

Gen. Thomas J. Jackson.  
He won the nickname "Stonewall" at First Manassas.

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National Park Service  
U. S. Department of the Interior



National Parks Centennial 1872-1972

## FIRST MANASSAS

July 21, 1861: the deep-throated roar of a 30-pounder Parrott rifle shattered the morning calm where Stone Bridge carried the Warrenton Turnpike across Bull Run. Soon the smaller cannons added their bark to the din. Men on both sides of the stream waited, one group to attack, the other to defend. Now there would be no turning back; the battle, and then the war, would be fought to the bitter end.

When Fort Sumter was fired upon in April 1861, the talk ended and both North and South prepared for war. The men of both armies were confident that their opponents would run at the first sound of battle. The generals were not so confident. They knew their men needed training, but public pressure was building up. Finally, in July, the North grew impatient and forced Gen. Irvin McDowell, commander of the Union forces, to move. McDowell protested that his men were not ready, but to no avail. He marched his 35,000 men south, using the Orange & Alexandria Railroad, which led toward the Confederate capital of Richmond, as his line of advance.

The Confederates waited along Bull Run. Commanded by Gen. P. G. T. Beauregard, they defended the vital railroad junction at Manassas. Here the Orange & Alexandria met the Manassas Gap Railroad which led west to the Shenandoah Valley. In the valley was another Southern army, under Gen. Joseph E. Johnston. Together, these two armies numbered about 35,000 men.

McDowell arrived at Centreville on July 18. He

first attempted to move around the Confederate right flank, but his troops were checked. He then spent 2 days scouting the Southern left. In the meantime, Beauregard asked the Confederate government in Richmond for help. Johnston, ordered to support Beauregard if possible, gave an opposing Union force the slip and, employing the Manassas Gap Railroad, started his brigades toward Manassas Junction. Most of Johnston's troops arrived at the junction on July 20 and 21, some marching from the trains into battle.

On the morning of July 21, McDowell sent his attack column in a long march north toward Sudley Springs Ford. This route took it around the Confederate left. To distract the Southerners, he sent two divisions to attack the Confederate right at Blackburns Ford and to probe their center at Stone Bridge. The latter division fired the signal gun for the attack.

McDowell's flanking column started as planned, but it was slowed because soldiers straggled and took frequent breaks. Valuable time was lost, and this gave Confederate Col. Nathan Evans, commanding at Stone Bridge, time to discover that the attack on his front was a diversion. Leaving only a small force to hold the bridge, he rushed the remainder of his command to Matthews Hill in time to check McDowell's column. But his force was too small to hold back the Federals for long, and he called for help.

Gen. Barnard Bee with two brigades marched to Evans' assistance. But even with these reinforce-

ments, the Confederates recoiled. As they retired toward Henry Hill, what had started as a withdrawal became a rout. Attempting to rally his men, Bee used Gen. Thomas J. Jackson's newly arrived brigade as an anchor. Pointing to Jackson, Bee shouted, "There stands Jackson like a Stone Wall, rally behind the Virginians!" Moments later, Bee was mortally wounded. Generals Johnston and Beauregard then arrived on Henry Hill, where they assisted in rallying shattered brigades and redeploying fresh units that were marching to the point of danger.

About noon, the Federals stopped their advance to reorganize for a new attack. The lull lasted for about an hour, and the Confederates were allowed to re-form their line. Then the fighting resumed, each side trying to force the other off Henry Hill. The battle ebbed and flowed until after 4 p.m., when fresh Southern units crashed into the Union right flank. Tired and discouraged, McDowell's soldiers began to withdraw.

The retreat at first was orderly. Screened by the regulars, the 3-months' volunteers retired across Bull Run, where they found Warrenton Turnpike encumbered with the carriages of Congressmen and others who had driven out from Washington to watch the fight. Panic now seized many of the soldiers and the retreat became a rout. The Confederates were too disorganized to follow up their success. Daybreak on July 22 found the defeated Union army back in Washington. The South had won the First Battle of Manassas.

## TOURING FIRST MANASSAS

This tour will take you to the main points of the battlefield and help you to gain some understanding of the first major land battle of the Civil War. It is about 5 miles long and will take about 1 hour by car. There is also a walking tour of Henry Hill which begins at the visitor center.

1. **Stone Bridge.** Here the first shots of the battle were fired on the morning of July 21, 1861. During the evening, a portion of the Union army retreated across this bridge. A trail here leads to Farm Ford, where Gen. William T. Sherman's men crossed Bull Run during the morning.

2. **Matthews Hill.** The fighting began here when Evans' men tried to stop the Union advance. The Confederates were soon forced back, but they held this high ground long enough for fresh Southern troops to establish a strong position on Henry Hill. A ½-mile walking trail leads from Stone House to Matthews Hill.

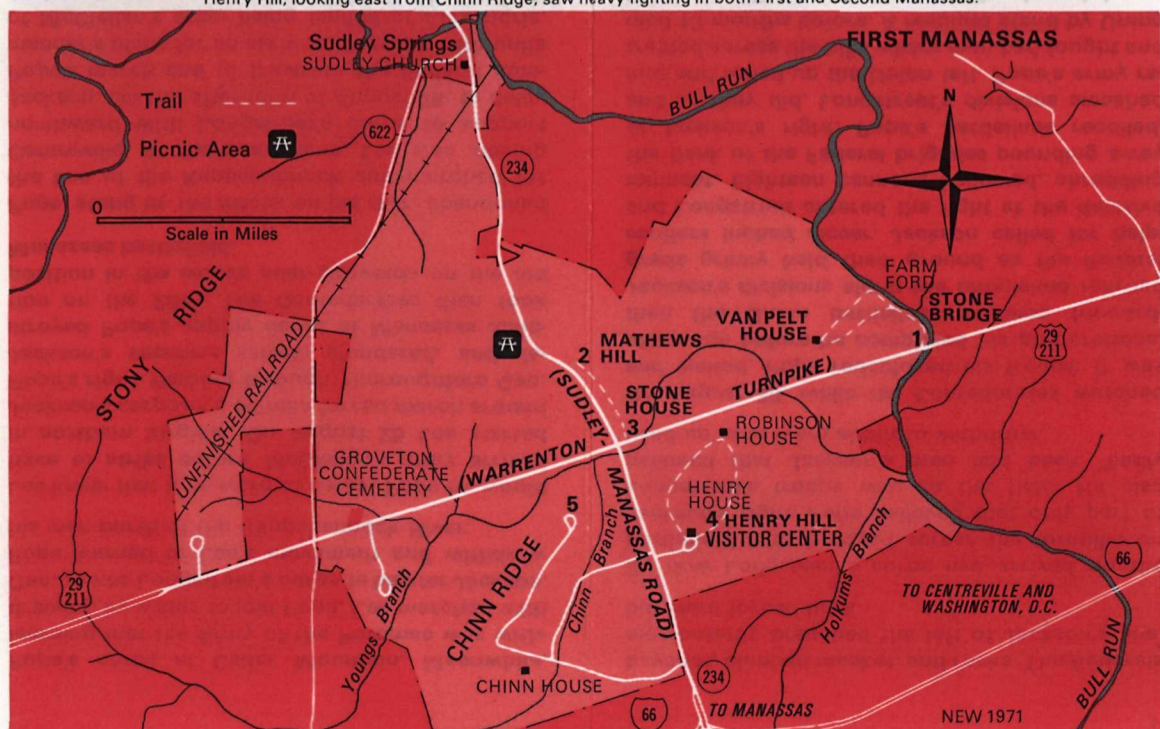
3. **Stone House.** Originally a tavern stop on Warrenton Turnpike, the house was converted to a field hospital by the advancing Union army. When the Federals were forced to retreat, the doctors and their patients were captured by the Confederates.

4. **Henry Hill.** The fighting raged here all afternoon, as both sides fought to control the hill. The walking tour that starts on the terrace of the visitor center covers the fighting in detail.

5. **Chinn Ridge.** In the late afternoon, Gen. Oliver O. Howard's Union brigade was attacked by Gen. Jubal Early's Confederates in this area. Howard's retreat led to the rout of the Union army.



Henry Hill, looking east from Chinn Ridge, saw heavy fighting in both First and Second Manassas.



## SECOND MANASSAS

After the defeat at Manassas in July 1861, Gen. George B. McClellan took command of the Union forces and organized the troops in and around Washington into a formidable fighting machine—the Army of the Potomac. In March 1862, leaving a strong force to cover the Capital, McClellan shifted his army by water to Fort Monroe, Va., only 100 miles southeast of Richmond. Early in April, he advanced toward the Confederate capital. The Southerners abandoned the Manassas area and marched to meet the Federals. By the end of May, McClellan's troops were within sight of Richmond. Here the Confederate army under General Johnston assailed the Federals in the bloody but inconclusive Battle of Seven Pines. Johnston was wounded, and President Jefferson Davis placed Gen. Robert E. Lee in command of the Army of Northern Virginia.

One of Lee's first acts was to recall from the Shenandoah Valley Gen. T. J. "Stonewall" Jackson's army, which, since March, had pinned down in northern Virginia thousands of soldiers supposed to march south to join McClellan's drive on Richmond. Lee then took the offensive, and in the Seven Days' Battles drove the Army of the Potomac into a fortified camp on the James River.

In July 1862 the scattered Federal forces in northern Virginia were organized into the Army of Virginia. Gen. John Pope, a bombastic and boastful man who had won a reputation in the west, was placed in command.

Realizing that an assault on McClellan's position would be suicidal, General Lee sent Stonewall Jackson's corps northward to "suppress" Pope. The rest of the Army of Northern Virginia watched McClellan. On August 9, Jackson fought one of

Pope's corps at Cedar Mountain. Meanwhile, learning that the Army of the Potomac was withdrawing by water to join Pope, Lee marched with Gen. James Longstreet's corps to bolster Jackson. Pope learned of Lee's movement and withdrew his men north of the Rappahannock River.

Lee knew that if he were to defeat Pope he would have to strike before McClellan's army arrived in northern Virginia. On August 25 Lee started Jackson's corps on a 56-mile forced march around Pope's right. Passing through Thoroughfare Gap, Jackson's veterans seized, plundered, and destroyed Pope's supply depot at Manassas Junction on the 26th. The Confederates then took position in the woods near Groveton on the old Manassas battlefield.

Pope, stung by the attack on his rear, abandoned the line of the Rappahannock and marched for Centreville. At the same time, Lee was moving northward with Longstreet's corps to support Jackson. On the afternoon of August 28, to delay Pope's march and to frustrate the Federal commander's plans for an early rendezvous with units of McClellan's army being landed at Alexandria, Jackson's troops assailed a Union column as it marched up Warrenton Turnpike. The savage fight lasted until dark.

Satisfied that Jackson was isolated, Pope ordered his columns to converge on Groveton. He was convinced that he could destroy Jackson before Lee and Longstreet could intervene. On the 29th, Pope's army found Jackson's corps posted behind an unfinished railroad grade, north of the turnpike. All afternoon, Pope hurled his men against Jackson's line. Some Confederate units ran short of ammunition and the men met the Federals with

bayonet, clubbed musket, and rocks. The Federals momentarily breached the left of Jackson's line, but were forced back.

By now Longstreet's corps had arrived on the battlefield and deployed across the turnpike on Jackson's right. Pope believed that only part of Longstreet's troops was on the field. He also believed that Jackson's men had been "badly used up" and were about to withdraw.

On August 30, while the Confederates watched and waited, Pope redeployed his troops. It was afternoon before he completed his preparations; then the Union battlelines stormed forward. Jackson's divisions along the unfinished railroad grade grimly held their ground as the Federal soldiers inched closer. Jackson called for help, and Longstreet entered the fight at the decisive moment. Eighteen cannons bellowed, shredding the flank of the Federal brigades pounding away at Jackson's right. Pope's battlelines recoiled, and as they did, Longstreet's divisions smashed into and rolled up the Union left. Pope's army retreated across the hills where men had fought and died 13 months before. A resolute stand by Union troops on Bald and Henry Hills slowed Longstreet's surge long enough for most of the army to escape across Bull Run and to reach the protection offered by the Washington defenses. The South had won the Second Battle of Manassas.

First Manassas had shown the leaders on both sides that the war was not going to be short and easy; Second Manassas reaffirmed this and provided the incentive for Lee to carry the war into Maryland, where the armies would clash again, on the banks of Antietam Creek near the small village of Sharpsburg.

## TOURING SECOND MANASSAS

This driving tour will take you over the battlefield and give you a better understanding of the Southern victory that paved the way for Lee's first invasion of the North. It is about 9 miles long and takes about 2 hours.

The Warrenton Turnpike, an important commercial highway before the war, played a major part in both battles. U.S. 29-211 follows the historical roadbed. Sudley-Manassas Road crossed the turnpike at the Stone House. Va. 234 follows that old roadbed.

**1. Battery Heights.** Over these open fields, Stonewall Jackson's forces attacked a brigade of Gen. Rufus King's division, Pope's Army of Virginia, on August 28, 1862. This attack, the opening phase of Second Manassas, stopped Pope's withdrawal toward Washington and reinforcements from McClellan's army.

**2. Dogan House.** The last surviving building of the village of Groveton, this house was caught between the battlelines on August 28 and 29, 1862.

**3. Jackson's Line (Unfinished Railroad).** Along this line, stretching from Sudley Springs on the north to a point 1 mile beyond you, General Jackson's command lay in wait for the Union army to attack. The bed of the unfinished railroad made an excellent defensive position. The attacks came on August 29 and 30; the Confederate line bent, but never broke.

The trail across the road will take you down the line that Jackson's men occupied. On the trail is a monument, erected in 1865, to the Union soldiers who fought here.

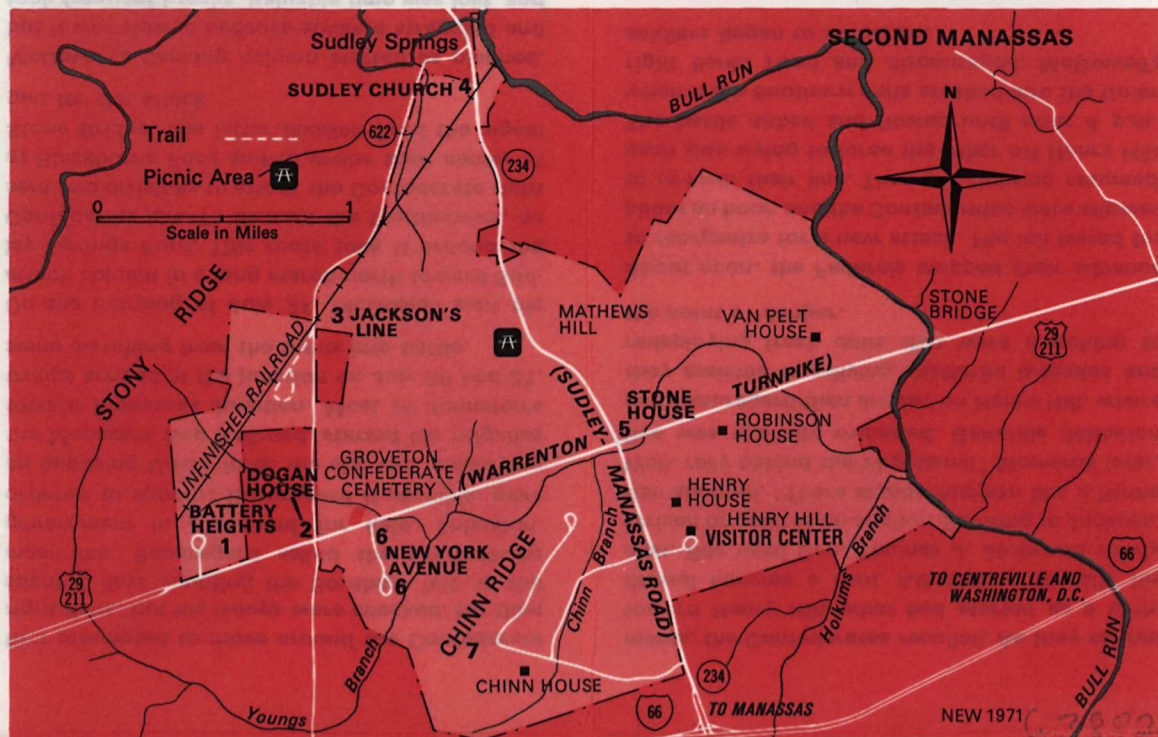
**4. Sudley Church.** This church marks the extreme left flank of Jackson's line. During the battle, the original church on this site was used as a field hospital.

**5. Stone House.** During the Second Battle of Manassas, this building served as General Pope's headquarters and later as a Union field hospital.

**6. New York Avenue.** On the afternoon of August 30, Longstreet's corps hit Pope's left flank with pile-driving force, rolling it up and sending the

Union army in retreat. A determined stand by two New York regiments slowed the Confederate advance, but could not stop it.

**7. Chinn Ridge.** On August 30, 1862, during Longstreet's attack, the Union left flank was pushed back to and across this ridge. Only a desperate stand by the divisions of Gens. George Sykes and John F. Reynolds on Henry Hill prevented a complete rout.



## ADMINISTRATION

Manassas National Battlefield Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Box 350, Manassas, VA 22110, is in immediate charge.

## ABOUT YOUR VISIT

Manassas National Battlefield Park is 26 miles southwest of Washington, D.C., near the intersection of Int. 66 and Va. 234. The visitor center is open daily. Folders, handbooks, and other literature can be purchased at the sales counter. Stone House, at the intersection of U.S. 29-211 and Va. 234, has been re-equipped as a field hospital. It is open from June through August. The park also has a 16-mile, circular bridle trail. Check with the park staff for details.

To help us preserve this historic area for future generations, please observe the following regulations:

- All pets must be kept on a leash.
- Picnicking, kite flying, ball games, and other recreational activities, or car polishing are restricted to the picnic area.
- Parking is not allowed on the road shoulders.
- Hunting for relics is strictly forbidden.
- Fires are permitted only at the picnic area and only in grills. Extinguish fires completely before leaving.
- All motorized vehicles must stay on established roadways and may not stop on grassy areas or trails.
- Climbing on cannons and monuments is not allowed.



Stone Bridge. First Manassas began here in July 1861.



Manassas Junction, attacked by Jackson's men in August 1862.



Stone House was a field hospital during both battles.