby mixture of loblolly pine and hardwood species.⁶

5. Karen D. Patterson, *Vegetation Classification and Mapping at Petersburg National Battlefield, Virginia*, Technical Report (National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, 2008), 143.
6. *Vegetation Classification and Mapping at Petersburg National Battlefield*, 2008, 142.

Old field succession is occurring in many of the fields due to lack of consistent mowing or burning protocols (Figure A-30).



FIGURE A-30. Old field succession with understory hardwood species and shrubby mixture of loblolly pine is apparent within the battlefield. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Pine Plantations

Early-Successional Loblolly Pine Forest includes abandoned plantations which, after a time with no active management, develop an understory of hardwood species. It can also occur on areas where forests have been recently cleared and allowed to naturally regenerate, leaving a dense shrubby mixture of *Pinus taeda* (loblolly pine) and hardwood species.

Open Grass Fields

Open Grass (Cultural Meadow)

This broadly defined vegetation type includes pastures and post- agricultural fields and is largely composed of nonnative cool-season grasses and herbs (generally of European origin) in the early stages of succession. The fields are typically mowed at least annually. Physiognomically, these grasslands are generally composed of mid-height (1 to 3 feet tall) grasses and forbs, with occasional scattered shrubs. Species composition varies from site to site, depending on land-use history and soil types.

Mown Field

The field northwest of the Five Forks intersection is the only open field mown often enough to maintain a stand of tall grass. In other areas around the intersection, and along the road edges of the field, grass is kept short to allow visitors to see and visit monuments, interpretive waysides, and the gun carriage with cannon associated with the interpretation of the battlefield (Figure A-31).



FIGURE A-31. Mown fields dominate the landscape around the Five Forks intersection.
(Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Vegetation Associated with Visitor Contact Station

The planting plan implemented in association with the visitor contact station and maintenance area included mixed hardwood and natives to help blend the area into the surrounding forest cover. Areas of mown grass exist around the buildings and parking lots and those areas transition to taller grass fields and mixed forest cover that were extant at the time of construction. As-constructed drawings were completed in 2010 and indicate the cultural vegetation planted within the visitor contact station area.⁷ Vegetation was verified during site investigations in February 2023.

Trees

Trees present in the landscape of the visitor contact station include American holly (*Ilex opaca*); American hornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*); flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*); Eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*); downy serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*); ironwood (*Carpinus caroliniana*); loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*); red maple (*Acer rubrum*); red oak (*Quercus rubra*); red twig dogwood (*Cornus sericea*); scarlet oak (*Quercus coccinea*); tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*); white pine (*Pinus strobus*); and water oak (*Quercus nigra*) (Figure A-32).



FIGURE A-32. Tree plantings are abundant at the Visitor Contact Station. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

7. GWWO, Inc. and PBS&J, "Constructed Drawings for Visitor and Maintenance Facilities at Five Forks Battlefield," 2010, Sheet 20 of 103.

Shrubs and Perennial Herbaceous Flowering Plants

Shrubs associated with the visitor contact station site include arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*); blackhaw (*Viburnum prunifolium*); and Southern wax myrtle (*Myrica cerifera*). The perennial herbaceous planting is soft rush (*Juncus effusus*).

Meadow Mixes

Shortgrass mix was used for the recreation field. Species include blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*); buffalo grass (*Buchloe dactyoides*); Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pennsylvanica*); and Appalachian sedge (*Carex appalachia*).

Restoration mixes with wildflowers include big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*); little bluestem (*Andropogon scoparius*); Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*); switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*); and wool grass (*Scirpus cyperinus*).⁸

Buildings and Structures

Buildings

Comfort Station

Located south of Steuart Trail at the end of an access drive and loop north of White Oak Road is a small comfort station (Figure A-33). The comfort station is rectangular in plan and consists of an open-air covered vestibule and single occupancy restroom. The comfort station sits on a concrete slab foundation and has precast concrete walls and roof. A steel access door is present in the foundation at the east end of the building. The precast concrete walls mimic the appearance of vertical wood siding, while the precast concrete gable roof mimics the appearance of wood shake shingles. A sheet metal vent at the east end of the building extends from the foundation through the roof.



FIGURE A-33. The comfort station south of the Steuart Trail, view from southwest. (Source: WJE, 2023)

Visitor Contact Station

The visitor contact station, constructed in 2009, is located northwest of the parking area southwest of Courthouse Road (Figure A-34). The building faces southeast, with a concrete walk leading from the parking area to the front door of the building (Figure A-35). The central portion of the building is taller than the two side wings. Rectangular in plan, the visitor contact station sits on a concrete foundation. The building has composite siding exterior walls at the lower portions of the building and standing seam metal roofs. An aluminum curtain wall system comprises the walls at the taller central portion of the building, which is topped by a gable roof. Clerestory windows extend the length of the raised portion of the building above the side

8. "Constructed Drawings," Sheet 29 of 103.

wings. The side wings each have a shed roof. Three aluminum-framed windows are present on the southwest elevation (Figure A-36). Two additional windows are present on the west end of the northwest elevation (Figure A-37). Additional doors at the center of the elevation provide access to the education pavilion to the northwest. The visitor contact station has been closed to the public since the fall of 2019.



FIGURE A-34. The visitor contact station, view from east. (Source: WJE, 2023)



FIGURE A-35. The southeast elevation of the visitor contact station, view from southeast. (Source: WJE, 2023)



FIGURE A-36. The southwest elevation of the visitor contact station, view from southwest. (Source: WJE, 2023)



FIGURE A-37. The northwest elevation of the visitor contact station, view from northwest. (Source: WJE, 2023)

Education Pavilion

Northwest of the visitor contact station is the education pavilion (Figure A-38). The pavilion consists of a concrete slab with six wood columns supporting laminated wood beams below a standing seam metal gable roof. The roof deck is exposed at the underside of the roof.



FIGURE A-38. The education pavilion, view from southeast. (Source: WJE, 2023)

Maintenance Building

South of the visitor contact station parking area is a maintenance area. North of a paved parking area is a maintenance building (Figure A-39). The one-story building is rectangular in plan and sits on a concrete foundation. The building is clad with composite siding and has a standing seam metal gable roof. A series of three overhead doors is situated at the east end of the south elevation with door to the west (Figure A-40). A small extension with a shed roof is present on the east elevation of the building (Figure A-41). A covered mechanical area is located on the south side of the extension. A door is present near the center of the east elevation. There are two aluminum-framed windows on the west end of the north elevation. A door is centered on the west elevation, with an aluminum-framed window at the north end of the elevation.



FIGURE A-39. The maintenance building, view from southwest. (Source: WJE, 2023)



FIGURE A-40. SOUTH ELEVATION OF MAINTENANCE BUILDING, VIEW FROM SOUTH. (SOURCE: WJE, 2023)



FIGURE A-41. East elevation of maintenance building, view from east. (Source: WJE, 2023)

Tobacco Barn

The tobacco barn is located south of the Five Forks intersection between Courthouse Road to the east and Wheelers Pond Road to the west. The tobacco barn is in a ruinous condition (Figure A-42). The barn, which is rectangular in shape, has a stone and brick foundation. The walls are log with chinking present in the joints between logs. Portions of the north and south walls have collapsed, as has the roof. The collapsed roof is present at the west side of the barn (Figure A-43).



FIGURE A-42. Tobacco barn, view from south. (Source: WJE, 2023)



FIGURE A-43. Tobacco barn, view from northwest. (Source: WJE, 2023)

White Oak Road Farm

The White Oak Road Farm is located on the north side of White Oak Road west of the Five Forks intersection. Six structures remain at the farm. There is a log structure located near just north of the road (Figure A-44). The one-story structure has log walls with chinking in the joints between the logs, and a standing seam metal shed roof. A door composed of vertical wood planks is centered on the west elevation of the building.



FIGURE A-44. Log structure, view from west. (Source: WJE, 2023)

Northwest of the log structure is a former animal pen (Figure A-45). The structure consists of wood posts and beams that support a partially collapsed standing seam metal shed roof. Horizontal wood siding is present at the base of the structure.



FIGURE A-45. Collapsed animal pen, view from south. (Source: WJE, 2023)

A collapsed shed is located west of the animal pen (Figure A-46). The building appears to have been a wood structure with vertical wood siding and a standing seam metal roof.



FIGURE A-46. Collapsed shed, view from south. (Source: WJE, 2023)

Two log structures are located at the west end of the site (Figure A-47). The easternmost building is partially collapsed (Figure A-48). The building has log walls with chinking in the joints between the logs and a standing seam metal gable roof. The west wall of the building and a portion of the roof have partially collapsed. A door opening is centered on the south elevation of the building.



FIGURE A-47. Log structures at White Oak Road Farm, view from east. (Source: WJE, 2023)



FIGURE A-48. Partially collapsed log structure, view from northwest. (Source: WJE, 2023)

The western structure sits on a concrete block foundation and has log walls and a standing seam metal gable roof (Figure A-49). Wood siding is present above the log walls at the gable ends. A door opening is centered on the east elevation, with another door at the south end of the west elevation.



FIGURE A-49. Log structure, view from west. (Source: WJE, 2023)

A log barn sits southwest of the two log structures (Figure A-50). The center portion of the barn has log walls atop a stone foundation with a standing seam metal gable roof. The door opening is centered on the south elevation of the barn, with another opening located directly above (Figure A-51). A lower wing is present on both the east and west side of the barn. The side wings have vertical wood siding at the walls atop a stone foundation with standing seam metal shed roofs (Figure A-52). A door opening is present on the east elevation of the barn.



FIGURE A-50. Barn at White Oak Road Farm, view from west. (Source: WJE, 2023)



FIGURE A-51. Barn at White Oak Road Farm, view from southeast. (Source: WJE, 2023)



FIGURE A-52. Barn at White Oak Road Farm, view from northeast. (Source: WJE, 2023)

A stone chimney remains southeast of the barn, directly south of the road trace that leads into the site from White Oak Road to the south. The face of the stone is covered with a cementitious parge coating (Figure A-53).



FIGURE A-53. Stone chimney, view from south. (Source: WJE, 2023)

Stewart House

The Stewart House is located north of White Oak Road northeast of Tour Stop 4. The two-story house is L-shaped in plan, with the north wing only one story in height (Figure A-54). The Stewart House sits on a stone pier foundation and has wood siding at the exterior walls and a standing seam metal gable roof over the two-story portion of the house. Vinyl, double-hung windows are present throughout the building. The roof over the north wing is partially collapsed, with only wood sheathing and framing visible (Figure A-55). A wood porch is centered on the south elevation at the front door to the house (Figure A-56). The porch has an asphaltic roofing membrane. A wood ramp with a railing provides access from the existing grade to the porch.



FIGURE A-54. Stewart House, view from south. (Source: WJE, 2023)



FIGURE A-55. North wing of Stewart House, view from east. (Source: WJE, 2023)



FIGURE A-56. Stewart House with front porch at center, view from south. (Source: WJE, 2023)

Structures

Earthworks

As demonstrated by the sophisticated earthworks and fortifications that were constructed by both armies in association with the siege and battle of Petersburg, by spring 1865 forces on either side of the conflict constructed a line of defensive earthworks if fearing an assault. These earthworks provided cover and strategic locations from which to fend off opposing forces. Although very little of the earthworks remain at Five Forks Battlefield today, the remnant line and angle of Confederate earthworks that survive under forest cover and in deep leaf litter at the far east end of White Oak Road at Tour Stop 2 are one of the last remaining battle features to interpret the Battle of Five Forks (Figure A-57).



FIGURE A-57. Just inside the wood line at Tour Stop 2 is the last section of Confederate earthworks that survive at Five Forks Battlefield. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Trail Footbridge

Small wooden bridges constructed along the trail system within the battlefield provide access across stream drainages. The wood plank structures with wood edging provide secure footing for visitors through wet areas associated with stream drainages (Figure A-58).



FIGURE A-58. View of one of the stream crossings associated with the Steuart Trail. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Views and Vistas

Five Fork Intersection Views

Most of the area surrounding the Five Forks intersection has been cleared since the end of the historic period. Views from this position are generally more open than they were at the time of battle. In 1865, the entire vicinity of the Five Forks intersection was wooded to some degree, with clear views only available on the west side of the line overlooking the cleared Gilliam property. Currently the road corridors and open mown grass, managed by the National Park Service, afford numerous views to and from the roads and to the confluence of the roads and surrounding interpretive features within the mown grass fields.

Views from Tour Stop 1

Views are afforded to visitors looking north and south along Courthouse Road, as well as into the woods where the Union cavalry assembled (Figure A-59).



FIGURE A-59. View looking north along Courthouse Road from Tour Stop 1. (Source: Petersburg National Battlefield)

Views from Tour Stop 2

Remaining Confederate earthwork remnants can be viewed from this tour stop, as well as views east and west along White Oak Road (Figure A-60).

Views from Tour Stop 3

Views at Tour Stop 3 include the Five Forks intersection, east and west along White Oak Road, north on Courthouse Road, and south on Wheelers Pond Road (Figure A-61).

Views from Tour Stop 4

At Tour Stop 4, views are directed east and west along White Oak Road and to the opening of the Confederate Retreat Road Trace. (Figure A-62).

Views from Tour Stop 5

Tour Stop 5 directs views north and south along Courthouse Road (Figure A-63).



FIGURE A-60. View looking west down White Oak Road. The Confederate defensive line began here and ran along the right side of the road. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)



FIGURE A-61. Views are afforded in every direction associated with the roads, open mown fields, and forest edges. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)



FIGURE A-62. View from Tour Stop 4 looking west along White Oak Road. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)



FIGURE A-63. View looking south along Courthouse Road from Tour Stop 5. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

View north from Five Forks Monument to Intersection Roads

Due to the open landscape surrounding the Five Forks intersection, there is an expansive view north to northwest from the monuments that encompasses the roads and the intersection. The area is managed as mown grass and contains the gun carriage and cannon, worm fencing, and wayside exhibits (Figure A-64).



FIGURE A-64. View north to northwest from the location of the monuments in the landscape. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

View north from White Oak Road to the Loop Access Drive

An expansive view from White Oak Road is afforded along the access drive meandering north where it loops back on itself. The viewshed at this location reveals current vegetation patterns in the landscape, composed of thick forest edges, fields transitioning to loblolly plantations, and remaining open fields (Figure A-65).



FIGURE A-65. View north from White Oak Road along the alignment of the access road leading to a comfort station and trailhead. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Small-Scale Features

Fences and Gates

Access gates to the Visitor Contact Station. Two contemporary pipe rail gates secure access to the visitor contact station and maintenance area. One stands at the entrance southwest of Courthouse Road and the other marks the road leading to the maintenance storage building. Both gates are painted brown to blend in with the surrounding landscape (Figure A-66).



FIGURE A-66. Pipe rail metal gates remain locked at the Visitor Contact Station. The contact station is currently closed to the public. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Trail gates. Large wood gates have been installed at various points along the trails, to prevent vehicular access on the trail corridor and the soft pine surfacing in some areas. One is located at the south side of White Oak Road and Tour Stop 2 (Figure A-67).

Worm Fence. A section of worm fence is located west of the Five Forks intersection and north of White Oak Road. The section measures 135 feet in length and is surrounded by mown turf grass. It is associated with the single cannon and double wayside exhibit also located in the open area of turf grass (Figure A-68).

Worm Fence with Pegram Marker. A small worm fence marker with an identity sign “Pegram” is in the mown field near the Five Forks intersection. It is believed this area was the site where Confederate Col. William R. J. Pegram fell during the battle (Figure A-69).



FIGURE A-67. The wood gates with 6-inch-diameter wood pole members have been installed to prevent vehicular traffic on the trail. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)



FIGURE A-68. The wooden worm fencing is visible within the Five Forks intersection. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)



FIGURE A-69. The Pegram marker is located in the mown field near the Five Forks intersection. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Monuments

National Historic Landmark Monument. In the 1960s, two monuments were erected at the Five Forks intersection to commemorate the site and the soldiers who fought there. In 1961, before the Five Forks Battlefield was added to Petersburg National Military Park, the NPS erected the Five Forks Battlefield National Historic Landmark Monument on a cleared half-acre of land located directly south of the intersection. The rough-cut granite marker stands 22 inches high and 25 inches wide and has a slightly arched top. A bronze plaque mounted on the polished face bears an inscription describing the designation of the site (Figure A-70).



FIGURE A-70. The Landmark Monument was erected south of the Five Forks intersection in 1961. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Battle of Five Forks Monument. Four years later, in 1965, the Dinwiddie Confederate Memorial Association donated the Battle of Five Forks Monument as a memorial to soldiers who fought in the Battle of Five Forks, particularly those from Dinwiddie County. The monument was placed as a recognition of the centennial of the battle as well as the conclusion of the war. It consists of a 6-foot-high rough-cut granite slab on a 1-foot-high rectangular granite base with rough-cut sides and a finished top. The smooth face of the monument

features an inscription describing its dedication and showcases an engraving of crossed United States and Confederate flags (Figure A-71).



FIGURE A-71. The Battle of Five Forks Monument was erected in 1965.
(Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Mary Ann Roberts Gravestone. The small gravestone stands in the wooded area enclosed inside the access loop road north of White Oak Road and is inscribed with the name “Mary Ann Roberts.” While no other gravestones are immediately apparent, it is possible that the area was used as a cemetery, and other unmarked graves could be present at the site (Figure A-72). The gravestone is currently surrounded by the trunk and root growth of an adjacent tree. It is in danger of complete displacement or destruction as the tree grows.



FIGURE A-72. The grave marker is threatened by the roots and trunk growth of the large adjacent tree. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Interpretive Exhibits

Cannon. A cannon stands on the west side of the Five Forks intersection, in the field between Courthouse Road and White Oak Road. The bronze tube, 12-pounder Napoleon is fixed on a wheeled carriage.

Tour Stop Waysides. Ten interpretative waysides are installed in the Five Forks Battlefield project area. The waysides are standard NPS design with metal supports and sign frame. The illustrations depicted on the sign panels vary in condition, with some faded and barely legible (Figure A-73).



FIGURE A-73. The wayside at Tour Stop 4, “A Final Stand,” is in fair condition, but fading.
(Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Visitor Contact Station Waysides. Along the circulation routes of the visitor contact station there are wayside signs installed to enhance the visitor experience at Five Forks Battlefield. The interior of the contact station has numerous exhibits designed to interpret the significance of the battle and its landscape context. The exterior waysides and the interior interpretive exhibits are not currently available to the public, as the contact station remains closed.

Signage

Tour Stop Numbers. Each of the tour stops is identified with a small identification sign, matching the tour locations as presented in the trail maps. The signs are 24 inches in height and display the tour stop number on a circular, green metal signboard. The identification number is attached to both sides of the concrete post except at Tour Stop 3 (Figure A-74).

Park Identity Signs. Standard NPS park identity signs are provided at the park boundaries, associated with the roads. The vehicular signage indicates entrance/exit for Five Forks Battlefield. The metal signboards, painted brown with white lettering, are mounted on wood posts (Figure A-75).

Burnt Quarter Identification Sign. The access road to Burnt Quarter is west of the Five Forks intersection and south of White Oak Road as it winds through the southwestern area of the battlefield. The access lane is marked with a sign indicating the direction to the privately owned house and fields. The sign is contained in a mulched planting bed, edged with concrete block pavers. The bed contains two shrubs and a black ornate metal signpost with an extended arm. Hanging from the arm is the wooden sign, painted white with black stylized lettering identifying the private property. The sign states: “*Burnt Quarter c. 1737, 15917 White Oak Road, Private Drive*” (Figure A-76).



FIGURE A-74. The tour stop signs are identical except for the identification number (Source: LSHLA, 2023).



FIGURE A-75. The standard entrance/exit signs for "Petersburg National Battlefield" are installed at the boundaries of Five Forks Battlefield and are associated with each of the roads leading to the Five Forks intersection. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)



FIGURE A-76. The identity sign reveals the access lane to Burnt Quarter, the privately owned house and land along the south side of White Oak Road. (Source: LSHLA, 2023).

Directional / Informational / Trail Signs. There is a single standard NPS vehicular directional sign installed east of Courthouse Road giving directions to the access road associated with the Visitor Contact Station located west of Courthouse Road. The trailheads are clearly marked with signage and there are various small wooden signs, providing directions for the individual trails where they intersect with each other or an access road (Figure A-77).



FIGURE A-77. Small wood trail signs include equestrian signage where horseback riding is allowed on the trail. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Regulatory Signs Associated with the Roads. Most of the vehicular regulatory and identity signs occur at the Five Forks intersection. The variety of sign type and design, when seen together in the open landscape of the intersection, produces visual clutter at the heart of the battlefield site. Standard street signs (painted green with white lettering) are mounted on metal poles and identify the road names (Courthouse Road, White Oak Road, and Wheelers Pond Road). There are two standard stop signs with state road numbers mounted on top, located where Wheelers Pond Road and White Oak Road meet the intersection (Figure A-78).



FIGURE A-78. Multiple regulatory and identity signs are present in the landscape of the Five Forks intersection. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Site Furnishings

Site furnishings are provided within the gated visitor contact station landscape. Benches, picnic tables, trash receptacles, bicycle racks, a single flagpole, and light fixtures are provided along the pedestrian circulation routes and within the education pavilion located northwest of the contact station. These features are documented in the as-constructed drawings (2010) and in photographs taken during field investigations in 2023 (Figure A-79 and Figure A-80).



FIGURE A-79. Features include the flagpole, bench, trash receptacle, bike rack, and the accessible parking area. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)



FIGURE A-80. The accessible picnic area is paved with exposed aggregate concrete and contains three accessible picnic tables. (Source: LSHLA, 2023)

Benches. Single benches are provided in various locations along the pedestrian walkway as it winds from the parking area to the front door of the Visitor Contact Station. The benches are 6 feet in length and are mounted within concrete platforms or in the walkway alignment. The bench seat is constructed with four laminated plastic members (4x4s), mounted on three supports.

Picnic Tables. An accessible picnic area is provided west of the contact station and south of the education pavilion. The rectangular level platform is paved with exposed aggregate concrete that is typical for the entire circulation system within the site. Three accessible picnic tables are provided for visitors.

Flagpole. The flagpole is located along the circulation route southeast of the contact station. It is mounted in a level concrete platform adjacent to the sidewalk. A single bench is provided at the base of the flagpole.

Light Fixtures. Thirteen contemporary light fixtures line the access road, parking lot, and sidewalks at the visitor contact station. The poles are painted black to appear less conspicuous in the landscape.

Archeological Resources

Past Archaeological Investigations and Studies

- Brooke S. Blades, PhD (author), with David G. Orr, PhD, and Paul A. Shackel, PhD (principal investigators), Department of Anthropology, University of Maryland, *An Archeological Overview and Assessment of the Five Forks Unit, Petersburg National Battlefield, Virginia*, 1999.

An archeological overview and assessment of the Five Forks Unit (Dinwiddie County, Virginia) of Petersburg National Battlefield was undertaken by the University of Maryland in 1998. The overview and assessment was initiated under the terms of a cooperative agreement that was supervised by Dr. David Orr and Superintendent Michael Hill of the National Park Service and awarded to Dr. Paul Shackel in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Maryland. Dr. Brooke Blades conducted the background research, directed the field survey, and wrote the final report. Park Historian Chris Calkins and Gail Brown of the University of Maryland Department of Anthropology assisted with the field survey in March 1998.

Management Summary. No prehistoric sites have been located within the Five Forks Unit, but the recovery of projectile points by a local collector and the inventory of identified sites in Dinwiddie County indicate that later Archaic, Woodland, and possibly Paleoindian loci are possible within the boundaries of the unit. The landform configuration of uplands above small tributary streams and stream junctions reinforces the probability of evidence of prehistoric occupation. The historic occupation of the Five

Forks vicinity had commenced by the mid-eighteenth century if not earlier. A mixture of tobacco plantations surrounded the Five Forks junction of three roadways during the late eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. The labor on these plantations was supplied primarily by African American enslaved persons. The Civil War battle of Five Forks on April 1, 1865, intruded upon this rural landscape for only one day, but the impact of the end of the siege of Petersburg was profound. The post-Civil War residents of the Five Forks area sought to maintain the essence of their economic structure despite dramatic social changes.

The configuration of the modern agricultural fields is different from that which existed in 1865, although the overall rural character of the landscape has been maintained. The sites of two farm dwellings that were standing at the time of the battle are located within the unit: the Boisseau/Young farm west of Church Road and the Sydnor farm north of White Oak Road. These farm dwellings probably disappeared during the twentieth century. A third site had evidently burned in 1851 and was called the “Chimneys” at the time of the battle; the site lies northeast of the Sydnor farm. The Gilliam farm dwelling of “Burnt Quarter” was built in the eighteenth century and still stands south of the park, although lands that were once included in the Gilliam farm fall within the boundaries of the park. Several dwellings and other structures that were built after the Civil War remained standing within the Five Forks Unit at the time of the assessment.

- Corey R. Rosentel, Lone Tree Archaeology and Environmental, Inc., *Phase I Archaeological Study Final Report for Installation of a New Visitor Contact Station: Five Forks Unit of Petersburg National Battlefield, Dinwiddie County, Virginia*, 2005.

This report presents the results of an archaeological survey performed by Lone Tree Archaeology and Environmental, Inc., at the Five Forks Unit of Petersburg National Battlefield between December 8 and December 15, 2004. One hundred and ten shovel test pits were excavated for archaeological investigation. No prehistoric artifacts were recovered by this investigation. Two of the shovel test pits contained historic cultural material. Each of these two positive shovel test pits contained a single piece of modern clear bottle glass. Each of these artifacts were noted and discarded in the field.

Management Summary. The purpose of this project was a Phase I archeological survey of the area of possible ground disturbance associated with the installation of a new visitor contact station located at the Five Forks Unit of Petersburg National Battlefield. Following scientific archeological testing to the specifications of the United States Department of the Interior and the Commonwealth of Virginia, no archeological resources were located within the construction project’s Area of Potential Effect (APE). It was suggested that the current planning associated with the development and construction of this visitor contact station would have “no effect” on archeological resources located within the current APE.

- Kerry Schamel-Gonzalez and Bryce Stanley, Dovetail Cultural Resources Group I, Inc., *Archeological Survey of the Five Forks Visitors Center Utility Line, Petersburg National Battlefield, Dinwiddie County, Virginia*, 2008.

On behalf of the National Park Service, Dovetail Cultural Resource Group I, Inc., conducted an archeological survey of the proposed Petersburg National Battlefield utility line within the Five Forks Battlefield in Dinwiddie County, Virginia. The project area began at the NPS boundary line and ran along the northeast side of Courthouses Road for approximately 935 feet, where it terminated adjacent to the visitor contact station construction site. The goals of the work were to determine if any potentially significant archeological deposits were present within the current project area and to make recommendations for further studies if archeological deposits were identified. The work was conducted

from August 11 through August 12, 2008, and consisted of a 100 percent metal detector survey across the project area to identify war-related metal objects.

Management Summary. A total of nine historic artifacts were recovered during the survey. Although these artifacts and their associated location data are a contributing element of a National Register-listed property, the area of effect is very small. The military items recovered from the 100 percent metal detector survey are likely associated with the battle. The data obtained from the current investigation suggests that the project area contains little potential to yield further significant data beyond what has been yielded to date. No further archeological investigation was recommended.

- Julia Steele, *Phase I Archeological Survey for the Road Resurfacing Project and Horse Trailer Parking Loop at Five Forks Battlefield, Petersburg National Battlefield, Dinwiddie County, Virginia, 2009.*

Petersburg National Battlefield proposed to surface an existing farm road at the Five Forks unit in Dinwiddie County, Virginia, with gravel to provide a secure surface for the removal of a dilapidated Post-Civil War Farmhouse, called the Martin House, as part of the plan outlined in the park General Management Plan (2005) to return the battlefield to its 1865 condition. The park decided to conduct a 100 percent metal detector survey on the farm road before the road was constructed as an archeological survey under Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, to assess whether Civil War artifacts were left on the battlefield, or if the field had been heavily metal detected before coming into NPS ownership as reported by many locals. This survey would continue into the new section of road as a Phase 1 survey under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This original section of the road project was completed in April 2009. Construction was not implemented as described in the compliance document: topsoil was stripped to subsoil; subsoil was compacted; gravel crush and run was placed on the excavated road bed; and the surface was finished with a sand-clay-gravel mix that matched the local soil.

Management Summary. Although the artifacts and associated location data are contributing elements to a National Register listed property, the area of effect is comparatively small, given the entire field of battle. The 100 percent metal detector survey preliminarily reported here was noted to have likely recovered a high percentage of the military artifacts associated with the battle. Other artifacts were associated with nineteenth and twentieth century farming activities that occurred on the farm road, in the nearby field, and nearby associated farm structures. The survey noted that no features were identified in the over 1,600 holes excavated to retrieve objects. The data obtained from the current investigation suggests the project area contains little potential to yield further significant data beyond what has been yielded to date. No further archeological investigation was recommended for the road and horse trailer loop. The survey findings noted that if other undertakings are envisioned in the vicinity, additional work should be done to explore the battlefield and farm related activities.

Resource Inventory Table

* Condition ratings are based on the following definitions:

Good: indicates the cultural landscape shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The cultural landscape's historical and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the cultural landscape shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within three to five years to prevent further harm to its historical and/or natural values. The cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the significant characteristics and features of the cultural landscape, if left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, will cause the landscape to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the cultural landscape shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural areas.

Unknown: indicates that not enough information is available to make an evaluation.

Natural Systems and Features

Feature Name Alternate Name	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Intermittent drainages to Hatcher's Run	–	–	By 1865	X	–	–	–	TBD	–
Hatcher's Run	–	–	By 1865	X	–	–	–	TBD	–
Wetlands	–	–	Undetermined	X	–	–	–	TBD	–
Rock outcroppings	–	–	By 1865	X	–	–	–	Good	–

Adjacent Natural Systems and Features

Feature Name <i>Alternate Name</i>	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Pond and associated creek and drainageway	–	–	1963–1981	–	–	–	–	–	–

Spatial Organization

Feature Name <i>Alternate Name</i>	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Five Forks intersection and associated landscape	–	–	By 1865	X	–	–	–	–	–
Open fields	–	–	20th century	–	X	–	–	–	–
Five Forks Battlefield Visitor Contact Station and Maintenance Facility cluster	–	–	2009	–	X	–	–	–	–
Wooded road corridors	–	–	Post-1865	–	X	–	–	–	–
Trail corridors	–	–	Post-1990	–	X	–	–	–	–

Land Use

Feature Name <i>Alternate Name</i>	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Agriculture	–	–	By 1865 and Post-1865	X	–	–	–	–	–
Commemoration	–	–	1961	–	X	–	–	–	–
Interpretation	–	–	1990s	–	X	–	–	–	–
Maintenace Storage	–	–	2009	–	X	–	–	–	–
Recreation	–	–	1990	–	X	–	–	–	–
Timbering	–	–	Post-1865	–	X	–	–	–	–
Transportation	–	–	By 1865	X	–	–	–	–	–
Visitor Services	–	–	2009	–	X	–	–	–	–

Circulation

Feature Name <i>Alternate Name</i>	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Confederate Escape Road trace	–	–	By 1864	X	–	–	Extends north from White Oak Road near park unit's western edge	Fair-Poor	–
Gilliam Field Road segment	–	–	Circa 1770– 1820	X	–	–	Extends north from White Oak Road near park unit's western edge; widened circa 1950s for farming	Fair	–
Wagon road trace	–	–	Circa 1801– 1820	X	–	–	Extends south from White Oak Road near park unit's eastern edge	Fair	–
Tour Stop 1	–	–	1999	–	X	–	Located south of the intersection along the east side of Courthouse Road	Fair to Good	–

Feature Name Alternate Name	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Tour Stop 2	–	–	1999	–	X	–	East of the intersection near the Angle along the north side of White Oak Road	Fair to Good	–
Tour Stop 3/White Oak Road Pull-off	–	–	1999/2009	–	X	–	The pull-off contains a six-car and two-bus lot	Fair to Good	–
Tour Stop 4	–	–	1999	–	X	–	West of the intersection near the Confederate Escape Road Trace south of White Oak Road	Fair to Good	–
Tour Stop 5	–	–	1999	–	X	–	North of the intersection along the east side of Courthouse Road	Fair to Good	–

Feature Name Alternate Name	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Access drive and loop at Steuart Trailhead	–	–	Post-1990	–	X	–	–	Good	–
Parking area at Corse Trailhead	–	–	Post-1990	–	X	–	–	Good	–
Five Forks Visitor Contact Station access road and parking area	–	–	2009	–	X	–	–	Good	–
Visitor contact station walks to building, education pavilion, Devin Trailhead	–	–	2009	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	–
Corse Trail	–	–	Post-1990	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	Management of trails has been minimal in past few year, due to deficits in staff maintenance positions for the park.
Crawford Trail	–	–	Post-1990	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	–

Feature Name Alternate Name	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Ford's Trail	–	–	Post-1990	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	–
Griffin Trail	–	–	Post-1990	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	–
Munford Trail	–	–	Post-1990	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	–
Pegram Trail	–	–	Post-1990	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	–
Pine Rock Trail	–	–	Post-1990	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	–
Steuart Trail	–	–	Post-1990	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	–
Devin Interpretive Trail	–	–	Post-1990	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	–
Winthrop Hike/Bike Trail	–	–	Post-1990	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	–

Adjacent Circulation

Feature Name Alternate Name	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Five Forks intersection (White Oak Road, Courthouse Road/Ford Road/Dinwiddie Court House Road, Wheelers Pond Road)	–	–	1820s–1850s	X	–	–	Crossroads of Butterwood Road and Church Road by circa 1820; White Oak Road (former Butterwood Road), Church (Ford's) Road; Dinwiddie Court House Road (former Church Road); Scott's Road by circa 1850s	Good	–

Feature Name Alternate Name	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Courthouse Road	–	–	Circa 1820s	X	–	–	Paved and widened twentieth century; curve has been made smoother and gentler for vehicular traffic (an abandoned trace section is visible to the west of the current roadway along the curve)	Good	–
White Oak Road	–	–	By circa 1850s	X	–	–	Paved twentieth century; widened late twentieth century	Good	–
Wheelers Pond Road	–	–	By circa 1850s	X	–	–	Paved twentieth century	Good	–
South Side Railroad	–	–	By 1860	–	–	–	Objective of Confederate protection	–	–

Missing Circulation

Feature Name <i>Alternate Name</i>	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Wagon road joining White Oak Road and Dinwiddie Court House Road	–	–	By 1865	–	X	–	–	–	–
Unnamed road extending north from White Oak Road	–	–	circa 1801– 1820	–	X	–	–	–	–
Road extending south from White Oak Road to the Gilliam farm	–	–	By 1865	–	X	–	–	–	–

Topography

Feature Name <i>Alternate Name</i>	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Rolling Piedmont terrain	–	–	By 1865	X	–	–	–	Good	–
Steep drainages	–	–	By 1865	X	–	–	–	Fair to Good	–
Level uplands between drainages	–	–	By 1865	X	–	–	–	Fair to Good	–

Missing Topography

Feature Name <i>Alternate Name</i>	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Confederate rifle pits east of the Angle along White Oak Road	–	–	1865	–	–	X	–	–	–

Vegetation

Feature Name <i>Alternate Name</i>	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Old field successional fields and woodlands	–	–	Post-1865	–	X	–	–	Fair	–
Mixed pine and hardwood forest	–	–	Post-1865	–	X	–	–	Good	–
Pine plantations	–	—	Post-1865		X	–	–	Fair	–
Open grass fields	–	–	Post-1865	–	X	–	–	Fair	–
Trees around the visitor contact station	–	–	2009	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	–
Shrubs and perennial herbaceous flowering plants around the visitor contact station	–	–	2009	–	X	–	–	Fair	–
Meadow mixes around the visitor contact station	–	–	Post-2009	–	X	–	–	Fair	–

Buildings and Structures

Feature Name Alternate Name	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Comfort station	–	–	2009	–	X	–	–	Good	–
Five Forks Battlefield Visitor Contact Station	–	–	2009	–	X	–	–	Good	–
Education pavilion	–	–	2009	–	X	–	–	Good	–
Maintenance building	–	–	2009	–	X	–	–	Good	–
Tobacco barn	–	–	Circa 1920s	–	X	–	On land once part of the Burnt Quarter Plantation	Poor	–
White Oak Road Farm Log Building north of the road	–	–	Undetermined (post period of significance)	–	X	–	–	–	–
White Oak Road Farm Log Building, western section of the property	–	–	Undetermined (post period of significance)	–	X	–	–	–	–
White Oak Road Farm Log Building (partially collapsed),	–	–	Undetermined (post period of significance)	–	X	–	–	–	–

Feature Name Alternate Name	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
western section of the property									
White Oak Road Farm shed (partially collapsed)	–	–	Undetermined (post period of significance)	–	X	–	–	–	–
White Oak Road Farm Barn	–	–	Undetermined (post period of significance)	–	X	–	–	–	–
White Oak Road Farm stone chimney	–	–	Undetermined (post period of significance)	–	X	–	–	–	–
Steuart House	–	–	Circa 1900	–	X	–	–	Poor	–
Confederate breastworks and the Angle	–	–	1865	X	–	–	Surviving elements include forward outpost and linear breastworks	–	–

Adjacent Buildings and Structures

Feature Name Alternate Name	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Burnt Quarter Plantation house	–	–	Present during Civil War	–	–	–	–	–	–
Confederate breastworks and angled eastern end of the line	–	–	1865	X	–	–	–	Poor to Fair	–

Missing Buildings and Structures

Feature Name Alternate Name	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Boisseau/Young property buildings and structures	–	–	Present during Civil War	–	–	X	–	–	–
L. Sydnor property buildings and structures	–	–	Present during Civil War	–	–	X	–	–	–
T. Bass property buildings and structures	–	–	Present during Civil War	–	–	X	–	–	–
Tenant farm with privy, shed, chicken	–	–	Circa 1890– 1920	–	–	X	Removed in 2001	–	–

coop, log tobacco barn									
Store/gun club/visitor contact station	–	–	Circa 1950	–	–	X	–	–	–
Crib barn	–	–	Circa 1950	–	–	X	Damaged by tornado in 2011, later removed	–	–

Views and Vistas

Feature Name <i>Alternate Name</i>	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Five Forks intersection views	–	–	By 1865	X	–	–	–	Good	All views are impacted by changes in vegetation and adjustments or maintenance to the roads.
Views from Tour Stop 1 (north and south along Courthouse Road, woods where Union cavalry assembled)	–	–	1999	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	–
Views from Tour Stop 2 (Confederate earthworks, east and west along White Oak Road)	–	–	1999	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	–
Views from Tour Stop 3 (Five Forks intersection and east and west along White Oak Road, north along Courthouse Road,	–	–	1999	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	–

Feature Name Alternate Name	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
south on Wheelers Pond Road)									
Views from Tour Stop 4 (east and west along White Oak Road)	–	–	1999	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	–
Views from Tour Stop 5 (north and south along Courthouse Road)	–	–	1999	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	–
View north from Five Forks Monument to intersecting roads	–	–	1960s	–	X	–	–	Good	–
View north from White Oak Road to the loop access drive	–	–	1999	–	X	–	–	Good	–

Small-scale Features

Feature Name <i>Alternate Name</i>	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Trail gates	–	–	1999	–	X	–	–	Good	–
Worm or snake fencing	–	–	1999	–	X	–	–	Fair to good	–
National Historic Landmark Monument	–	–	1960s	–	X	–	–	Good	–
Battle of Five Forks monument	–	–	1965	–	X	–	–	Good	–
Mary Ann Roberts gravestone	–	–	1907	–	X	–	–	Fair / threatened by tree trunk	–
Cannon exhibits	–	–	1999	–	X	–	–	Good	–
Tour stop waysides	–	–	1999	–	X	–	—	Poor to Good	–
Visitor contact station waysides	–	–	2009	–	X	–	–	Fair	–
Tour stop numbers	–	–	1999	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	–
Park identity signs	–	–	Circa 1999	–	X	–	–	Good	–

Feature Name <i>Alternate Name</i>	HS No.	CRIS No.	Date of Origin	Contributing	Non- contributing	Missing	Modifications	Condition*	Notes
Directional and informational signs	–	–	Undetermined	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	–
Regulatory signs associated with the roads	–	–	Circa 1945	–	X	–	–	Good	–
Benches	–	–	2009	–	X	–	–	Good	–
Picnic tables	–	–	2009	–	X	–	–	Good	–
Flagpole	–	–	2009	–	X	–	–	Good	–
Lighting fixtures	–	–	2009	–	X	–	–	Good	–
Trail crossings	–	–	1999	–	X	–	–	Good	–
Trail markers	–	–	1999	–	X	–	–	Fair to Good	–