

WILLCOX'S LANDING



Crossing the James



LEE VS. GRANT – THE 1864 CAMPAIGN



WILLCOX'S LANDING The only known photograph of the wharf area taken during the crossing. Beginning June 14, Hancock's II, Warren's V and part of Wright's VI Corps boarded vessels and were transported across the river to Windmill Point.

With the Federal armies stalled at Cold Harbor, Gen. U.S. Grant made the fateful decision to move on Petersburg. The march began under cover of darkness on the evening of June 12, 1864, and covered some 20 miles before reaching the James River crossings. From June 14 to 17 – here at Willcox's landing and three miles downstream at Weyanoke

Point – the Army of the Potomac along with artillery and several thousand supply wagons moved south of the James. It was one of the few times a Union commander had managed to outmaneuver Confederate commander Gen. Robert E. Lee. The crossing supported a simultaneous advance and attack on Petersburg, one that nearly ended the war.



Grant's movement across the James River caught Lee unaware. While the Federal army marched toward Petersburg, Lee's Confederate forces kept guard against a possible advance toward Richmond.

Dr. Willcox's House, Tuesday, June 14: "Our tents are pitched on the south side of the house under a number of fine old locust trees. We have a fine grass field in our front, and a view of the James River in the distance. Dr. Willcox's house stands about half a mile back from the river, and a couple of hundred yards from the road. For Virginia it is a good house, and in quite decent order outside and around. I have not been in it myself though they say that the doctor's daughter, a married woman, is very agreeable." – Col. Charles Wainwright, Commander U.S. V Corps Artillery



ENGINEERING MARVEL The bridge at Weyanoke Point measured 2,100 feet and contained 101 wooden pontoon boats. Engineers and construction crews began work from opposite shores the evening of June 14 and completed their task in less than eight hours. For three days a steady parade of infantry, artillery and wagons worked its way across the river. End-to-end, the Federal supply train stretched an incredible 35 miles.