

ABOUT YOUR VISIT

The National Battlefield Site lies north and east of Sharpsburg, along Md. 34 and 65. Both routes intersect either U.S. 40 or 40A and Int. 70. The visitor center is north of town on Md. 65. Please check with the park staff for days and hours of operation, and for information on facilities and the auto tour route.

There are also interpretive markers at Turner's, Fox's, and Crampton Gaps on South Mountain, scenes of preliminary fighting, and at the Shepherdstown (W.Va.) Ford.

Federal regulations prohibit hunting and removing or disturbing any relics. Fishing is permitted in Antietam Creek. There is a picnic area but camping or fires are not allowed in the park. A walk-in tent campground is available on the C & O Canal, 5 miles away.

ADMINISTRATION

Antietam National Battlefield Site is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Box 158, Sharpsburg, MD 21782, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources." The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.

National Park Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE IS NOT FINANCIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SAFETY.



National Parks Centennial 1872-1972

The Battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862, greatly altered the course of the Civil War. Robert E. Lee's failure to carry the war effort effectively into the North caused Great Britain to postpone recognition of the Confederate Government. Of almost equal importance was the long-awaited opportunity given President Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. Five days after the Federal victory, Lincoln issued his preliminary proclamation which warned the South that on January 1, 1863, he would declare free all slaves in territory still in rebellion against the United States. Henceforth, the war would have a dual purpose: To preserve the Union and to end slavery.

Antietam climaxed the first of Lee's two attempts to carry the war into the North. After a great victory at Manassas in August 1862, Lee headed for Maryland, hoping to find vitally needed men and supplies. Some 41,000 Confederates were pitted against 87,000 Federals under George B. McClellan, once more in command of the Army of the Potomac. McClellan followed Lee into Maryland, first to Frederick, then westward to the passes of South Mountain.

Here Lee tried to block the Federal Army, but McClellan forced the gaps. Lee moved on westward. Finding that McClellan was in pursuit, Lee crossed Antietam Creek and consolidated his position on the high ground to the west, with his center near Sharpsburg. By September 15 McClellan had most of his command within a few miles of the creek, while half of Lee's army was still in Harpers Ferry.

The battle opened at dawn on the 17th as Hooker's artillery began a murderous fire on "Stonewall" Jackson's troops posted in a cornfield north of town. The battle raged southward all day—from the North Woods, through the Cornfield, the East Woods, the West Woods, past "Bloody Lane" and Burnside Bridge, to the hills below Sharpsburg where at last it ended. The timely arrival of A. P. Hill's division stopped the final Union assault just short of victory. Neither side had gained the upper hand, but Lee was turned back into Virginia. Losses on both sides were staggering: 12,410 Federals were killed or wounded (15 percent of those engaged) and 10,700 Confederates (26 percent of those engaged).

WARTIME PHOTO OF THE DUNKARD CHURCH.



THE CHARGE ACROSS BURNSIDE BRIDGE.

AUTO TOUR OF THE BATTLEFIELD

The battle was fought over an area of 12 square miles. The site today consists of 787 acres and some 8 miles of paved roads. The exhibits and an 18-minute slide program at the visitor center help tell the story of the Antietam Campaign. These should be viewed before taking the tour. For an unhurried visit to the main points of interest, follow the tour outlined below. If you begin at the visitor center, your first stop will be at the Dunkard Church, just across the Hagerstown Road.

1. **Dunkard Church.** This church, reconstructed on the original site, was the scene of repeated clashes as both armies sought to hold the high ground on which it stood.

2. **Joseph Poffenberger Farm.** Hooker launched the initial Union attack from this point, behind the North Woods. At dawn, 8,000 men of the I Corps swept forward—and were stopped by Jackson's troops in the Cornfield, one-half mile south.

3. **East Woods.** Here Gen. Joseph Mansfield was fatally wounded as he led the XII Corps into battle. One division moved to Hooker's aid in the Cornfield; the other met the determined Confederates in the woods.

4. **The Cornfield.** More fighting took place here in the Miller cornfield than in any other area at Antietam. Early that morning, four Union divisions attacked, and four Confederate divisions counter-attacked—without pause. The line of battle swept back and forth across this field 15 times.

5. **West Woods.** Gen. John Sedgwick's division lost more than 2,200 men in one-half hour in an ill-fated charge into these woods. Arriving at the same time, two of Jackson's divisions cut them down with a withering crossfire.

6. **Bloody Lane.** For 3 hours, Confederate infantry contested this sunken road pointblank with French's and Richardson's Union divisions—producing 4,000 casualties and rightfully earning its name.

7. **Burnside Bridge.** Named after the Union general whose four divisions were held off all morning by a few hundred Georgia riflemen, this bridge—and the Union failure here—was a key factor in McClellan's lack of success at Antietam. Possibly the battlefield's best known landmark, the bridge dates from 1836.

8. **Hawkins Zouaves Monument.** This monument marks the site where the battle ended at dusk. Here A. P. Hill's division battered Burnside's final drive to a standstill. Now accessible only by foot, the area offers a splendid view of the pastoral Antietam valley.

9. **Antietam National Cemetery.** The remains of 4,776 Federal soldiers, including 1,836 unknown, are buried in this cemetery, located on a hilltop at the eastern edge of town. Most of the Confederate dead were buried at Hagerstown, Md., and Shepherdstown, W. Va.

