

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania
National Military Park
Virginia

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



From the painting *Battle of the Bloody Angle* by Thure de Thulstrup. Courtesy The Veterans of the Seventh Regiment, N.Y.

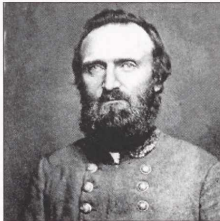
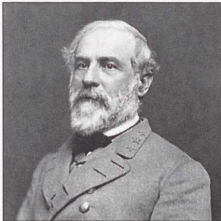


In 1861, Fredericksburg was a quiet city of 5,000 inhabitants nestled along the Rappahannock River. Its strategic location midway between Washington and Richmond caused it to become a focal point during the Civil War.

Confederate infantrymen standing in a sunken road (right) and concealed from view by a stone wall repulsed thousands of attacking Federals during the 1862 Battle of Fredericksburg.



Robert E. Lee (near right) led the Confederate forces at all four battles around Fredericksburg. Stonewall Jackson (far right), Lee's most trusted subordinate, fell victim to the mistaken fire of his own men at Chancellorsville.



The first two battles of the campaign that led to final Union victory in Virginia were fought west of Fredericksburg at the Wilderness and Spotsylvania Court House. Some of the most savage fighting took place at Spotsylvania during the Union attack on the Confederate-held

"Mule Shoe Salient" or "Bloody Angle" (above). Losses were fearful, but Ulysses S. Grant (right), commanding all Union armies, called the results "important" to his overall plan to capture Lee's army and end the war.



Where Uncommon Valor Was Commonplace

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park memorializes the battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, the Wilderness, and Spotsylvania Court House—four major engagements of the Civil War. No other area of comparable size has witnessed such heavy and continuous fighting. Here, within a radius of 17 miles, occurred more than 100,000 American casualties in battles involving strategy and tactics beyond the understanding of the average soldier. The park preserves and interprets some of the scenes of those battles. The quiet, peaceful woods and fields are constant reminders of how much we owe to the sacrifice of others.

Fredericksburg

The Union army commanded by Ambrose E. Burnside arrived on Stafford Heights overlooking Fredericksburg in mid-November 1862. Not until December 11, however, did the Federals cross the Rappahannock River. By that time Lee's forces were firmly posted on the high ground west of the city. On December 13, Burnside ordered two attacks. An assault on the left, led by George G. Meade against Jackson's corps at Prospect Hill, achieved temporary success before Confederate reserves drove Meade back to his original position. Burnside launched his second attack against the heart of Lee's defenses on Marye's Heights west of Fredericksburg. Confederate artillery on the heights and infantry behind a stone wall slaughtered the Union soldiers. When the day ended, Lee had won his most one-sided victory of the war.

Chancellorsville

Following the Fredericksburg debacle, President Abraham Lincoln replaced Burnside with Joseph Hooker. On April 27, 1863, the new commander marched most of his army upstream, crossed the Rappahannock and Rapidan rivers at shallow fords, and within three days was at the Chancellorsville crossroads. Lee discovered this threat to his position and rushed westward, prompting Hooker to abandon the initiative and establish a

defensive line, which was vulnerable on the right flank. Stonewall Jackson exploited this weakness on May 2 by leading his corps on a risky 12-mile march around the Union army and destroying Hooker's right in a spectacular surprise attack. Ironically, the day ended in tragedy for the Confederates when Jackson was unwittingly shot and mortally wounded by his own troops. For three more days Lee pressed his advantage and eventually drove the Federals back across the river.

The Wilderness

The first of the classic encounters between Lee and Grant took place in the dense thickets and tangled undergrowth of the Wilderness on May 5-6, 1864. Along the Orange Turnpike the armies sparred indecisively for two days. To the south, on the Orange Plank Road, the Federals almost crushed A. P. Hill's troops on May 5, only to be thrown back by a dramatic Confederate counter-attack the next day. Tactically the battle was a draw, but Grant broke the stalemate by marching his army south toward Spotsylvania Court House.

Spotsylvania Court House

On May 7, 1864, both armies raced for the vital intersection at Spotsylvania Court House that controlled the shortest route to Richmond. Lee arrived first, entrenched, and successfully withstood a series of Union attacks. On the morning of May 12, two Federal corps charged from the woods opposite a vulnerable section of the Confederate line known as the "Mule Shoe Salient." Thanks in part to a thick fog and wet Confederate powder, the initial Union advance overwhelmed the Southerners. Confederate reinforcements counterattacked, and for the next 20 hours the men in this sector engaged in the most intense hand-to-hand combat of the war. This desperate fighting at what came to be called the "Bloody Angle" earned Lee enough time to build new earthworks, which he defended until Grant abandoned the field on May 21.

Stonewall Jackson Shrine

Following his accidental wounding on the night of May 2, 1863, Jackson's left arm was amputated at a field hospital near Wilderness Tavern. On May 4, he endured a 27-mile ambulance ride to T. C. Chandler's Fairfield Plantation at Guinea Station. Here, well behind Confederate lines and at a point convenient to the railroad, Jackson lay in a small frame office building. Pneumonia set in after his arrival and he died here on May 10.

Old Salem Church

Built in 1844 to provide the Baptists of upper Spotsylvania County a more geographically convenient place of worship, this structure harbored scores of refugees who fled Fredericksburg during the 1862 battle. Union and Confederate soldiers later fought here during the Battle of Chancellorsville. When the fighting ended, Southern surgeons attended to wounded soldiers of both sides in the building.

Chatham

This gracious Georgian plantation house, built by William Fitzhugh beginning in 1768, hosted two of America's most famous Presidents—George Washington in 1785 and Abraham Lincoln in 1862. During the Battle of Fredericksburg the building served as headquarters for Edwin V. Sumner, commander of the Union army's Right Grand Division. After the battle, it was converted into a field hospital. Army medical personnel, assisted by volunteers like Clara Barton and Walt Whitman, treated hundreds of Union soldiers within its walls. Graffiti scrawled by soldiers is still visible today.

Fredericksburg National Cemetery

More than 15,000 Union soldiers killed in and around Fredericksburg are buried in this 12-acre cemetery located on Marye's Heights. The identities of 85 percent of the soldiers are unknown. Confederate soldiers are buried in Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania Confederate cemeteries.

Fredericksburg and Vicinity, 1861-1865



Stonewall Jackson Shrine

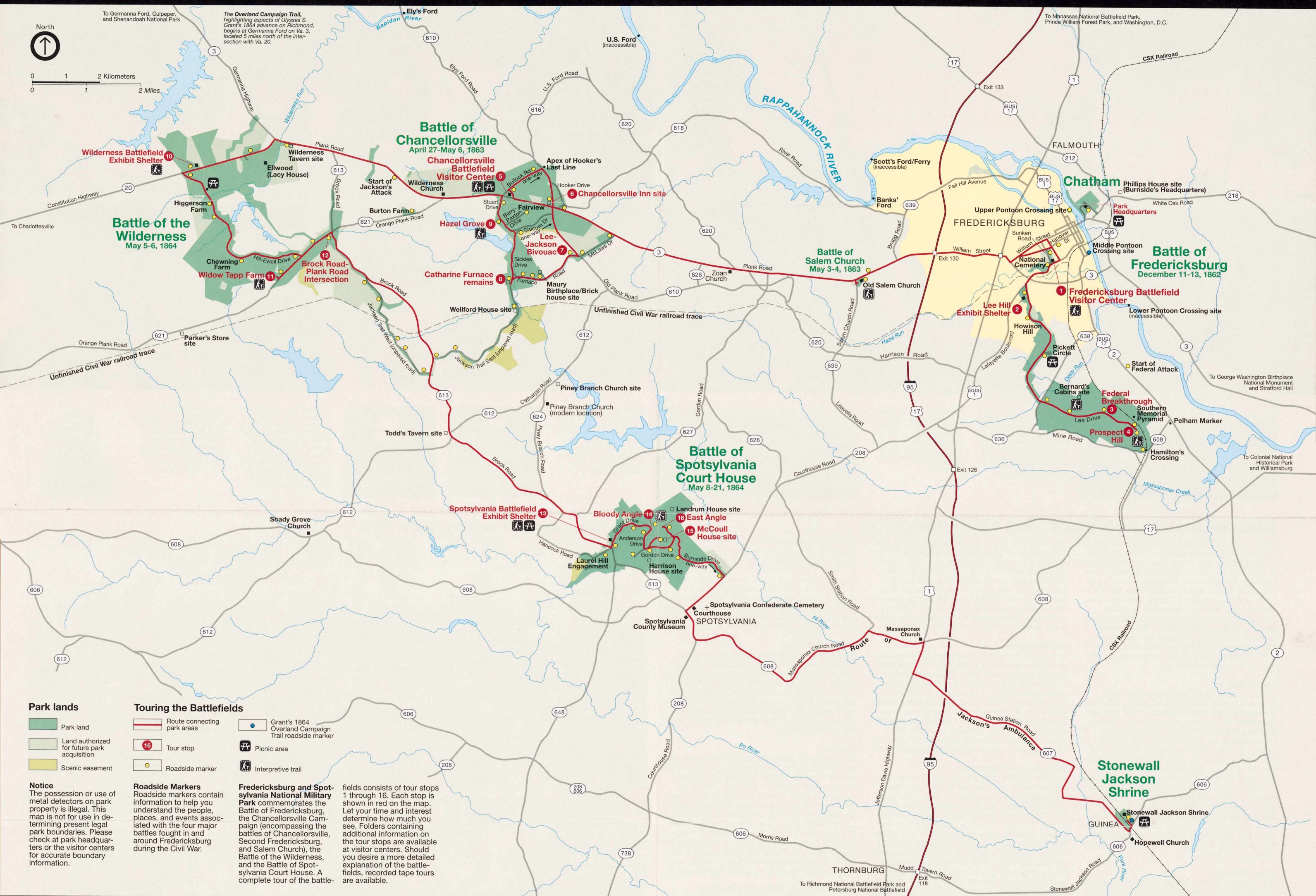


Fredericksburg National Cemetery



Salem Church

Touring the Battlefields



About Your Visit

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park is a Federal Fee Area. A small fee, collected in the visitor centers, covers use of all four battlefields and all other park facilities. Within the park boundary are 8,463 acres dispersed in seven major units. A self-guided tour of the four battlefields and three historic buildings begins at the Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor Center on U.S. 1, Lafayette Blvd. Another visitor center is located at Chancellorsville, 10 miles west of Fredericksburg on Va. 3.

Park rangers are on duty daily at both visitor centers and at Chatham to provide information about the park and its story.

Stonewall Jackson Shrine is open daily during summer months, with reduced hours the rest of the year. Walking tours and other interpretive programs are presented from early June through Labor Day.

A variety of publications about Civil War history can be purchased at both visitor centers, Chatham, and the Stonewall Jack-

son Shrine. Picnic tables are available in each battlefield unit, as well as at Chatham and the Stonewall Jackson Shrine. There are no overnight camping facilities in the park. There are National Park Service campgrounds with various camping options at Prince William Forest Park, 23 miles north of Fredericksburg. Call 703-221-7181 for information.

A seven-mile loop hiking trail connecting important sites at Spotsylvania Battlefield begins at Stop 13, the exhibit shelter. Other

interpretive trails are located along the Sunken Road (at Stop 1), at Old Salem Church, at Chancellorsville Battlefield Visitor Center (Stop 5), at Hazel Grove (Stop 9), at the Wilderness Battlefield Exhibit Shelter (Stop 10), at the Widow Tapp Farm (Stop 11), and at the Bloody Angle (Stop 14).

Regulations

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

- Relic hunting or the possession of metal detectors on park property is strictly forbidden.
- Pets must be leashed.
- Climbing on cannons, monuments, earthworks, or historic ruins is not allowed.
- Picnicking is allowed only in designated areas.

- Fires are permitted only at picnic areas in grills. Extinguish fires completely before leaving.
- Washing, polishing, or repairing motor vehicles is prohibited, except in emergencies.

- Recreational activities, such as ball playing, kite flying, skateboarding, and in-line skating, are not permitted.
- All vehicles, including bicycles, must stay on roadways that are open to the general motoring public.

- The possession or use of any kind of weapon is prohibited in the park.
- Cutting or gathering firewood, including dead and down wood, is not allowed.

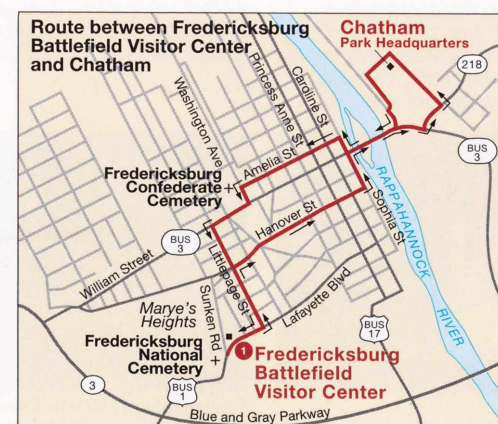
- Hunting, trapping, spotlighting, or intentionally disturbing wildlife is forbidden.
- Consumption and/or possession of open alcoholic beverages is prohibited.

For Your Safety

Driving tours require turning onto and off of heavily traveled highways. Hiking, jogging, and bicycling are encouraged in the park and motorists need to be alert to these activities. You may also encounter stinging insects and poisonous plants during your visit. Wear proper walking shoes while hiking park trails, especially at Spotsylvania, and be alert for footing hazards. Please use caution while you are with us and have a safe, enjoyable visit.

Accessibility

The first floors of Chatham, the Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor Center, and the Stonewall Jackson Shrine are accessible to wheelchairs. The Chancellorsville Battlefield Visitor Center is completely accessible to wheelchairs; visitors with disabilities are especially encouraged to visit that site.



Administration

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park is a unit of the National Park System, which consists of more than 370 parks representing important examples of our country's natural and cultural heritage. Address inquiries to the Superintendent at 120 Chatham Lane, Fredericksburg, VA 22405-2508. You can also find park information at <http://www.nps.gov/frsp/frspweb.htm> on the Internet.

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