

# Manassas

Manassas  
National Battlefield Park  
Virginia

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



## First Manassas (First Bull Run)

On a warm July day in 1861, two great armies of a divided nation clashed for the first time on the fields overlooking Bull Run. Their ranks were filled with enthusiastic young volunteers in colorful new uniforms, gathered together from every part of the country. Confident that their foes would run at the first shot, the raw recruits were thankful that they would not miss the only battle of what surely would be a short war. But

any thought of colorful pageantry was suddenly lost in the smoke, din, dirt, and death of battle. Soldiers on both sides were stunned by the violence and destruction they encountered. At day's end nearly 900 young men lay lifeless on the fields of Matthews Hill, Henry Hill, and Chinn Ridge. Ten hours of heavy fighting swept away any notion the war's outcome would be decided quickly.



Gen. Irvin McDowell, Federal commander of the First Battle of Manassas.



Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard, commander of the main Confederate army at Manassas.



Gen. Joseph E. Johnston. His Confederate troops helped turn the tide of battle.



The Stone Bridge, where the opening shots of First Manassas were fired.

Cheers rang through the streets of Washington on July 16, 1861, as Gen. Irvin McDowell's army, 35,000 strong, marched out to begin the long-awaited campaign to capture Richmond and end the war. It was an army of green recruits, few of whom had the faintest idea of the magnitude of the task facing them. But their swaggering gait showed that none doubted the outcome. As excitement spread, many citizens and congressmen with wine and picnic baskets followed the army into the field to watch what all expected would be a colorful show.

These troops were 90-day volunteers summoned by President Abraham Lincoln after the startling news of Fort Sumter burst over the nation in April 1861. Called from shops and farms, they had little knowledge of what war would mean. The first day's march covered only 8 kilometers (5 miles), as many straggled to pick blackberries or fill canteens.

McDowell's lumbering columns were headed for the vital railroad junction at Manassas. Here the Orange and Alexandria Railroad met the Manassas Gap Railroad, which led west to the Shenandoah Valley. If McDowell could seize this junction, he would stand astride the best overland approach to the Confederate capital.

On July 18th McDowell's army reached Centreville. Five miles ahead a small meandering stream named Bull Run crossed the route of the Union advance, and there guarding the fords from Union Mills to the Stone Bridge waited 22,000 Southern troops under the command of Gen. Pierre G.T. Beauregard. McDowell first attempted to move toward the Confederate right flank, but his troops were checked at Blackburn's Ford. He then spent the next two days scouting the

Southern left flank. In the meantime, Beauregard asked the Confederate government at Richmond for help. Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, stationed in the Shenandoah Valley with 10,000 Confederate troops, was ordered to support Beauregard if possible. Johnston 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 directly into battle.

On the morning of July 21, McDowell sent his attack columns in a long march north toward Sudley Springs Ford. This route took the Federals around the Confederate left. To distract the Southerners, McDowell ordered a diversionary attack where the Warrenton Turnpike crossed Bull Run at the Stone Bridge. At 5:30 a.m. the deep-throated roar of a 30-pounder Parrott rifle shattered the morning calm, and signaled the start of battle.

McDowell's new plan depended on speed and surprise, both difficult with inexperienced troops. Valuable time was lost as the men stumbled through the darkness along narrow roads. Confederate Col. Nathan Evans, commanding at the Stone Bridge, soon realized that the attack on his front was only a diversion. Leaving a small force to hold the bridge, Evans rushed the remainder of his command to Matthews Hill in time to check McDowell's lead unit. But Evans' force was too small to hold back the Federals for long.

Soon brigades under Barnard Bee and Francis Bartow marched to Evans' assistance. But even with these reinforcements, the thin gray line collapsed and Southerners fled in disorder toward Henry Hill. 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!" 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, giving the Confederates enough time to reform their lines. Then the fighting resumed, each side trying to force the other off Henry Hill. The battle continued until just after 4 p.m., when fresh Southern units crashed into the Union right flank on Chinn Ridge, causing McDowell's tired and discouraged soldiers to withdraw.

At first the withdrawal was orderly. Screened by the regulars, the three-month volunteers retired across Bull Run, where they found the road to Washington jammed with the carriages of congressmen and others who had driven out to Centreville to watch the fight. Panic now seized many of the soldiers and the retreat became a rout. The Confederates, though bolstered by the arrival of President Jefferson Davis on the field just as the battle was ending, were too disorganized to follow up their success. Daybreak on July 22 found the defeated Union army back behind the bristling defenses of Washington.

## Second Manassas (Second Bull Run)

In August 1862, Union and Confederate armies converged for a second time on the plains of Manassas. The naive enthusiasm that preceded the earlier encounter was gone. War was not the holiday outing or grand adventure envisioned by the young recruits of 1861. The contending forces, now made up of seasoned veterans, knew well the reality of war. The Battle of Second Manassas, covering three days, produced far

greater carnage—3,300 killed—and brought the Confederacy to the height of its power. Still the battle did not weaken Northern resolve. The war's final outcome was yet unknown, and it would be left to other battles to decide whether the sacrifice at Manassas was part of the high price of Southern independence, or the cost of one country again united under the national standard.



Gen. Thomas J. Jackson, whose steadfastness influenced the outcome of both battles.



Gen. Robert E. Lee. His bold strategy made Second Manassas a Confederate victory.



Gen. John Pope, whose overconfidence resulted in Union defeat.



The Stone House, a landmark of both battles.

After the Union defeat at Manassas in July 1861, Gen. George B. McClellan took command of the Federal forces in and around Washington and organized them 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 on the tip of the York-James peninsula, only 160 kilometers (100 miles) southeast of Richmond. Early in April he advanced toward the Confederate capital. Anticipating such a move, 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 Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's Confederate army assailed the Federals in the bloody but inconclusive Battle of Seven Pines. Johnston was wounded, and President Davis placed Gen. Robert E. Lee in command. Seizing the offensive, Lee sent his force (now called the Army of Northern Virginia) across the Chickahominy River and, in a series of savage battles, pushed McClellan back from the edge of Richmond to a position on the James River.

At the same time, the scattered Federal forces in northern Virginia were organized into the Army of Virginia under the command of Gen. John Pope, who arrived with a reputation freshly won in the war's western theater. Gambling that McClellan would cause no further trouble around Richmond, Lee sent Stonewall Jackson's corps northward to "suppress" Pope. Jackson clashed indecisively with part of Pope's troops at Cedar Mountain on August 9. 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. On the Rapidan, Pope successfully blocked Lee's attempts to gain a tactical advantage, and then withdrew his men north

of the Rappahannock River. Lee knew that if he was to defeat Pope he would have to strike before McClellan's army arrived in northern Virginia. On August 25 Lee boldly started Jackson's corps on a march of over 70 kilometers (50 miles), around the Union right flank to strike at Pope's rear.

Two days later, Jackson's veterans seized Pope's supply depot at Manassas Junction. After a day of wild feasting, Jackson burned the Federal supplies and moved to a position in the woods at Groveton near the old Manassas battlefield.

Pope, stung by the attack on his supply base, abandoned the line of the Rappahannock and headed toward Manassas to "bag" Jackson. At the same time, Lee was moving northward with Longstreet's corps to reunite his army. On the afternoon of August 28, to prevent the Federal commander's efforts to concentrate at Centreville and bring Pope to battle, Jackson ordered his troops to attack a Union column as it marched past on the Warrenton Turnpike. This savage fight at Brawner's Farm lasted until dark.

Convinced that Jackson was isolated, Pope ordered his columns to converge on Groveton. He was sure that he could destroy Jackson before Lee and Longstreet could intervene. On the 29th Pope's army found Jackson's men posted along an unfinished railroad grade, north of the turnpike. All afternoon, in a series of uncoordinated attacks, Pope hurled his men against the Confederate position. In several places the northerners momentarily breached Jackson's line, but each time were forced back. During the afternoon, Longstreet's troops arrived on the battlefield and, unknown to Pope, deployed on Jackson's right, overlapping the exposed Union left. Lee urged Longstreet to attack, but

"Old Pete" demurred. The time was just not right, he said.

The morning of August 30 passed quietly. Just before noon, erroneously concluding the Confederates were retreating, Pope ordered his army forward in "pursuit." The pursuit, however, was shortlived. Pope found that Lee had gone nowhere. Amazingly, Pope ordered yet another attack against Jackson's line. Fitz-John Porter's corps, along with part of McDowell's, struck Starke's division at the unfinished railroad's "Deep Cut." The southerners held firm, and Porter's column was hurled back in a bloody repulse.

Seeing the Union lines in disarray, Longstreet pushed his massive columns forward and staggered the Union left. Pope's army was faced with annihilation. Only a heroic stand by northern troops, first on Chinn Ridge and then once again on Henry Hill, bought time for Pope's hard-pressed Union forces. Finally, under cover of darkness the defeated Union army withdrew across Bull Run toward the defenses of Washington. Lee's bold and brilliant Second Manassas campaign opened the way for the south's first invasion of the north, and a bid for foreign intervention.



# The Battlefields of Manassas

Much of the landscape within Manassas National Battlefield Park still retains its wartime character. Henry Hill, focus of heavy fighting at First Manassas in July 1861, is still cleared, though now neat and lush after decades of farming. A new farmhouse marks the site of the old. The unfinished railroad, scene of much of the fighting at Second Manassas in August 1862, still runs through the woods north of the Warrenton Turnpike. The peacefulness of the Chinn Farm, its house and outbuildings now gone, belies the violence that took place there. The Stone House—the former Union field hospital—still stands as it has for 160 years, overlooking the Warrenton Turnpike. These and other sites on the First and Second Manassas battlefields can be reached by following the tours outlined below.



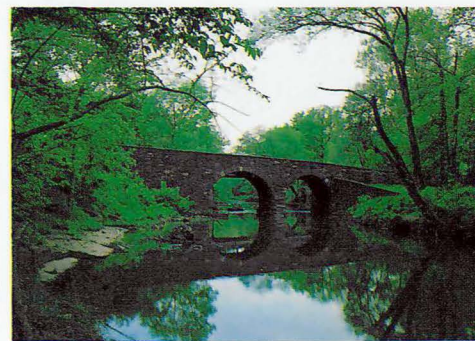
Stonewall Jackson Monument

## First Manassas Battlefield A Walking Tour

The critical fighting at First Manassas (Bull Run) centered on Henry Hill. Today a one-mile self-guided walking tour with taped messages and interpretive signs tells the story of the battle. The tour begins behind the visitor center at the rebuilt Henry House. Near the house is a monument to the "Memory of the Patriots who fell at Bull Run, July 21, 1861." Also nearby is the grave of Mrs. Judith Carter Henry, the only civilian killed in the first battle. From the Henry House the trail goes north to the Confederate artillery positions overlooking Matthews Hill—vital during the morning phase of the battle—and then across the fields to the Robinson House, where Wade Hampton led his South Carolina troops into the battle. The trail then loops back along the Confederate line, where Gen. Thomas J. Jackson received his famous nickname "Stonewall," to the site of the capture of Captain Griffin's Union cannon—a turning point of the battle. The final stop overlooks Chinn Ridge where, in the late afternoon, a Confederate attack crushed the Union right and began the rout of the entire Union army.

**Caution:** The trail is not paved and the ground is uneven. Weather conditions may occasionally make the walk slippery. Please watch your step!

A 1.4-mile loop walking trail at the Stone Bridge and a .6-mile walking trail at Sudley highlight other areas of the First Manassas battlefield. Information about these two trails is available at the visitor center.



The Stone Bridge

© David Muench

## Second Manassas Battlefield A Driving Tour

Four times larger than the first battle, the Second Battle of Manassas raged over a much wider area. This 12-mile driving tour is designed to cover twelve sites which figured prominently in the second battle. Each description is keyed by number to the modern map at right.

**Caution:** Two heavily traveled highways divide the park. U.S. 29 follows the historical roadbed of the Warrenton Turnpike, an important commercial highway before the war and which played a major part in both battles. The Manassas-Sudley Road (Va. 234) crosses the turnpike at the Stone House. Use caution in driving across or turning onto and off of these highways.

**1 Battery Heights** In the late afternoon of August 28, 1862, Stonewall Jackson ordered his troops to attack a Union column as it marched past on the Warrenton Turnpike in front of the hidden Confederate position north of the road. As the lead elements of Gen. Rufus King's Union division emerged from the woods to the west, Jackson pushed his infantry forward from the distant ridge into this open field. King's troops swung to meet this attack and for one-and-a-half hours the two lines fought resolutely, in some places only 80 yards apart. In that short time this opening struggle of the Second Battle of Manassas inflicted casualties amounting to almost one-third of the 7,000 men engaged.



The Stone House

**2 Stone House** Convinced that Jackson was isolated, Pope ordered his columns to converge upon and attack the Confederates. He was sure he could destroy Jackson before Lee and Longstreet intervened. During the fighting on August 30, Pope made his headquarters directly behind this house. The house served as a field hospital during First and Second Manassas.



L. Logan House

**3 Dogan Ridge** On August 29 Pope's army found Jackson's men posted along an unfinished railroad grade about one-half mile west of this location. Throughout the day these fields were awash with blue as thousands of Federal troops formed here for assaults against Jackson's line. Though bloody, these attacks were uncoordinated and unsuccessful. The low ridges surrounding you were also the site of important Union artillery positions.

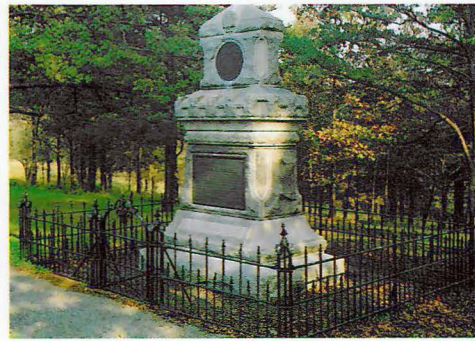
**4 Sudley** Throughout the day on August 29th, Federal troops made several brutal but unsuccessful attempts to smash through the extreme left of Jackson's line, positioned on the knoll just west of here. While the fighting raged here, far to the south across the Warrenton Turnpike, Longstreet's troops arrived on the battlefield and, unknown to Pope, deployed on Jackson's right, overlapping the exposed Union left. Lee urged Longstreet to attack, but "Old Pete" demurred. The time was just not right, he said.

**5 Unfinished Railroad** Jackson's line covered a front of about one and one-half miles, extending from near the Sudley Church to a point three quarters of a mile southwest of here. The center of his line rested in this area. The focal point of Jackson's position was the bed of the unfinished railroad. The grade is still visible running into the woods on both sides of the road.

**6 Deep Cut** The morning of August 30 passed quietly. Just before noon, erroneously concluding the Confederates were retreating, Pope ordered his army forward in "pursuit." The pursuit, however, was short-lived. Pope found that Lee had gone nowhere. Amazingly, Pope ordered yet another attack against Jackson's line. More than 5,000 troops under the command of Gen. Fitz-John Porter moved forward across the road into the field and crashed into Jackson's line in the area around the "Deep Cut." There the Southerners held firmly, and Porter's column was hurled back in a bloody repulse. A trail of about one-third of a mile begins at the road and traces the footsteps of Porter's gallant troops.

**7 Groveton** The small, white frame building just west of you is the only remaining structure of the wartime village of Groveton and one of only two Civil War-era houses remaining in the park. Nearby Groveton Confederate Cemetery contains the remains of over 260 Confederate soldiers. The identity of only a handful is known.

**8 New York Monuments** On the afternoon of August 30, seeing the Union lines in disarray following the repulse of Porter, Longstreet pushed his massive columns forward and staggered the Union left. A brief, futile stand on this ridge by the 5th and 10th New York Regiments ended in slaughter. In five minutes the 5th New York lost 123 men killed, the greatest loss of



10th New York Zouave Monument

life in any single infantry regiment in any battle of the Civil War.

**9 Hazel Plain (Chinn House)** This low stone foundation is all that remains of the Chinn House. About 5 o'clock on August 30, Longstreet's attackers converged on this ridge, passing on either side of the house as they bore down on the Federal line. But the Federals resisted stoutly, buying time for Pope's hard-pressed forces.

**10 Chinn Ridge** Stretched along this ridge, the Union troops fought desperately to delay Longstreet's advance long enough for Pope to set up a second defensive line on Henry Hill, just to the east. From here you can see a marker near the spot where Fletcher Webster, Daniel Webster's eldest son, was killed while leading the 12th Massachusetts Infantry into battle.

**11 Henry Hill** Here parts of McDowell's, Porter's, Sigel's, and Reno's corps made a final stand against Longstreet. Taking position in the bed of Sudley Road, the Federals beat off Confederate attacks from Anderson's and Jones' divisions. Darkness brought an end to the fighting. The Union army, though beaten, was still intact.

**12 Stone Bridge** Finally, under cover of darkness, the defeated Union army withdrew across Bull Run in this vicinity toward Centerville and the Washington defenses beyond. Lee's bold and brilliant Second Manassas campaign opened the way for the South's first invasion of the north and possible European recognition of the Confederate government.

The map at the right, based on historical sources as well as modern field studies, portrays the battlefield area as it appeared during the Civil War.

In 1861 this was a peaceful landscape—a countryside of gently rolling fields and patchy woods dotted with bustling farms. The lifestyle re-



flected that of most Virginians. Benjamin Chinn and his nine slaves toiled in the fields around "Hazel Plain." Near Groveton, Lucinda Dogan's family grazed cattle in fields jutting up against an old unfinished railroad bed, while a half mile to the east her brother John raised corn and peaches on the land around "Rosefield." Henry Matthews and his wife Jane tended their plots near their 40-year-old stone house. Occasionally they gave refreshment to a teamster passing along the Warrenton Turnpike to or from the markets in Alexandria. On the hill across the road from the stone house was "Spring Hill," owned by 85-year-old Mrs. Judith Henry. But the fields of the Henry farm were fallow now, burgeoning with tall grass, brush, and cedars, because Mrs. Henry was too old to work them. She remained in her small house, visited often by her children and other neighbors, living out her life on land that had been in her family for over a century.

Second Manassas. Henry Matthews' stone house became a field hospital where the medical department of the Union Army was severely tested ministering to the needs of wounded and dying soldiers. And Mrs. Henry's farm—forever after known as Henry Hill—was awash in blood by the end of the first battle. Mrs. Henry herself, having refused to be removed to a place of greater safety, lay dead amidst the wreckage of her house, killed by a stray artillery shell. Nearby lived the free black family of James Robinson.

## About Your Visit

Manassas National Battlefield Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. It is located 26 miles southwest of Washington, D.C., near the intersection of I-66 and Va. 234. The visitor center is open daily except Christmas and contains a museum, slide programs, maps, and publications. Uniformed Park Service personnel will gladly answer your questions and help you make the most of

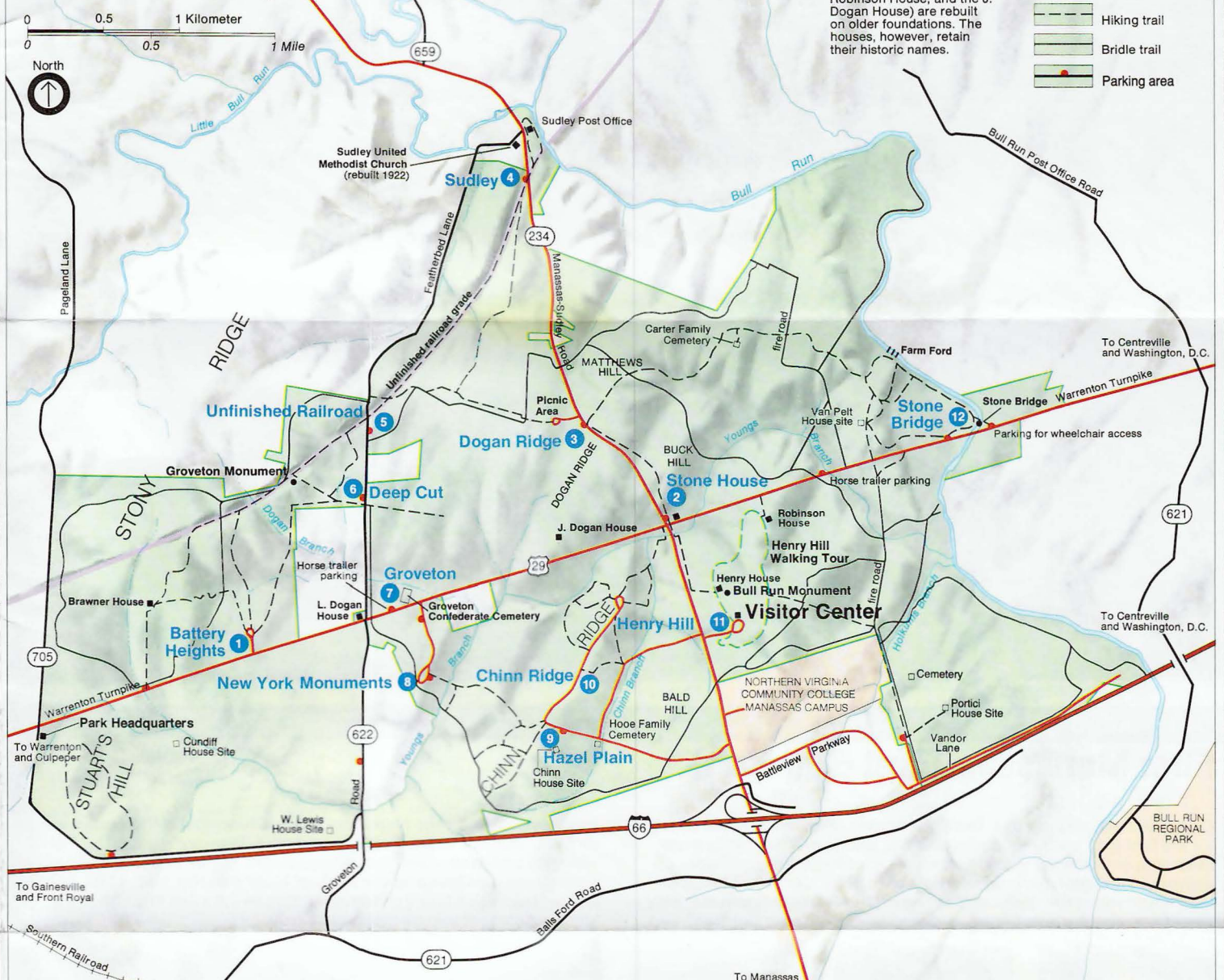
your visit. For information write the Superintendent, Manassas National Battlefield Park, 12521 Lee Highway, Manassas, VA 22110, or phone (703) 754-1861.

Please help us preserve this historic area for future generations by observing the following regulations:

- Climbing on cannons and monuments is not allowed.
- All pets must be kept on a leash.
- Picnicking, kite flying, ball games, and other recreational activities are

restricted to the picnic area. □ Alcoholic beverages are prohibited. □ Hunting for relics is strictly forbidden. □ Fires are permitted only in grills at the picnic area. Extinguish all fires completely before leaving. □ Parking is allowed in designated areas only. □ All motorized vehicles must stay on established roadways and are prohibited on shoulders, grassy areas, and trails. □ Bicycles are prohibited on all trails. □ Use caution riding bicycles on roadways.

## The Battlefield Today



## The Battlefield in 1861-1862

