

### The Site and Cemetery

Antietam National Battlefield Site, established by act of Congress in 1890, consists of more than 183 acres of avenues, monument plots, and farm lands, including the notable landmarks known as East Woods, West Woods, the site of the Dunkard Church, Bloody Lane, and Burnside Bridge. Battlefield exhibits, consisting of a wartime map showing battle action and an explanatory statement, are located at key points of interest. Outlying markers associated with the battlefield and under the supervision of the National Park Service are those pertaining to the battle of South Mountain in Turners, Fox's, and Cramptons Passes, and at Harpers Ferry and Blackford's Ford.

Antietam National Cemetery is the burial place of Federal dead largely from the battles of Antietam and South Mountain. Of the 4,773 burials of the War Between the States, 1,836 are unidentified. The total burials, including those of recent wars, is 4,908.

### How To Reach the Site

Antietam National Battlefield Site may be reached over State Route 34, connecting

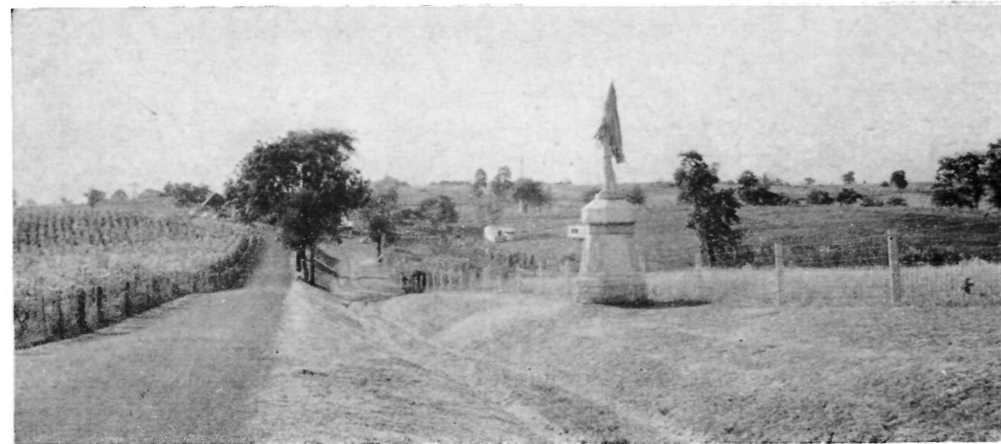
with U. S. No. 40 at Boonsboro and over State Route 65, connecting with U. S. No. 40 at Hagerstown. From the south, Route 45 from Martinsburg and Route 48 from Kearneysville lead directly to the site. Those traveling on U. S. No. 340 may reach the site via State Routes 9 and 48 from Charles Town, W. Va.

### Facilities for Visitors

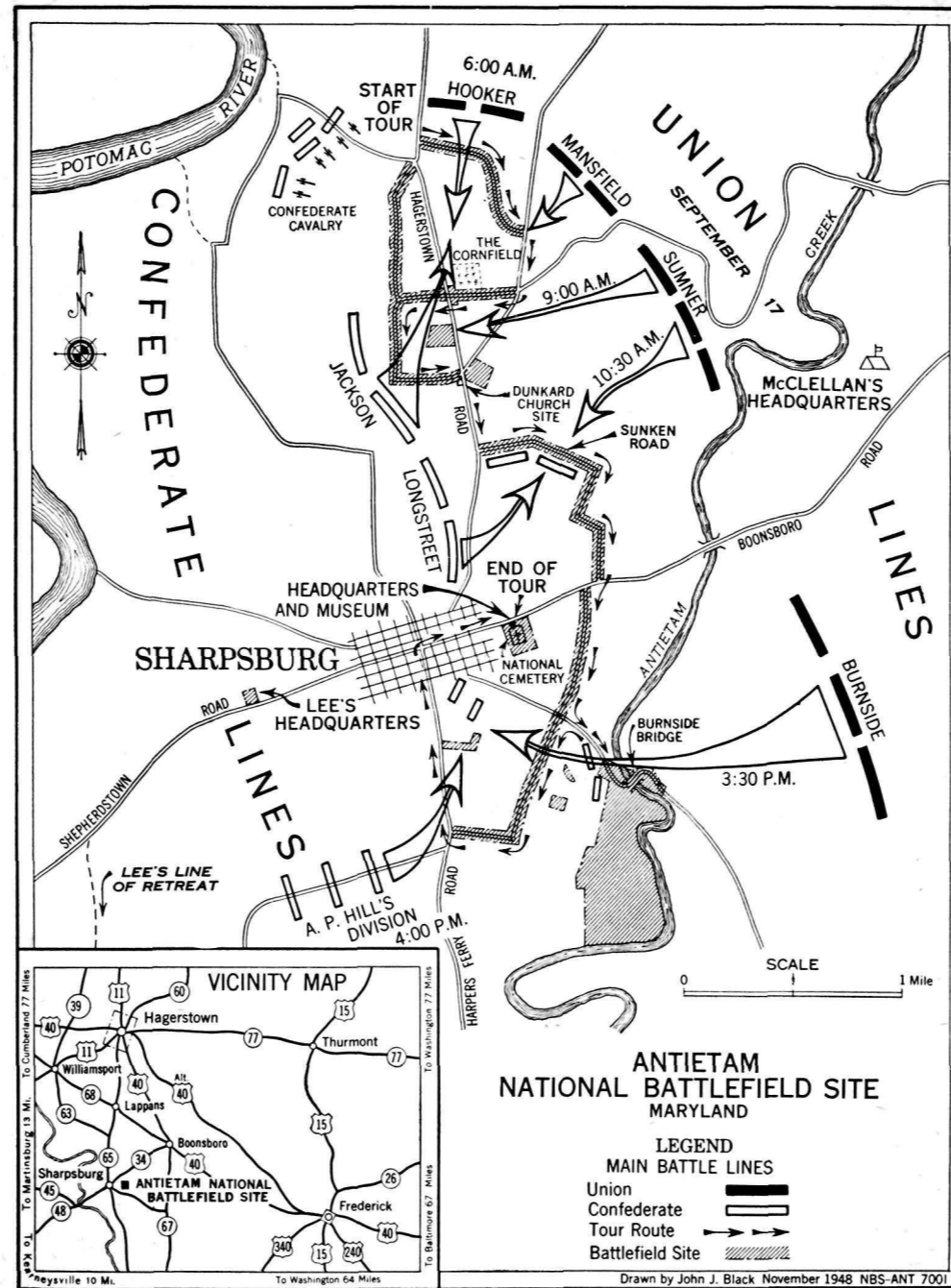
In the administration building, situated at the entrance to the national cemetery, a library and a free museum are open daily, 8 a. m. to 5 p. m. Organizations and groups are given special service if arrangements are made in advance with the superintendent.

### Administration

Antietam National Battlefield Site is one of the historical, scenic, and scientific areas administered by the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior for the benefit and inspiration of the American people. Communications should be addressed to the Superintendent, Antietam National Battlefield Site, Sharpsburg, Md.



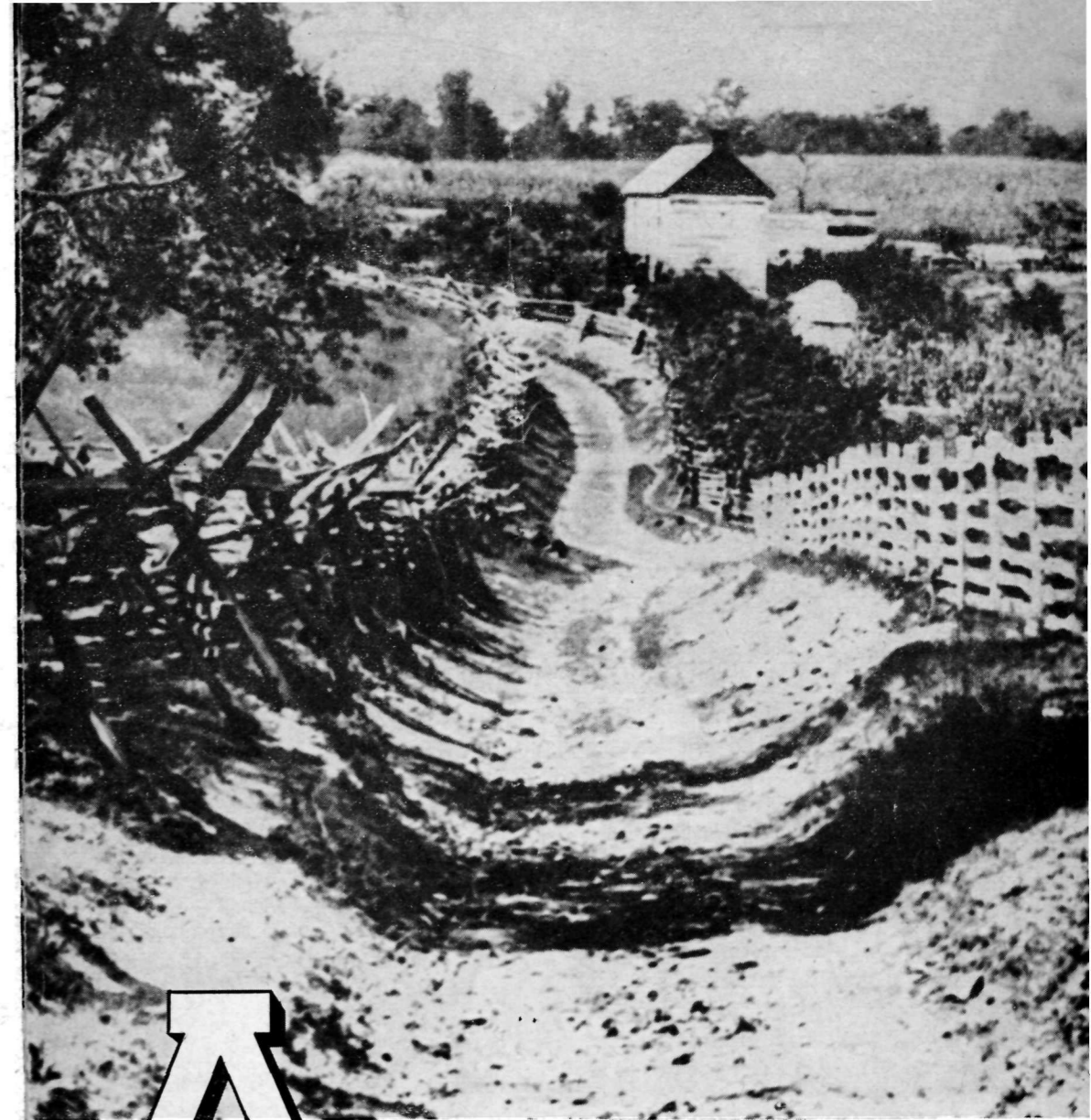
Bloody Lane today. This photograph is taken from almost the same angle as the picture on the cover.



Reprint 1953

Cover: Bloody Lane as it appeared shortly after the Civil War.

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1953



**Antietam**  
**NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD SITE**

**Maryland**



# ANTIETAM

## National Battlefield Site

United States Department of the Interior

OSCAR L. CHAPMAN, *Secretary*

National Park Service

CONRAD L. WIRTH, *Director*

*Antietam ended Lee's first invasion of the North, postponed indefinitely England's threatened recognition of the Confederacy, and gave Lincoln the opportunity to issue his Emancipation Proclamation.*

THE battle of Antietam, September 17, 1862, greatly affected the course of the American Civil War. Lee's failure to carry the war effectively into the Northern States or even to maintain himself in Maryland, together with the almost simultaneous repulse of Bragg's invasion of Kentucky, caused Great Britain to postpone recognition of the Confederate Government. Probably the greatest significance of Antietam in American history, therefore, lies in the fact that if Lee had won a decisive victory it might have foreshadowed the final independence of the Confederacy. When Lee turned back into Virginia, the best, if not the last, chance of foreign intervention vanished.

Of almost equal consequence on the future course of the war was the long awaited opportunity given President Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. On September 22, 1862, 5 days after the favorable issue to the Federal cause of the bloody battle of Antietam, Lincoln issued his preliminary proclamation which warned the South that on January 1, 1863,

he would declare free all slaves in territory still resisting the Union. Henceforth, the purpose of the war broadened. It now had two purposes: to preserve the Union and to end slavery.

### The Maryland Campaign and the Battle of Antietam

The Battle of Antietam, or Sharpsburg, September 17, 1862, was the culmination of the first of two eastern attempts on the part of the Confederacy to carry the war into northern territory. About 41,000 Confederates under the command of Gen. Robert E. Lee were pitted against 87,000 Federals under Gen. George B. McClellan.

Following the decisive victory at the Second Battle of Manassas, or Bull Run, August 28-30, 1862, Lee decided to invade northern territory before his adversaries could recover from this disastrous defeat. He hoped to take advantage of the rich supplies which Maryland would make available for his army, and he believed that the State would rally to the Confederate cause, helping to fill his depleted ranks.

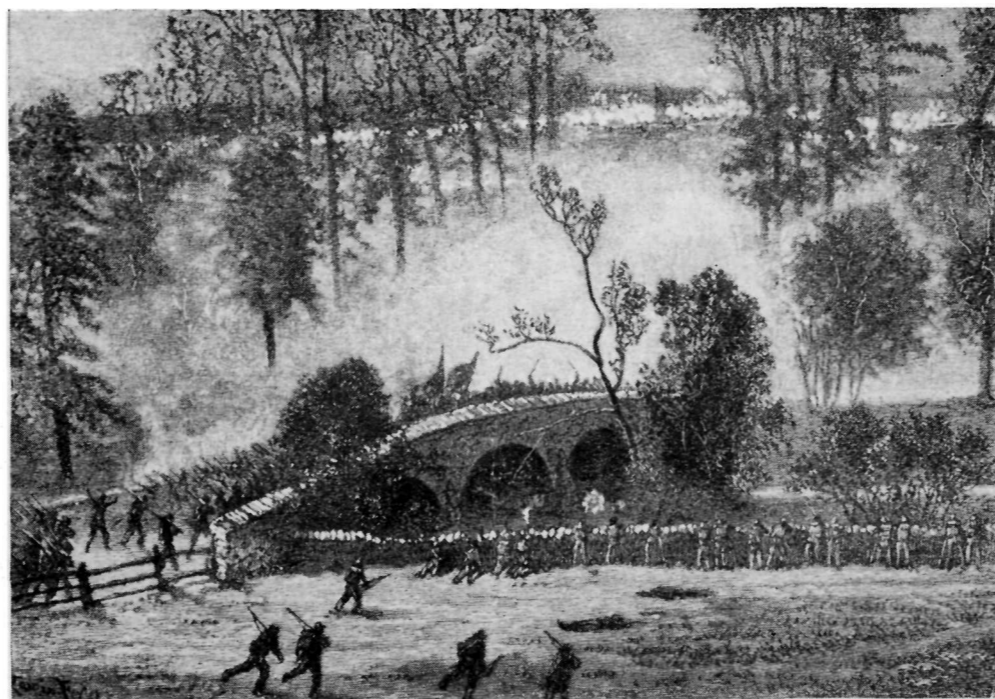
McClellan, again in command of the reorganized Federal Army, followed Lee into Maryland, first to Frederick, then westward to the passes of South Mountain. Here, on September 14, Lee attempted to block the passage of the Federal Army, but after a struggle, which ended at nightfall, the Federals forced their way through three mountain gaps. McClellan, at South Mountain, had taken the initiative from Lee, but his failure to relieve the Union garrison at Harpers Ferry enabled Gen. "Stonewall" Jackson to invest it. On the following morning, that place was surrendered to the Confederates.

Lee moved on westward. Finding that McClellan was in pursuit, Lee crossed Antietam Creek and began consolidating his position on the high ground to the west, with the center of his line at the town of Sharpsburg. General Longstreet's wing was placed in position extending

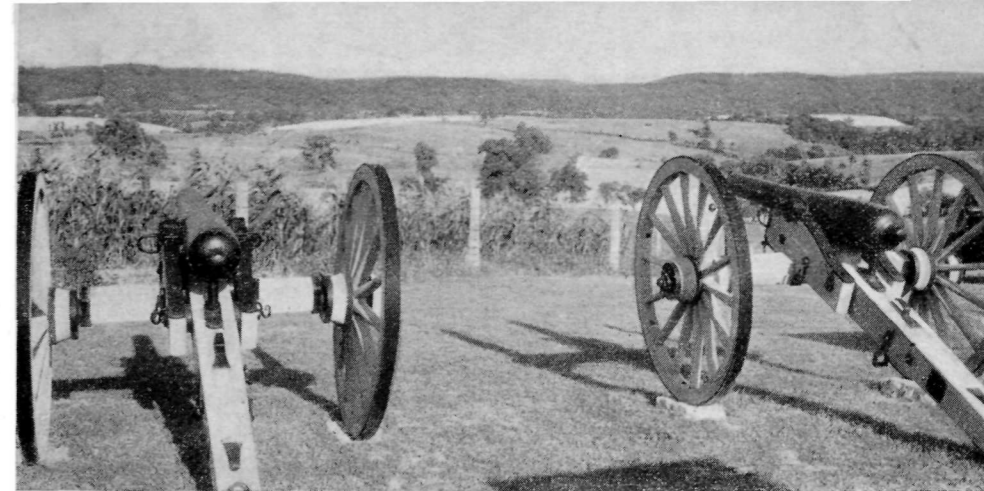
southward and northward through the town, with Jackson's veterans extending the line to the north. A large part of the Confederate forces had gone ahead to capture Harpers Ferry.

On September 15, McClellan had practically his entire command within a few miles of Antietam Creek where Lee had taken his position with only about one-half of the Confederate forces. Yet he moved so slowly that it was late on the afternoon of the 16th before the Federal Army corps of Hooker crossed the Upper Bridge. The day ended with a light interchange of infantry and artillery fire which continued until long after nightfall.

At dawn on the 17th, Hooker's artillery opened fire on Jackson's troops posted in a cornfield north of the town of Sharpsburg. Hooker reported: "In the time I am writing every stalk of corn in the northern and greater part of the field was cut as closely



*The charge across the Burnside Bridge. From a sketch made at the time.*



*Confederate Battery Position, Harpers Ferry Road and Branch Avenue.*

as could have been done with a knife, and the slain lay in rows precisely as they had stood in their ranks a few moments before." Hooker's troops advanced, driving the Confederates before them, and Jackson reported that his men were "exposed for near an hour to a terrific storm of shell, canister, and musketry."

About 6 o'clock in the morning, Jackson was reinforced and succeeded in driving the Federals back. An hour later Federal reinforcements regained some of the lost ground, and by 9 o'clock they had gained the woods in the vicinity of the Dunkard Church. A Federal corps, commanded by Sumner, arrived from the east, but one of its divisions marched into a pocket of 10 Confederate brigades and lost some 2,000 men in 20 minutes. Part of Sumner's corps came upon Confederates posted along an old sunken road, now known as Bloody Lane. A desperate conflict ensued until sheer exhaustion of the men on both sides brought an end to the struggle in the northern area of battle.

South of the town, the 2d and 20th Georgia Regiments of General Toombs' brigade and the 50th Georgia of Drayton's brigade stood guard at a bridge over Antietam Creek. General Burnside was

ordered to cross, and early in the afternoon he moved to attack. Successfully crossing the bridge, now known as Burnside Bridge, the Federals were driving the greatly outnumbered Confederates to the streets of Sharpsburg when a dramatic turn of events changed the fortunes of battle. A. P. Hill's "Light Division" arrived from Harpers Ferry and immediately entered the struggle, driving the Federals back to the heights near the bridge they had just taken. The Battle of Antietam was over.

Throughout the day of September 18, the armies faced each other without further fighting. That night Lee withdrew his army to the Potomac at Blackford's Ford and crossed into Virginia. Neither side had gained a decisive victory, but Lee had been turned back in his first attempt to invade the North.

More men were killed and wounded at Antietam on September 17, it is said, than on any other single day of battle during the war. Federal losses in killed and wounded were 12,410, or 15.4 percent of those engaged; Confederate losses in killed and wounded were 10,700, or 26.1 percent of those engaged.