

## Battle of Little Sailor's Creek

During the early days of April 1865, Grant and Lee were maneuvering their forces in and around the City of Petersburg and through Amelia County heading towards Farmville, and ultimately towards Appomattox. Lee was heading towards Amelia Court House for the supply train that would replenish his ammunition at the very least. Grants' army was looking to get in front of them. Both sides clashed along the way at places like Namozine Church and Deep Creek; however Grant's army gained the train station and began to fortify against Lee.

Lee had a tough decision to make – should he stand and fight or not? Because his army was fairly fresh, there was agreement amongst his generals that he should stand and fight. But, Lee's plan was to head straight for Farmville where trainloads of rations had been sent by the Confederate Commissary. So, on April 5<sup>th</sup>, the Confederate Army began an all night march towards Farmville.

On a drizzly April 6<sup>th</sup> morning, the Union Army in Jetersville watched the rearguard of Lee's army moving along the top of a high ridge and began their chase. Generals Phillip Sheridan and Horatio Wright moved their troops to try to intercept the Confederates along the many small roads through the area. Where the main road crossed Little Sailor's Creek, the armies met at what is collectively known as the Battles of Little Sailor's Creek.



“Making their stand about 5:30 p.m. on the evening of April 6th, General Ewell would hold the high ground on the south bank of the creek, while Wright formed his artillery and men on the north around the Hillsman house. After a thirty minute bombardment on the rebel line, two divisions of close to 7,000 men crossed over the creek and assaulted the heights. Because of the ground configuration, one division met the enemy before the other was able to come up. A rapid rebel volley sent a portion of this line

falling back to the stream. Over jubilant with their success, the Southerners jumped over their crude works and went into hand to hand combat with their adversaries. A few rounds of canister from across Sailor's Creek quickly sent them scurrying back to their lines.

By this time all the Federals were in place and ready for another assault, moving back up the slope. After more deadly combat, the Yankees enveloped both flanks of General Richard Stoddart Ewell's position as white flags began going up among the Confederates. Close to 3,400 men would surrender.”<sup>1</sup>

Lee decided to ride back to Big Sailor's Creek to see where the rest of his army was. Seeing how few men were left, his comment has been widely quoted as, “My God! Has the army been dissolved?” He had lost almost 25% of his men in the three engagements.

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<sup>1</sup> The Fox and Hound: On the Road to Appomattox by Chris Calkins, Sailor's Creek Battlefield Historical State Park