

MARYLAND
BYWAYS

Antietam Campaign  4

As the autumn of 1862 approached, President Abraham Lincoln felt he needed a decisive Union victory to ensure that there would be support for a yet-to-be-announced proclamation freeing the slaves. It's still debatable just how decisive the slaughter at Antietam – remembered as “The Bloodiest Single Day of the Civil War” – truly was. By sheer numbers, the Sept. 17 battle ended in a draw, with 10,700 Confederates and 12,400 Union soldiers killed, wounded or missing in action. However, General George McClellan's Union army thwarted the Rebel advance north, and a few days after the cannons fell silent, Lincoln visited the battlefield.

This byway roughly follows the chronology of events beginning Sept. 4, as General Robert E. Lee and his

Army of Northern Virginia crossed the Potomac River into Maryland, and ending two weeks later as Lee's forces limped back into West Virginia. It follows one of four Maryland Civil War Trails (another, Booth's Escape, appears as a byway on pages 115-120). Each trail brings you face to face with both familiar and lesser-known Civil War stories, while also placing you among breathtaking scenery while presenting convenient recreational opportunities. This byway is one of two Civil War Trails that intersects Maryland's Heart of the Civil War Area, recognizing South Mountain and its surrounding valleys as the crossroads of the Civil War in the state. For a free map guide to Maryland Civil War Trails, call 1-888-248-4597 or go online at www.visitmaryland.org.



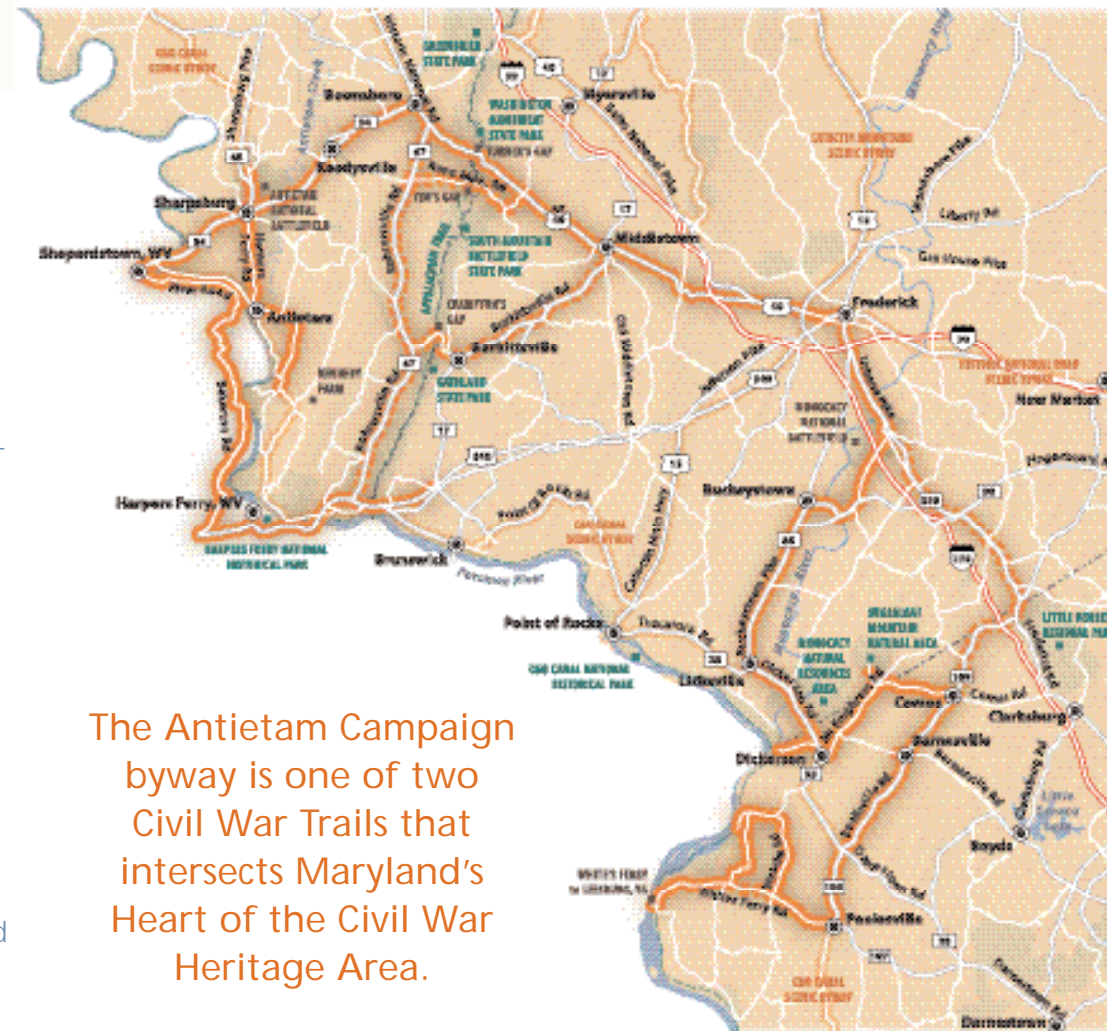
126 miles from
White's Ferry to
Sharpsburg



White's Ferry to Poolesville – MD 107 & 109

General Lee understood the advantages of a military strike into Federal territory: it would allow time for farmers in war-torn Virginia to complete their fall harvest, and a victory on Union soil might gain foreign support for the Southern cause. Though Lee's ensuing Campaign of 1862 came to a head in Sharpsburg, his path to that Western Maryland town is strewn with sites of other significant confrontations.

In early September, Confederate soldiers forded the Potomac River near the present-day position of White's Ferry, which was established in 1828 and still remains hard at work transporting modern-day conveyances and people. Not long after, Union horse-



The Antietam Campaign byway is one of two Civil War Trails that intersects Maryland's Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area.

men probing for enemy infantry clashed with Rebel cavalry beyond the C&O Canal in Poolesville. It would be one of several times Poolesville residents witnessed Civil War action up close: a year earlier, Union troops had assembled here before being ferried into Virginia for the Battle of Ball's Bluff, and a year later, J.E.B. Stuart's Confederate cavalry stormed through on its way to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Several historic structures around Poolesville harken back to the mid-19th century, with Civil War exhibits found inside the circa-1793 John Poole House.

Poolesville to Frederick – MD 109, Comus Rd, Mt. Ephraim Rd, 28, MD 109, 28, 85 Michael's Mill Rd, Baker Valley Rd, 355

Small communities in Beallsville and

Barnesville were disrupted by running cavalry fights, until Confederate riders finally concluded a successful rear-guard action in Comus on Sept. 11. The byway then cuts back across Sugarloaf Mountain, where signalmen from both armies were often stationed, to the town of Dickerson. Here along MD 28, you'll find the Monocacy River Natural Resource Management Area, which offers hunting, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, and a link into the C&O Canal byway (see pages 27-38).

Onward came the Rebel troops, camping in Carrollton Manor and feasting on bread baked in Buckeystown. To the east in Urbana, men of Stuart's cavalry hosted a Sabers and Roses Ball at the Landon House, which remains a popular "special event" spot. But their merri-



ment was cut short by reports of Union cavalry in the area.

Between US 270 and MD 355 on the road into Frederick, you'll find the Monocacy National Battlefield. Perhaps better known as the site of the July 9, 1864, conflict dubbed "The Battle that Saved Washington," Monocacy also played a key role in the Antietam struggle. Ask at the battlefield visitors center for details about Lee's "lost orders," which had been mistakenly left behind at an abandoned Confederate camp. The orders were discovered by a Federal private and given to General McClellan, who used the information to his advantage at Antietam.

Frederick to Boonsboro – US 40 & US 40 Alt, MD 17 & 67

Featuring a quaint, 50-block historic,

cultural and commercial district, Frederick has been recognized by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as a "Great American Main Street" award winner. Among its many attractions are the National Museum of Civil War Medicine and the Barbara Fritchie House and Museum. Fritchie was a 95-year-old widow when, according to a famous poem by John Greenleaf Whittier, she defiantly waved an American flag from her window as General Stonewall Jackson and his Confederate troops moved through town.

Here, the byway follows a portion of US 40 – the Historic National Road – through Braddock Heights before branching off toward South Mountain State Park. Three days prior to Antietam, battles were fought along three South Mountain "gaps,"



with some of the wounded, including future President Rutherford B. Hayes, removed to homes and churches in Burkittsville and Middletown, which served as makeshift hospitals. Crampton's Gap, today encompassed by Gathland State Park, serves as home to the War Correspondents Memorial Arch, erected on the one-time estate of Civil War journalist and nationally renowned author George Alfred Townsend. Travel over the mountain to Boonsboro, which includes a museum displaying local Civil War relics.

Boonsboro to Sharpsburg – MD 34

Heading toward their confrontation in Sharpsburg, both armies passed through Keedysville, which was also where many wounded were treated in Antietam's aftermath.

As dawn broke on Sept. 17, 1862 battle lines were drawn near Antietam Creek – Lee's 41,000 soldiers with their backs to the Potomac, against a Federal army more than twice that size. By dusk, one of every five fighting men had fallen. The Union dead are buried at the Antietam National Cemetery, with many Confederate soldiers laid to rest in nearby Hagerstown.

A thorough tour of the beautifully preserved Antietam National Battlefield – from the cornfield and Dunker Church to Burnside Bridge and the "Bloody Lane" – requires several hours, especially when combined with a tour of the Pry House Field Hospital Museum. Also plan to stop at the Kennedy Farmhouse, the staging area for abolitionist John Brown and his small army as they planned a



pre-Civil War raid of the U.S. Armory and Arsenal at Harpers Ferry. You can reach the Harpers Ferry National Historic Park by heading south from Sharpsburg on Harpers Ferry Road. Brown's raid, though ultimately unsuccessful, became an anti-slavery rallying cry during the war.

OLD LINE LORE: *The Monocacy Aqueduct, the largest such structure on the C&O Canal, was twice a target of Confederate demolition crews during the Antietam Campaign, but both attempts to destroy it failed. Granite blocks that were used to construct the aqueduct had been quarried from nearby Sugarloaf Mountain.*

Antietam National Battlefield
5831 Dunker Church Rd, Sharpsburg 21782
301-432-5124
Year-round, daily, 8:30am-5pm.
www.nps.gov/anti

Barbara Fritchie House and Museum

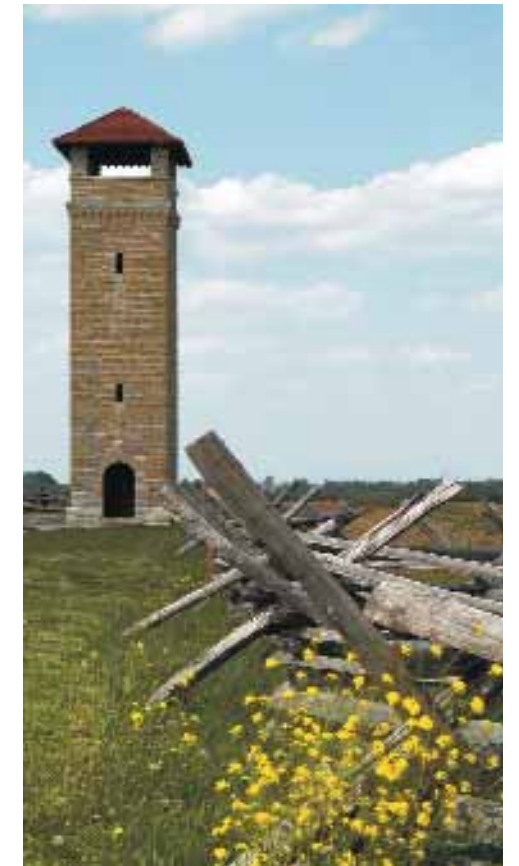
154 W Patrick St, Frederick 21701
301-698-8992
Apr-Sept: Mon, Thur-Sun, 10am-4pm;
Oct-Nov: Sat, 10am-4pm; Sun, 1-4pm.

Boonsborough Museum of History

113 N Main St, Boonsboro 21713
301-432-6969
May-Sept: Sun, 1-5pm; or by appt.

Gathland State Park

MD 67 (c/o Greenbrier State Park, 21843 National Pike, Boonsboro 21713)
301-791-4767
8am-sunset.
www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/gathland.html



John Poole House

19923 Fisher Ave, Poolesville 20837

301-972-8588

Sun, 12N-5pm.

www.historicmedley.org

Kennedy Farm House (John Brown HQ)

2406 Chestnut Grove Rd, Sharpsburg 21782

May-Oct: interior tours by appt. only.

www.johnbrown.org

Monocacy National Battlefield

4801 Urbana Pike, Rt 355 S, Frederick 21704

301-662-3515, 301-662-6980

8am-4pm.

www.nps.gov/mono

Monocacy River Natural Resource Management Area

(c/o Seneca Creek State Park, 11950

Clopper Rd, Gaithersburg 20878)

301-924-2127

Dawn-dusk.

www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/central/monocacy.html

National Museum of Civil War Medicine

48 E Patrick St, Frederick 21701

301-695-1864, 800-564-1864

Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm; Sun, 11am-5pm.

www.civilwarmed.org

Pry House Field Hospital Museum

18906 Shepherdstown Pike, Sharpsburg 21782

301-695-1864, 800-564-1864

May: weekends, 11am-5:30pm;

Memorial Day-Halloween: daily, 11am-5:30pm; Nov 1-Dec 2, weekends, 11am-5:30pm.

www.civilwarmed.org

South Mountain Battlefield State Park

(c/o Greenbrier State Park, 21843 National Pike, Boonsboro 21713)

301-791-4767

Dawn-dusk.

www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/western/southmountain.html

White's Ferry

24801 White's Ferry Rd, MD 107, Dickerson 20842

301-349-5200

Daily, 5am-11pm.