3

early in 1862, as Gen. Ulysses S. Grant tightened

Union pressure on the Army of Northern Virginia in Richmond and

Petersburg, Lee planned for the evacuation of his troops. He determined to march to North Carolina, consolidate his army with Gen. Joseph E. Johnston’s

defeated forces, Gen. William T. Sherman’s army, and then turn on Grant. When the Federals broke through his lines on April 2, Lee put his plan in motion. The divisions of his army were to rendezvous at Amelia Court House, march, and rendezvous at Danville along the Richmond and Danville Railroad.

Little was planned. High water across the Appomattox River delayed the rendezvous, and the anticipated supplies were not at Amelia Court House. Lee lost his last day’s lead over the pursuing Grant while he waited, allowing Federal cavalry and infantry to block his path down the track at Jerusalem. Devaluing not to give battle, Lee turned west and began a series of those counsenvative night marches. Grant’s strategy—to gain Lee from the rear while preventing him from turning south, get the cavalry in front of him, and then surround and compel him to fight or surrender—began to take effect.

Fighting by day and marching by night, Lee’s subordinates and some units staged toward Purnell’s, their next supply station. The column stretched for miles, slowed by a exhaustion and baggage train. At almost every

water source, the men and wagons bagged down and Gen. Philip H. Sheridan’s Union cavalry dashed into Lee’s rear guard. On April 4, the Federals brought Lee to bay at Little Beaver’s Creek, where in three separate engagements about a quarter of the Confederate force was captured or captured, Lee, absorbing the magnitude of the disaster, remarked, “My God, has the army been destroyed!”

The survivors crossed High Bridge, the huge railroad trestle over the Appomattox River and the scene of intense cavalry combat in the day, and made their way to Danville. The next day, as they distributed rations from the trains at the depot, the head of Federal cavalry was seen coming from the rear. Lee also learned that Union infinities had succeeded in capturing the Appomattox in a small wagon bridge below High Bridge and were threatening his line of march. He sent his troops across to the river to dig in around Danville and cut off Union pouches.

Beginning what would be their last night march on April 5, Lee’s men headed for the next destination, Appomattox Station on the South Side Railroad, where supplies were available. Grant was waiting for the Federals to join him, and when they arrived, the army would continue to the station and the supplies and positioned itself between Lee and his next objective. With Federal infantry chasing in behind him, Lee ordered a breakout attempt for the next morning. April 6, Gen. Lee hit the attack with a combined force of cavalry and infantry and fought his way to “a finale.” The cavalrymen cut through their Federal counterparts and escaped, but then huge numbers of Union infantry arrived in support. Gen. Purnell reported to Lee that it was no use. Flag of truce broke out. The third day of pursuit, and that afternoon, in the little village of Appomattox Court House, the war in Virginia came to an end.

WILSON-KAUTZ RAID

The late spring 1864, Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant ordered Gen. August V. Kautz to begin their railroad raid on April 6. The Confederates, General-in-Chief, United States Forces (www.virginiacivilwar.org)

NORTHERN VIRGINIA

This guide highlights Civil War sites where you will discover the epic stories and civilian and military stories at more than 1,400 Civil War sites.

Civil War Trail sites are found throughout Virginia. Lynchburg was saved, and Early was free to execute his plan of escape at Appomattox Court House on April 9. The Army of

Northern Virginia was surrendered that afternoon. of escape at Appomattox Court House on April 9. The Army of

Northern Virginia was surrendered that afternoon. Northern Virginia marched before the Army of the Potomac and the James. Robert E. Lee, commanding the Army of Northern Virginia, accepted the inevitable, saying, “There is nothing left but to go out and surrender.”

Lee and Grant met not in the village residences of Wilmer McLean—who had moved there to escape the war after the First Battle of Bull Run—nor around his Northern Virginia home—to sign the surrender documents. The homes of Lee’s Army formally laid down their weapons and flags over the next few days. On April 12, it was the infantry’s turn. Gen. J. E. Johnston led the depleted crowds up the hill to the village, Gen. Douglas Southward ordered the ceremony, ordered his troops to salute as the Confederates approached. Gen. Gordon recited, “Honour antetating hosts...” or Chamberlain’s Hymn, and then the Army of Northern Virginia passed into history.

APPOMATTOX

Lee’s Retreat

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WILSON-KAUTZ RAIL

A Lee’s Retreat

The final campaigns

APPOMATTOX

On June 22, the Union cavalrymen

about a week

Douglass, who had successfully competed

For detailed travel information, visit Danville Museum of Virginia

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