

# CHANCELLORSVILLE HISTORY TRAIL

## A Walking Tour

Here in the tangled thickets of the Wilderness near a roadside tavern called Chancellorsville, Robert E. Lee achieved his greatest victory of the Civil War.

Troop movements during the Chancellorsville Campaign sprawled across dozens of square miles between April 27 and May 6, 1863. The most decisive fighting, however, took place on the morning of May 3 along both sides of the historic Orange Plank Road, modern Virginia Route 3.

Confederate infantry led by cavalry officer J.E.B. Stuart, who had replaced the wounded "Stonewall" Jackson, launched relentless attacks against fortified Union positions. The battle raged for more than four hours as men from both sides grappled in the gloomy woods.

South of the highway, the Confederates tried to capture Fairview, an elevated clearing from which Union artillery poured forth a hail of iron. Stuart's troops north of the road supported this effort, aiming for the open ground around Chancellorsville itself.

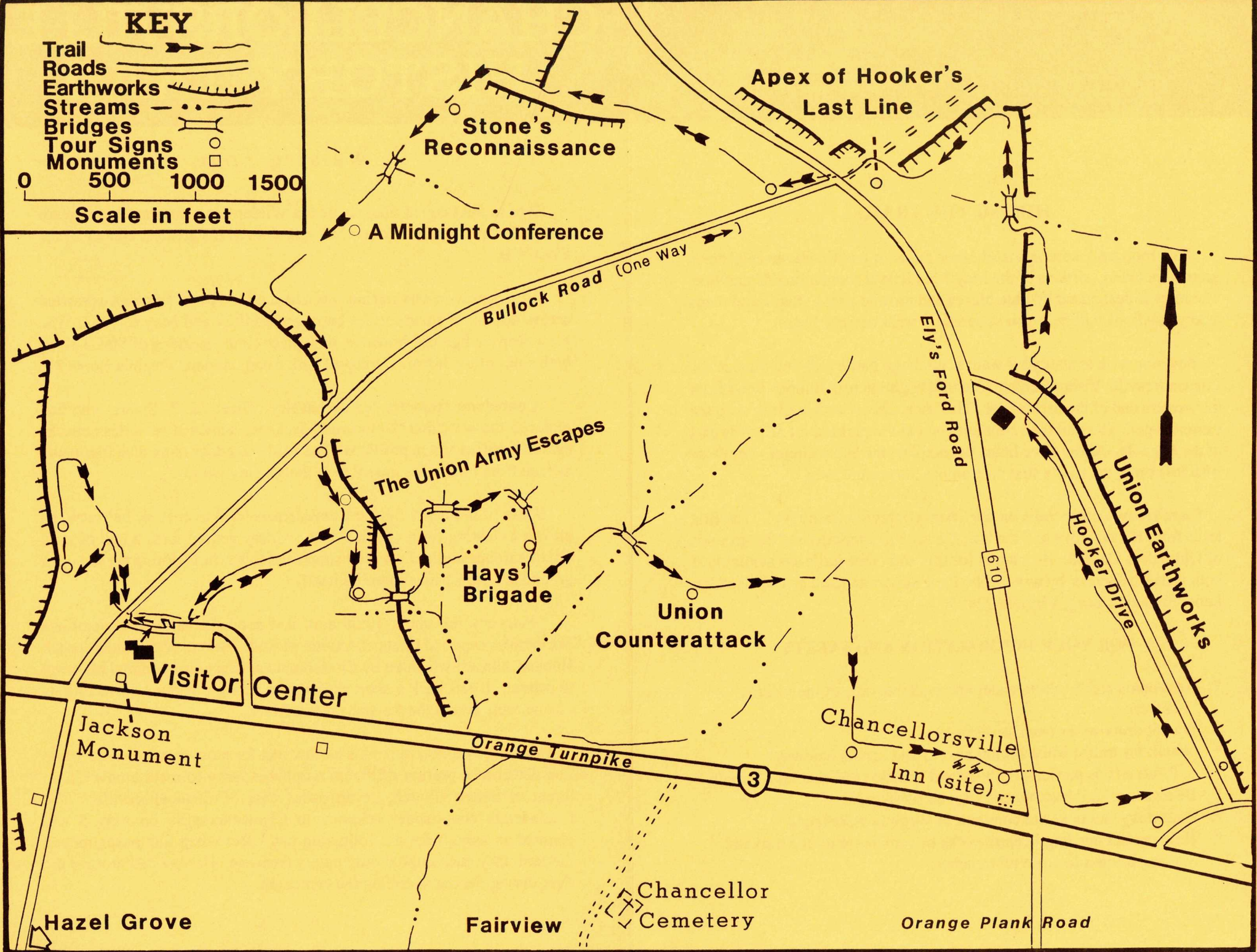
Fairview fell about 10:00 a.m. and soon thereafter the victorious Southerners captured Chancellorsville as well. Federal commander Joseph Hooker, himself wounded by Confederate artillery fire, ordered his army to retreat. It fell back a short distance to strong positions protecting its escape route across the Rappahannock River.

Hooker quietly occupied his earthworks for more than two days while Lee detached a portion of his outnumbered army to meet a new Union threat at Salem Church, seven miles east of Chancellorsville. The Confederate commander returned to Chancellorsville on May 5 and planned an assault for the following day. But when his troops moved forward, they encountered only empty trenches. Hooker had crossed the river during the night, ending the campaign.

# KEY

- Trail
- Roads
- Earthworks
- Streams
- Bridges
- Tour Signs
- Monuments

0 500 1000 1500  
Scale in feet



## HIKING THE TRAIL

This loop trail, approximately four miles in length, traverses historic ground including portions of the May 3 battlefield and the final Union line. The route is designated by blue blazes and mowed paths. Signs and maps at key locations will help you understand what occurred here.

You may wish to start your walk at the large battle painting outside the Chancellorsville Visitor Center. The trail begins across Bullock Road from the western end of the parking lot. This short circuit walk leads back to the visitor center. The trail then continues across the parking lot 50 yards east of the flagpole. Allow three hours to complete the entire circuit. For those with less time, the trail's first section is a 20-minute loop.

There are two other trails on the Chancellorsville Battlefield. The first leads from Hazel Grove to Fairview; the second encompasses the grounds of Old Salem Church. Brochures for this and other trails are available at both visitor centers or by writing the Park Superintendent at 120 Chatham Lane, Fredericksburg, Virginia 22405.

### FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND SAFETY

- \* Restrooms and drinking water are available only at the visitor center.
- \* Do not drink water from streams.
- \* Watch for traffic while hiking next to and across roadways.  
Route 610 is particularly busy and vehicles travel at high speeds.
- \* Be aware of trail hazards and uneven surfaces.
- \* Poison ivy and ticks are common in Virginia woodlands.
- \* Help protect our fragile earthworks by remaining on the trail and using bridges to cross all trenches.