



Foundation Document Overview

Monocacy National Battlefield

Maryland



Contact Information

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Purpose



The purpose of MONOCACY NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD is to preserve the breastworks, earthworks, walls, and other defenses and shelters used by the Confederate and Union armies on July 9, 1864, as well as the buildings, roads, and outlines of the battlefield; to commemorate the Battle of Monocacy; and to provide opportunities for visitors to understand and appreciate the significance of the Battle of Monocacy within the full context of the Civil War and US history.

Significance

Significance statements express why Monocacy National Battlefield resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- On July 9, 1864, the Battle of Monocacy, where a small Union army successfully delayed a larger Confederate army's advance on Washington, DC, provided sufficient time for General Ulysses S. Grant to send federal reinforcements to the United States capital, preventing its capture and saving Washington.
- This Confederate campaign, its third and final attempt to bring the war to the North, was also designed to divert pressure from General Robert E. Lee's besieged army at Petersburg, Virginia, and to lessen President Abraham Lincoln's chances for reelection.
- Other important events of the Civil War associated with Monocacy include the 1862 Maryland Campaign and finding of General Robert E. Lee's Special Orders 191, which outlined his plan of attack, and the August 1864 meeting of Generals Grant and Sheridan at the Thomas House to plan the Shenandoah Valley Campaign.
- Monocacy National Battlefield protects a crossroads where visitors can experience rural landscapes, historic structures, and transportation corridors that have changed little since the Civil War, and provides opportunities for understanding the history of life in Western Maryland within the broader context of US history.
- Established in 1794 by refugees from the Saint-Domingue (Haitian) slave rebellion, L'Hermitage, also known as the Best Farm, contains the intact archeological record of one of the largest known slave village sites in Maryland, providing unique insights into the lives of enslaved people north of the Potomac River.



Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Battlefield Landscape**
- **Historic Structures**
- **Archeological Resources**
- **Museum Collections**
- **Views and Vistas**
- **Commemorative Atmosphere**

Monocacy National Battlefield contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **Natural Communities**
- **Appropriate Recreational Opportunities**



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- The defeat of Union forces at the Battle of Monocacy prevented a successful attack on the US capital by the Confederate Army during its third and last offensive in the North.
- By virtue of its crossroads location, Monocacy Junction was the site of many important events related to American history.
- The events and issues relevant to the Civil War in Maryland are revealed in the natural, historical, and geographical elements that compose the Monocacy Battlefield landscape.
- The Battle of Monocacy, fought in a border state, revealed the divided loyalties of Maryland citizens relative to the Civil War.
- Confederate General Jubal Early's tactical success at Monocacy ironically resulted in a strategic loss by failing to capture the US capital and by enhancing President Lincoln's popularity, which had been declining shortly before the presidential election.
- After the Confederate victory at Monocacy, a Union campaign was initiated to bring total destruction on the Shenandoah Valley, end the war by any means necessary, and gradually force the Confederates back to Petersburg.
- The commemorative efforts of Civil War veterans in the early 1900s served as a focal point for memorializing those who fought in the Battle of Monocacy and also helped to foster reconciliation between North and South. Monocacy National Battlefield continues to commemorate and memorialize those events within the broader context of the Civil War.
- As a unit of the national park system and one of America's treasures, Monocacy National Battlefield preserves a natural landscape that provides opportunities for understanding, engaging in, and promoting environmental stewardship within and outside park boundaries.
- Located in western Maryland, a border state where slavery was legal, the farmsteads within the park provide connections to the lives of enslaved people who lived and worked there, and fought for their freedom before, during, and after the Civil War.

Description

Known as the “battle that saved Washington,” the Battle of Monocacy was fought on July 9, 1864, as a small Union force delayed a Confederate advance on the nation’s capital at Monocacy Junction in Western Maryland. This provided time for Union reinforcement to be moved into fortifications at Washington and successfully defend the capital. Today, Monocacy National Battlefield covers more than 1,600 acres, preserving this historic landscape for future generations.

Monocacy National Battlefield is located approximately three miles south of Frederick, the second largest city in Maryland, and near the fast growing Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. Roughly two miles of the Monocacy River run through the battlefield. The CSX railroad line (historic Baltimore & Ohio Railroad) also extends through the battlefield, paralleling the Monocacy River and Bush Creek. The historic Urbana Pike (Route 355) runs north-south through the eastern part of the battlefield. These transportation corridors made Monocacy Junction an important crossroads and strategic location during the Civil War and influenced troop movements during the battle.

The core battlefield consists of six historic properties, the Best Farm (L’Hermitage), the Worthington Farm, the Thomas Farm, the Baker Farm, the Lewis Farm, and the Gambrill Mill. Many of the historic structures on these farmsteads existed at the time of the battle. The rural fields and farmsteads retain a high level of historic integrity and provide an evocative backdrop for visitors to understand and reflect on the historic events of the Civil War that unfolded on this tranquil landscape.

Monocacy National Battlefield continues to preserve the site of this significant Civil War battle, honors those who fought on this landscape, and works collaboratively with surrounding communities on the stewardship of park resources.

