

# NATURAL BRIDGE



## Time Out for Touring



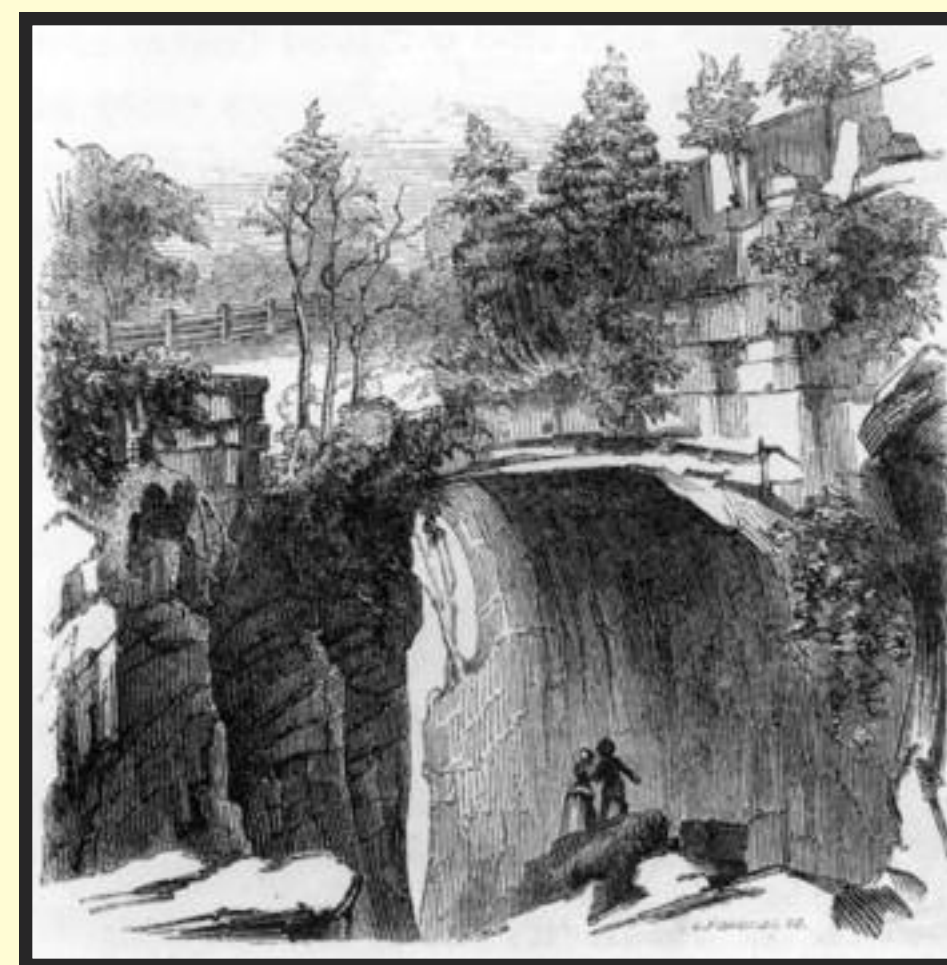
CivilWarTrails.org

### HUNTER'S RAID

On May 26, 1864, Union Gen. David Hunter marched south from Cedar Creek near Winchester to drive out Confederate forces, lay waste to the Shenandoah Valley, and destroy transportation facilities at Lynchburg. His raid was part of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's strategy to attack Confederates simultaneously throughout Virginia. After defeating Gen. William E. "Grumble" Jones at Piedmont on June 5, Hunter marched to Lexington, burned Virginia Military Institute, and headed to Lynchburg. There, on June 17–18, Gen. Jubal A. Early repulsed Hunter and pursued him to West Virginia. Early then turned north in July to threaten Washington.

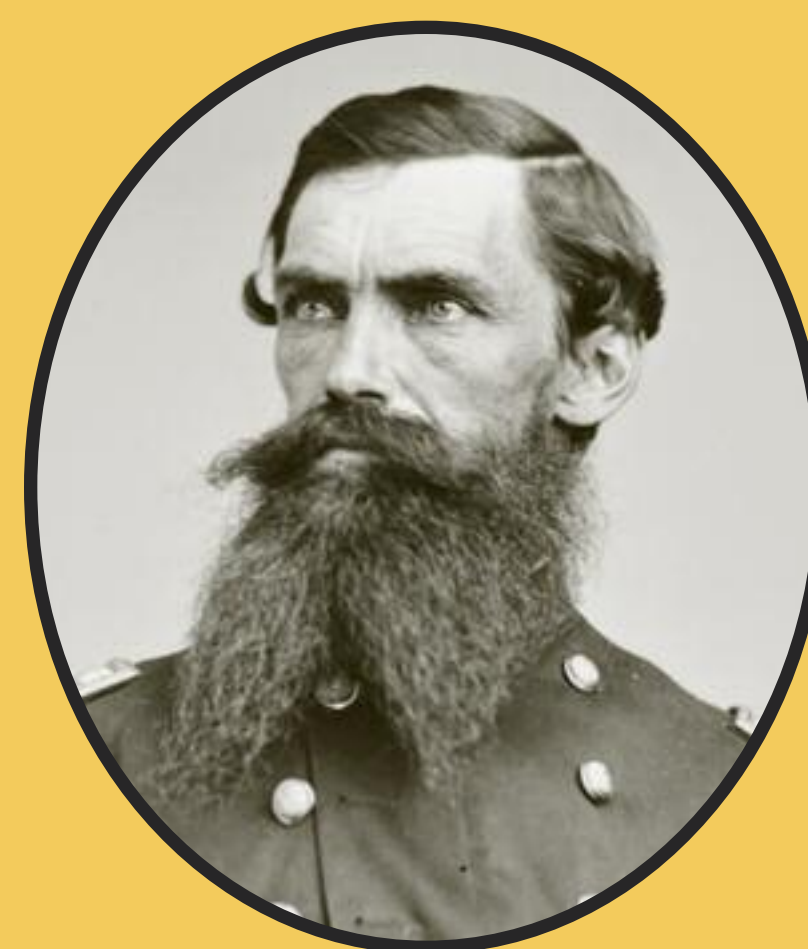
On June 14, 1864, Union Gen. David Hunter's army marched near here en route from Lexington to Lynchburg. Union Col. David Hunter Strother wrote, *"We passed within three miles of the Natural Bridge. Officers were much disappointed by not being able to see it. Lieutenant Meigs and some others did go by that road."*

After Hunter's attack on Lynchburg was repulsed June 17-18, Confederate troops passing through this area wanted to view Natural Bridge. Assistant Surgeon Thomas



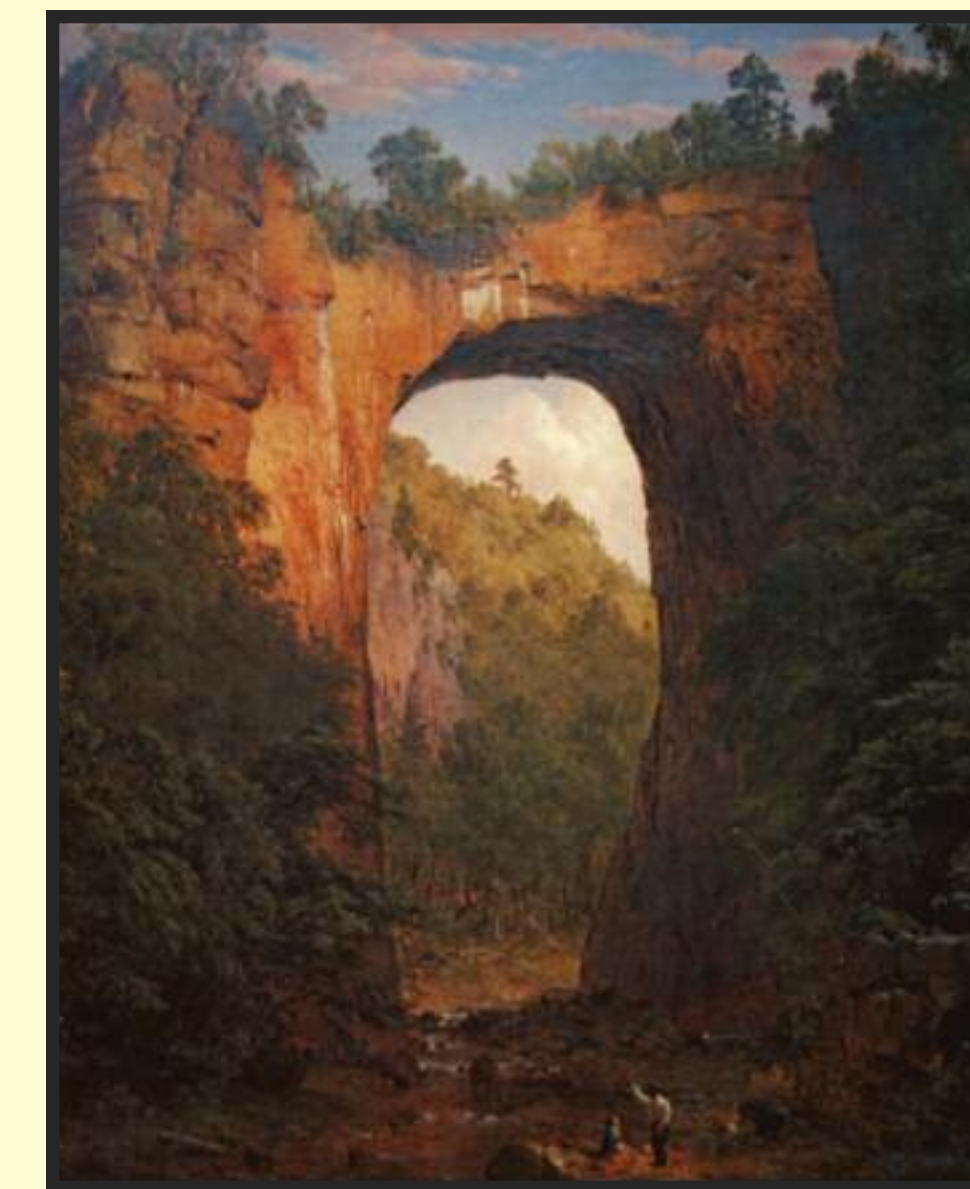
**"View from the Cliff," by Strother, showing top of Natural Bridge arch, from *Virginia Illustrated* (1871)**

Fanning Wood of the 3rd North Carolina Infantry later wrote in his memoirs, *"On the 23rd started on the march towards Lexington, and on the same day I got permission to visit or go by the Natural Bridge. ... We had pointed out to us the letters G. Washington carved in the stone, which were once quite plain, but time has nearly effaced the last vestige of them. ... The story was that George Washington had climbed this ledge to the top. None of us tried this experiment, but we learned that Henry MacRae [of the regiment] ... climbed to a very dangerous point, and finding he could not get to the top had to be rescued by a rope let down from above."*



David Hunter Strother, artist and illustrator, was born in Martinsburg, Va. (now W.Va.) on Sept. 16, 1816. He studied art in Philadelphia and New York then toured the American West and Europe. Under the pen name Porte Crayon, he gained fame in the 1850s for his illustrations for *Harper's Magazine* and his books, including *Virginia Illustrated*. He served in the U.S. Army as an officer during the Civil War and as consul-general to Mexico (1879–1885). He died in Charleston, W.Va., on Mar. 8, 1888.

*Courtesy U.S. Army Military History Institute*



**"Natural Bridge, Virginia," 1852, by Frederick Edwin Church  
*University of Virginia Art Museum***

Natural Bridge, once owned by Thomas Jefferson, was one of the nation's first tourist destinations, heavily visited during the 18th and 19th centuries by travelers from all over the world. Many explored the countryside around the bridge on horseback or in horse-drawn carriages. The braver guests were lowered over the edge from the top of the bridge in a hexagonal steel cage while a violinist played. During the Civil War, Union and Confederate officers and soldiers visited Virginia's Natural Bridge and recorded their impressions in letters, diaries, and memoirs.

