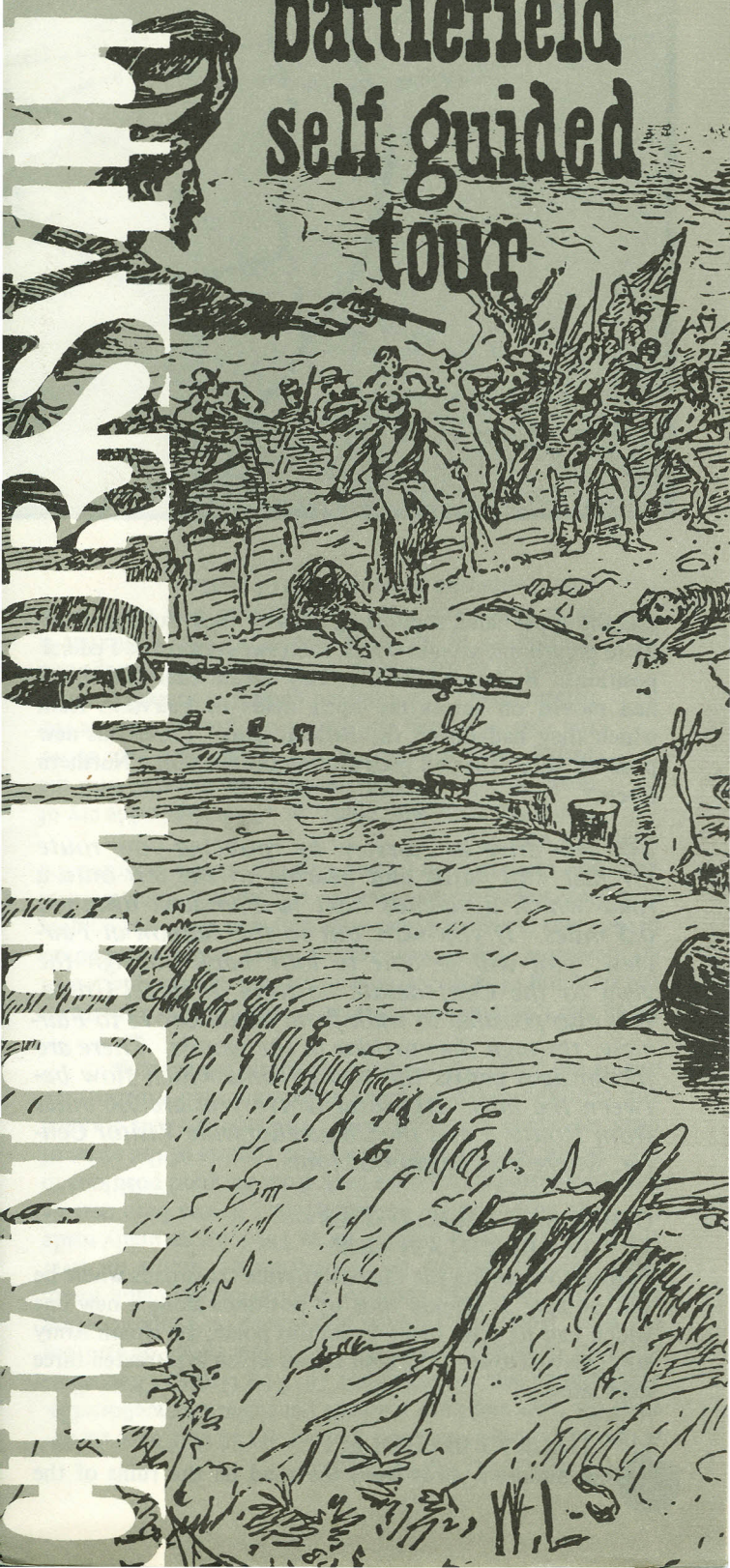


THE
WALK
TO
THE
BATTLEFIELD
OF
GETTYSBURG

battlefield self guided tour





CHANCELLORSVILLE INN

For more than two centuries, a large piece of Central Virginia countryside just below the Rapidan River, covered with a tangled growth of vegetation, has been known locally as the Wilderness of Spotsylvania. This desolate and infertile region seemed an unlikely site for any important event. Suddenly, however, it acquired military importance during the American Civil War because of its location midway between Richmond and Washington, the contending capital cities. Three major battles were fought in this inhospitable region, including one in the spring of 1863 which resulted in the amazing Confederate success that has come to be known as Lee's greatest victory —Chancellorsville. This Confederate victory opened the way for the invasion of Northern territory which culminated in the battle of Gettysburg.

This booklet will guide you around the Chancellorsville Battlefield and help you to understand what happened here more than a century ago.

YOUR TOUR

The battlefield park at Chancellorsville consists of only a few of the key spots associated with the far-flung battle. The four key sites on the tour are numbered 4 through 7, picking up in sequence from the numbers on the Fredericksburg Battlefield Tour Guide. Other historic sites on the Chancellorsville Battlefield identified on the map are explained at the end of the tour. Visitors interested in seeing these additional points of interest can do so by using roads shown on the map. Directions are available from personnel in the Visitor Centers.

THE BATTLE OF CHANCELLORSVILLE

The Battle of Chancellorsville was fought May 1–4, 1863, between the Federal Army of the Potomac, General Joseph Hooker commanding, and the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, General R. E. Lee commanding. Both armies

had wintered around Fredericksburg, Virginia, after the disastrous Federal defeat near the town in December, 1862. Frontal assault having failed under Burnside, Hooker would try a flank maneuver. He would lead a sizeable portion of his 130,000 man army up the north side of the Rappahannock River to cross behind Lee and jeopardize the positions of the Southerners near Fredericksburg.

On May 1, the battle was joined west of Fredericksburg as Gen. T. J. "Stonewall" Jackson attacked toward Chancellorsville on two separate roads. General Hooker committed the fatal blunder of retreating under Jackson's pressure, thus losing the initiative and giving his opponents the chance to attack his weak spots. Early next morning—in a bold move to cut around the Union Army—Jackson marched west with nearly 30,000 men, leaving Lee with only 15,000 troops to face Hooker's main threat. Another 10,000 Confederates had been left behind at Fredericksburg to protect Lee's rear. By late afternoon Jackson had his entire force behind the right flank of Hooker's army, and he was able to launch an overwhelming surprise attack which caved in the Federal line for 2½ miles.

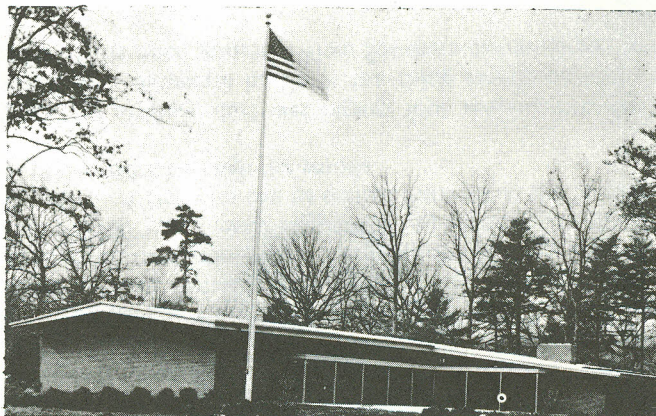
When confusion and darkness finally brought the attack to a halt, Jackson rode out in front of his lines to find a means of renewing the offensive and destroying Hooker's army. With total success at hand, tragic circumstance intervened. As the general rode back toward his own men, some of them fired a blind volley which badly wounded Jackson. He died a week later at Guinea Station, Virginia, as a result of his wounds and of the pneumonia which subsequently developed. The house in which Jackson died is still standing, and is preserved as a part of this National Military Park. The loss of Jackson dealt a crushing and irreparable blow to the military fortunes of the Confederacy.

Very early on the morning of May 3, Southern troops were thrown against the fortified Federal lines one mile west of Chancellorsville. Stuart's forces captured the key to the battlefield at the outset, when they occupied the high open clearing known as Hazel Grove. Federal forces abandoned this vital position with hardly a struggle. Confederate guns on the hilltop opened a hot fire on enemy infantry and artillery in the direction of Chancellorsville. After several hours of violent and costly fighting in the woods, Confederate infantry were able to join hands with their comrades to the east and drive Hooker back to a new position a mile north of Chancellorsville.

Meanwhile, the Federal holding force under General John Sedgwick had pushed past the Confederate rear guard at Fredericksburg. Lee was forced to halt his victorious army

near Chancellorsville and send back substantial reinforcements. After extensive fighting near Salem Church on May 3 and 4, Sedgwick was forced back across the Rappahannock at Bank's Ford. Hooker returned to the north bank with the main portion of his army on May 6. Old Salem Church building, located at the heart of the battlefield which took its name, is a part of the National Military Park. It is located 7 miles east of Chancellorsville on Virginia Route 3.

Federal losses for the campaign totaled more than 17,000; Confederate casualties were about 12,000. Lee had won perhaps his most amazing victory against odds of more than two-to-one in manpower.



4

CHANCELLORSVILLE VISITOR CENTER

You should begin your tour at the Chancellorsville Visitor Center, which is on the north side of Virginia Route 3 about ten miles west of Fredericksburg. The Center contains numerous exhibits related to the battle, and features a 12-minute film program. During the summer months you can observe special living history programs near the Center.

As you leave the parking lot through the western exit, you will come to historic Bullock Road. Turn right onto Bullock Road and proceed to its dead end intersection with the Ely's Ford Road (0.8 mile). This intersection marked the apex of the Federal army's last line (see "A"—Hooker's last line, below). Turn right for 0.7 miles to reach Stop 5, the site of Chancellorsville Inn.

5

CHANCELLORSVILLE INN

A few scattered foundation remains are all that have survived of the large and busy roadside inn called Chancellorsville. The building was erected about 1815 by George Chancellor. For four decades it served the traffic that rolled down from the west, laden with produce and bound for Fredericksburg along both the Orange Turnpike and the Orange Plank Road. When Hooker brought his Northern army across the river and down the roads to this spot in 1863, he naturally made the large landmark his headquarters. It was here that he lost his confidence and drew back from his good positions to the east on May 1; here he received reports of the series of disasters which befell his army; and here he was stunned and painfully wounded by a Confederate shell which struck one of the porch pillars against which he was leaning.

When the Confederates captured this key crossroads late on the morning of May 3, 1863, it marked the completion of an incredible victory won against heavy odds. The soldiers in the ranks recognized that what they had done was unique, and they staged an enthusiastic celebration when General Lee rode through their midst. One eyewitness recorded the scene this way:

One long, unbroken cheer, in which the feeble cry of those who lay helpless on the earth, blended with the strong voices of those who still fought, rose high above the roar of battle, and hailed the presence of the victorious chief . . . as I looked upon him in the complete fruition of the success which his genius, courage and confidence in his army had won, I thought that it must have been from such a scene that men in ancient times rose to the dignity of gods.

Continue straight across Route 3 and along the Orange Plank Road (Route 610) for 1.1 miles to Stop 6, which is at the next 4-way intersection. Turn right and stop in the paved pull-out adjacent to the corner.

6

LEE-JACKSON BIVOUAC SITE

Among the pines at this junction, Lee and Jackson met for the last time. Their army had already been weakened when it was necessary to leave 10,000 men behind near Fredericksburg. Here on the night of May 1, the two generals planned the Battle of Chancellorsville, one of the most daringly conceived engagements of the war. They agreed to a bold maneuver that divided the Confederate Army again, and sent Jackson with the largest piece on a dangerous march almost entirely around the Federals. Early the next morning Jackson disappeared down the road to the west. Lee never saw his greatest lieutenant again.

Proceed along the Furnace Road (McLaws Drive) 1.4 miles.

7

CATHARINE FURNACE

This ruin marks the site of an early 19th Century iron furnace. It had been abandoned before the Civil War, and then opened again for the manufacture of Confederate munitions. Union cavalry destroyed the furnace in 1864. During the fighting of May 1 an artillery duel raged around this site. The next day, Jackson's march around the Federal Army swung past the Furnace along the road you have been following.

To continue the main tour from Catharine Furnace, turn around at the Furnace and go back a few yards to Sickles Drive. Turn left and continue 1.1 miles to Stop 8.

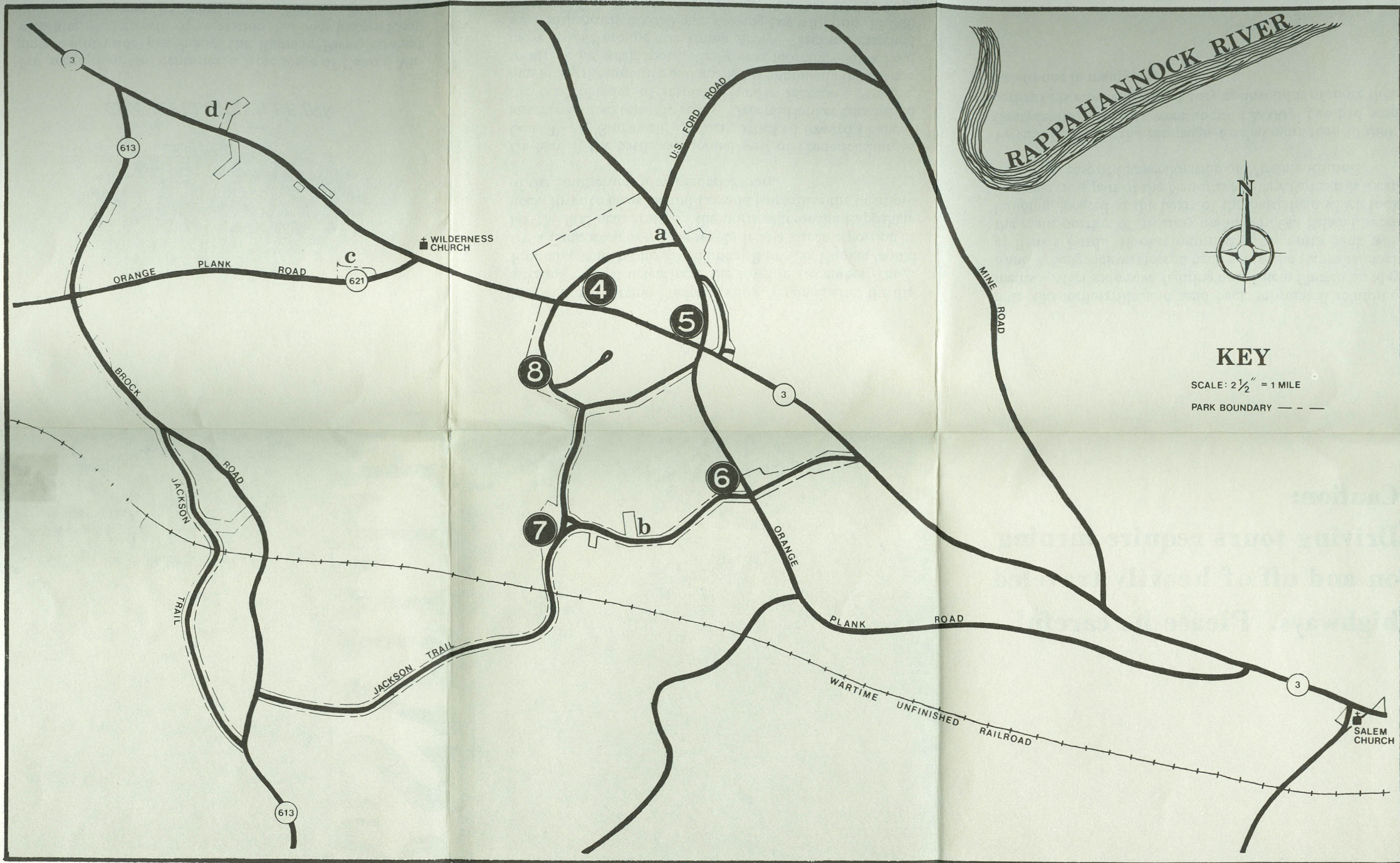
You may wish, instead, to follow Jackson's historic march route on the gravel road just beyond the Furnace to the location where he launched his devastating attack 10 miles from here. The tour map shows how Jackson Trail winds through the woods and a series of signs and markers along the way explain the action. A trip around Jackson Trail will lead you back to the Chancellorsville Visitor Center by way of Virginia Route 3.

8

HAZEL GROVE

The high open ground in this clearing was the most important military position on the battlefield of Chancellorsville. The tangled woods which covered the area did not leave room for artillery to be used, except along the roads and in infrequent open spaces such as this. On the morning of May 3, Confederate troops took Hazel Grove from retreating Federals, and within minutes they had three dozen guns in the clearing pouring their fire into the Northern lines. Their main opposition came from Federal artillery located about 1200 yards away on another open ridge known as Fairview. A few guns can be seen at Fairview at the far end of the corridor through the woods.

While the artillery duel was raging, foot soldiers were engaged in a desperate battle in the thick woods on both sides of the open ground. When Southern cannon began to



RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER



KEY

SCALE: 2 1/2" = 1 MILE

PARK BOUNDARY - - - -

SALEM CHURCH

WILDERNESS CHURCH

ORANGE PLANK ROAD

U.S. FORD ROAD

MINE ROAD

BROCK ROAD

JACKSON ROAD

ORANGE PLANK ROAD

WARTIME UNFINISHED RAILROAD

JACKSON TRAIL

JACKSON TRAIL

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613

gain the upper hand, supporting infantry took the opportunity to press home attacks which soon swept over the Federal positions. By late morning on May 3, Confederate artillery had moved on across the open fields to Fairview, from which they had driven the Federal guns. From this new position they renewed their fire on the retreating Northern forces.

You can drive to Fairview by retracing your route for just 100 yards and bearing to the left onto a road which dead-ends next to Fairview, distance 0.5 miles. If you walk out to the cannon at Fairview, you will be able to look back through the vista to the Confederate position at Hazel Grove. It is also possible to walk from Hazel Grove to Fairview, through the corridor in the woods. There are footbridges across the two streams which flow between the hills. At Hazel Grove you are 0.6 miles from Route 3 and the Chancellorsville Visitor Center, where you began this tour.

OTHER BATTLEFIELD SITES —

a. HOOKER'S LAST LINE

Forced to abandon the Chancellorsville crossroads where he was on May 3, Hooker took up positions along a new line which had its apex here. From this point, the Union Army stretched off toward the river across which it retreated three days later.

b. MAURY'S BIRTHPLACE

A few hundred yards from the road lie the ruins of the

brick house in which Matthew Fontaine Maury was born in 1806. Maury became world famous as a pioneer oceanographer. During the Civil War, this high ground was so conspicuous that some of the Confederate troops participating in "Stonewall" Jackson's flank march on May 2, 1863, had to make a detour to avoid shelling from Northern guns near Chancellorsville.

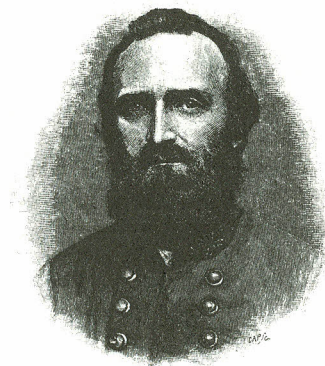
c. BURTON FARM

General Jackson climbed to a wooded hilltop on this farm and surveyed the blissfully unaware Northern soldiers whom he attacked a few hours later as they were eating dinner. Until he had seen the Federal positions from the Burton Farm vantage point, Jackson had intended to direct his assault up the Orange Plank Road toward Wilderness Church.

d. START OF JACKSON'S ATTACK

Here the long gray columns of Jackson's Corps were spread into two-mile long lines which came roaring out of the woods into the midst of surprised and stunned Union soldiers unaware of their danger. As the entire Federal line caved in before the screaming Confederates, the Southern Confederacy reached one of its highest points. Within a few hours, the sun had set, the attack ran out of organization, and General Jackson was mortally wounded.

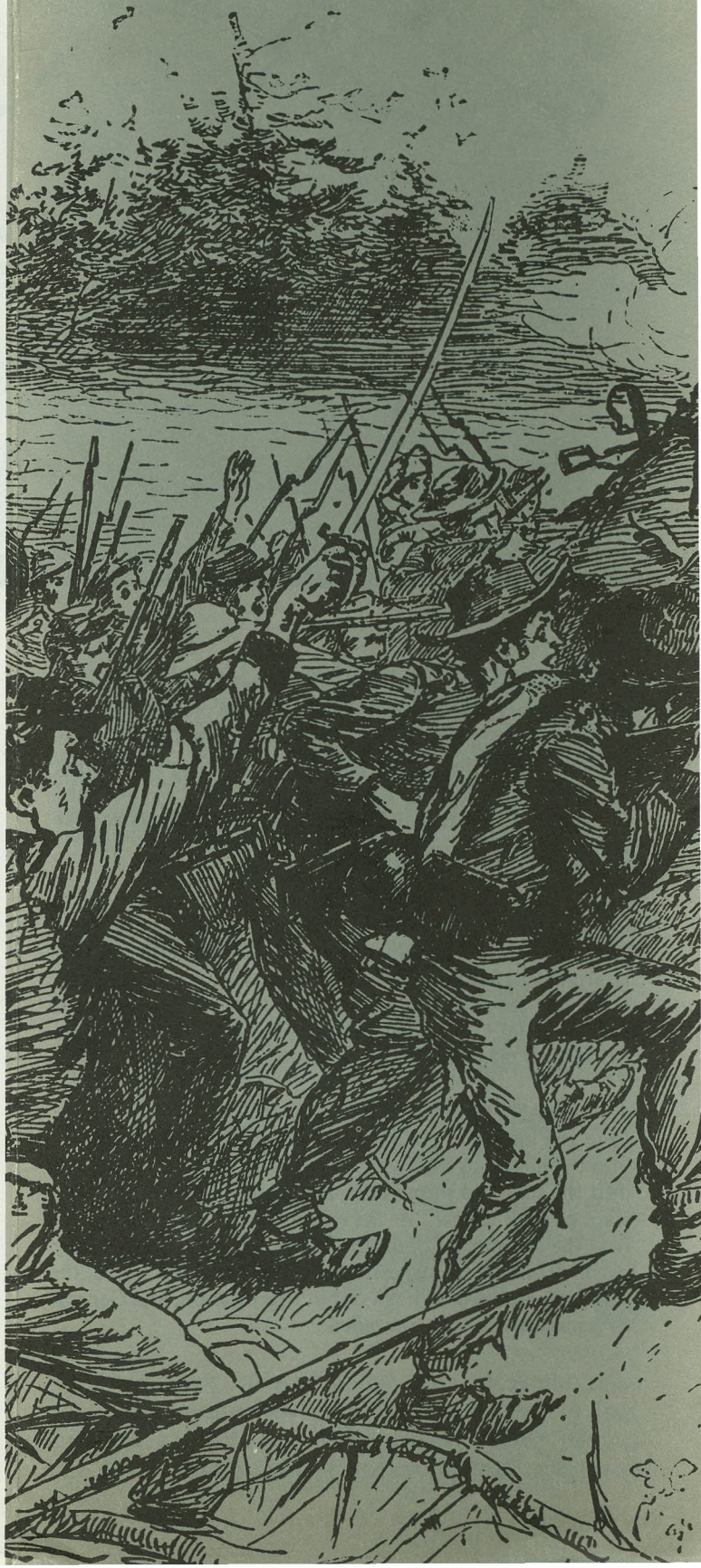
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"STONEWALL" JACKSON

Caution:

**Driving tours require turning
on and off of heavily traveled
highways. Please be careful.**



**National Park Service
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**