

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 Turnpike, 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 hand-to-hand in the gloomy woods.

South of the highway, the Confederates tried to capture Fairview, an elevated clearing from which Federal 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. They fell back but a short distance to strong positions protecting their escape route across the Rappahannock River.

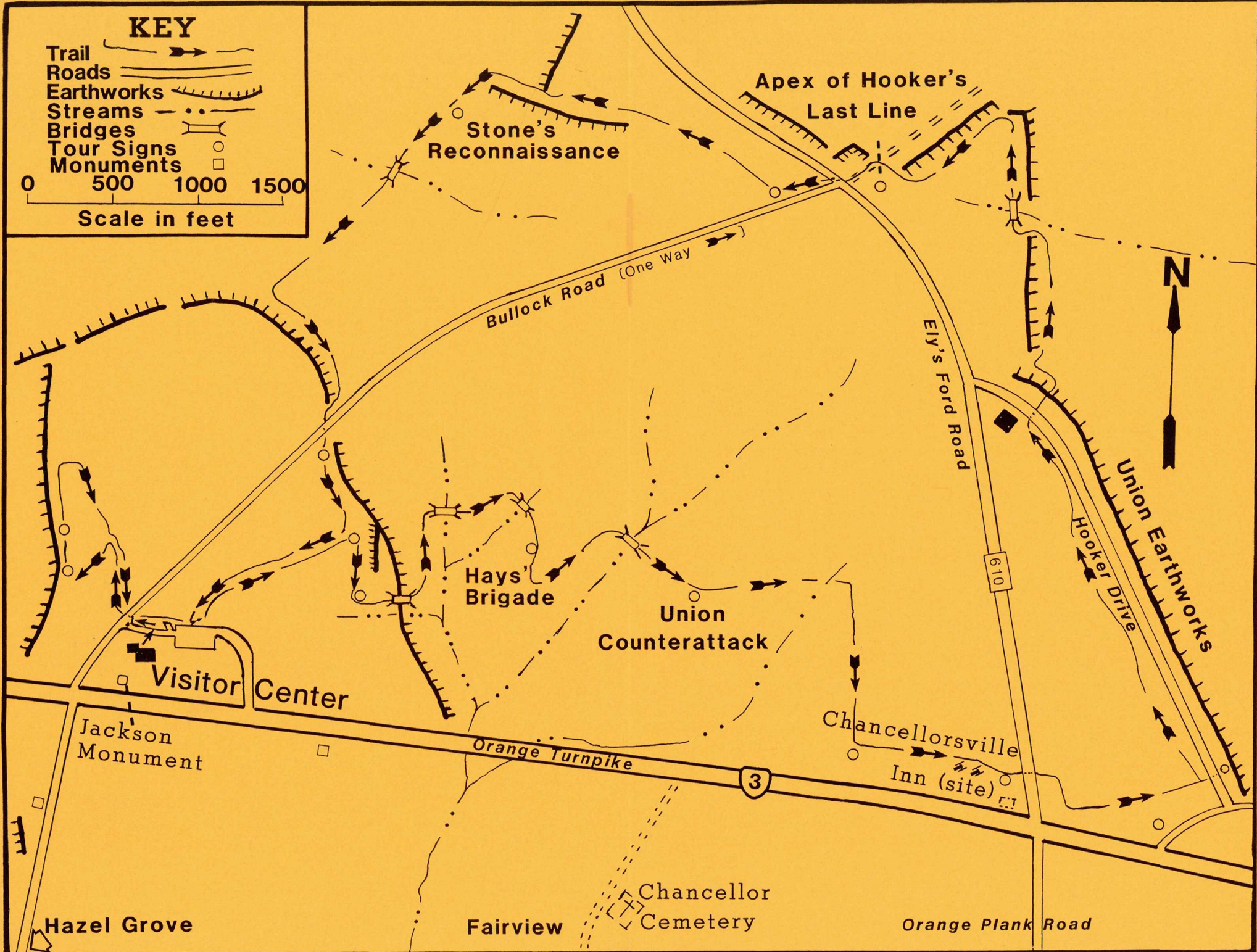
Hooker quietly occupied his earthworks for more than two days while Lee detached a portion of his outnumbered army to meet a new Union threat at Salem Church, seven miles east of Chancellorsville. The Confederate commander returned on May 5 and planned an assault for the following day. But when his troops 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.

Other trails lead from Hazel Grove to Fairview and around Old Salem Church. Brochures for these and other historic sites are available at both park visitor centers or by writing the Park Superintendent at P.O. Box 679, Fredericksburg, Virginia 22404.

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.
- * Bicycles and motorized vehicles are prohibited on the trail.
- * Picnicking is allowed only at the established picnic area near the visitor center.