

# Rockingham

## AT WAR

## Battlefield Driving Tour

### Battles of Cross Keys and Port Republic

June 8 and 9, 1862

#### 1862 Timeline

##### Winter 1861-62

Confederate Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson in winter headquarters in Winchester.

##### March 1862

Jackson retires south, up the Valley, as Union forces occupy Winchester.

##### 23 March

Jackson is defeated at the First Battle of Kernstown.

##### April - May

After pausing at modern-day Elkton, Jackson moves his army out of the Valley to deceive Federal forces and then returns via rail through Staunton.

##### 8 May

Jackson defeats Federal forces under Gen. John Frémont at McDowell.

##### 23 May

Jackson defeats a Federal garrison at Front Royal.

##### 25 May

Jackson defeats Union Gen. Nathaniel Banks at the First Battle of Winchester.

##### Early June

Jackson narrowly eludes an attempt by Union Gens. Frémont and James Shields to trap him in the lower Shenandoah Valley.

##### 8 June

Jackson defeats Frémont at Cross Keys.

##### 9 June

Jackson defeats Union forces at Port Republic.

##### Mid-June

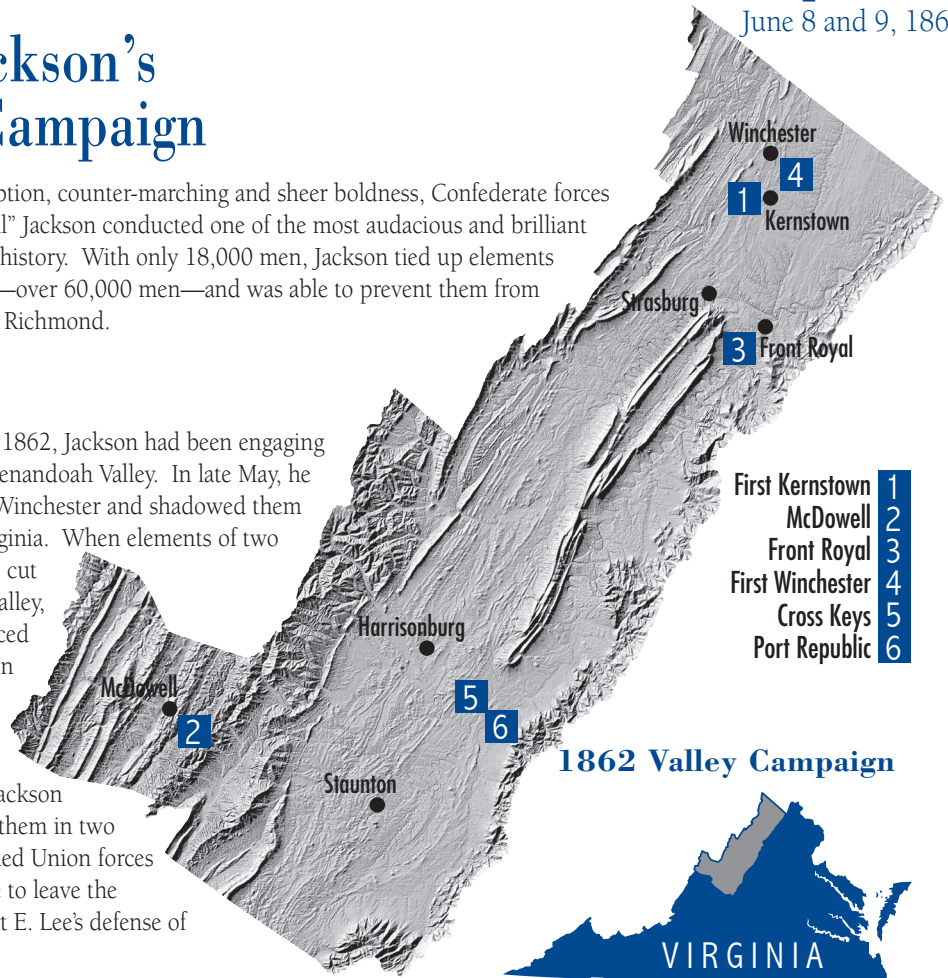
Federal forces withdraw from the Valley and Jackson joins Lee in front of Richmond.

## Stonewall Jackson's 1862 Valley Campaign

In a swift feat of marching, deception, counter-marching and sheer boldness, Confederate forces under Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson conducted one of the most audacious and brilliant campaigns in American military history. With only 18,000 men, Jackson tied up elements of three separate Federal armies—over 60,000 men—and was able to prevent them from joining the Federal effort against Richmond.

### Twin Battles

Over the course of the Spring of 1862, Jackson had been engaging Union armies throughout the Shenandoah Valley. In late May, he had pushed the Federals out of Winchester and shadowed them north into modern-day West Virginia. When elements of two more Union armies attempted to cut him off at the north end of the Valley, Jackson eluded their trap and raced southward, pursued by Gen. John Frémont on the west side of the Massanutten and Gen. James Shields on the east. Refusing to allow the Federals to combine, Jackson masterfully fought and defeated them in two battles over two days. The defeated Union forces withdrew. Jackson was then free to leave the Shenandoah Valley to join Robert E. Lee's defense of Richmond.



- 1 First Kernstown
- 2 McDowell
- 3 Front Royal
- 4 First Winchester
- 5 Cross Keys
- 6 Port Republic

1862 Valley Campaign

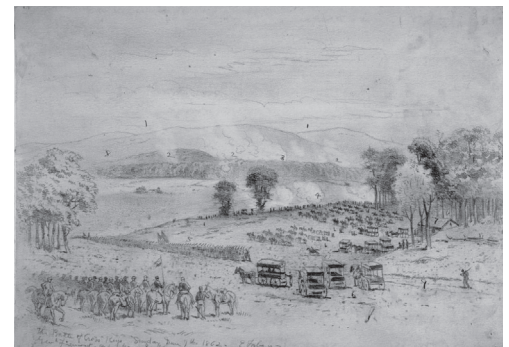
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### The Battle of Cross Keys (June 8, 1862)

After trailing Jackson south, Frémont began to move east to join with Shields at the south end of the Massanutten Mountain. Jackson ordered Gen. Richard Ewell to block Frémont's advance. Following a two hour artillery duel, Federal brigades moved forward on their left (the Confederate right), but were initially stunned and then thrown back. Frémont ordered other probes along the line as Confederates made limited counterattacks against the Federal left. The next day, a small Confederate rear guard slowed Frémont's advance, while the rest of Ewell's force crossed the North and South Rivers to assist in the defeat of Federals at Port Republic.

### The Battle of Port Republic (June 9, 1862)

Having stopped Frémont's attack the day before, Jackson consolidated most of his army for his attack on Shields' division. (Shields himself would not be present at the battle; Federal troops were commanded by Gen. Erastus Tyler.) Federal artillery occupied a key position on a hill called "the Coaling" which could sweep the low river bottom plain from its heights. Until the Coaling was taken, defeating the Union infantry in Jackson's front would be doubtful. Several attempts were made to capture this strong artillery position including advances made on the bottom land toward the Federal defenders. Eventually an attack succeeded in taking the Coaling, forcing the Federals to retreat.



# Civil War Orientation Center Hardesty-Higgins House Visitor Center

Start your tour at the Rockingham Area Orientation Center, housed at the Hardesty-Higgins House Visitor Center in downtown Harrisonburg. The orientation center features maps, information, historic imagery, and a Civil War orientation film for the Rockingham Area that includes animated maps of the battles of Cross Keys and Port Republic.

## Driving Tour Directions

**Please Note:** Much of the Cross Keys and Port Republic battlefields are on private land, so please be careful to stop only at sites clearly marked as open for visitors.

*Directions to Stop 1 (Turner Ashby Monument Site, Turner Ashby Lane off Neff Avenue):* From Port Republic Road (Route 253), turn east onto Neff Avenue. (The turn is about 0.8 miles south of the intersection with Interstate 81.) Continue on Neff Ave. for 0.5 miles, then turn left onto Turner Ashby Lane. Continue on Turner Ashby Lane for 500 feet to the parking area for the Ashby Monument site, then walk to the monument.

### Stop 1 ~ Turner Ashby Site

This is the site of the death of Confederate Gen. Turner Ashby, the “Black Knight of the Confederacy,” on June 6, 1862. When advance elements of Union Gen. John C. Fremont’s force pursued Confederate Gen. Stonewall Jackson – who had started his men towards Port Republic – Ashby successfully ambushed a contingent of overconfident Federal cavalry, including English soldier-of-fortune Col. Sir Percy Wyndham, who was captured during the action. But during further combat with additional Federal troops (including the famed Pennsylvania Bucktails), Ashby was killed. Ashby’s body was carried to Port Republic to the Frank Kemper House (today’s Port Republic Museum). The monument at this site was erected 36 years later on June 6, 1898.

*Directions to Stop 2 (Union Church):* Take Turner Ashby Road back to Neff Lane. Turn right onto Neff Lane and continue 0.5 miles to the intersection with Port Republic Road (Rte. 253). Turn left onto Port Republic Road. Continue on Port Republic Road for approximately 4.2 miles to the intersection with VA-276 (Cross Keys Road). Turn right onto VA-276 then continue 0.8 miles to Battlefield Road (on your left). Turn left onto Battlefield Road (VA-679). Continue on Battlefield Road for approximately 400 feet to the Cross Keys Mill Creek Ruritan Hall on your right (across the road from the cemetery); there are parking spaces around the building. Park and walk to the north end of the building (facing the cemetery) and read the battlefield orientation sign and Civil War Trails marker.

## Cross Keys Battlefield

### Stop 2 ~ Union Church: The Battle Opens (Cross Keys)

The modern Union Church (the Cross Keys-Mill Creek Ruritan Hall) in front of you sits on the site of the Union Church that stood here at the time of the Battle of Cross Keys. The church and its adjacent cemetery were the site of the opening shots of the Battle of Cross Keys, when Federals drove away Confederate skirmishers from the 15th Alabama and deployed along the historic Keezletown Road (Cross Keys Road). The Alabamians were driven south across the rolling countryside to the main Confederate defensive line on Mill Creek Ridge (today known as Artillery Ridge), the next stop on the tour. Across the road from the Church is a cemetery where Civil War veterans and their family members are buried. Some of the initial skirmishing during the battle passed through the cemetery, and some of the headstones may have been chipped by bullets during the fighting.

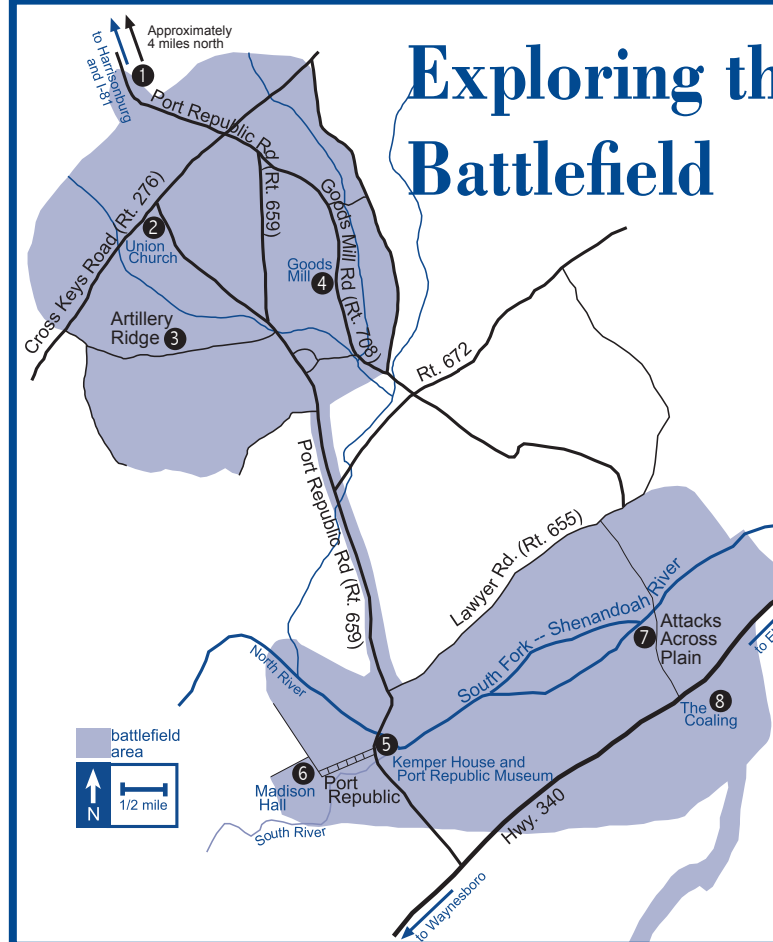
*Directions to Stop #3:* Leaving the parking lot, turn right onto Battlefield Road (Va-679). Continue on Va-679 for 1.2 miles to the intersection with Va-253 (Port Republic Road). **Being very careful to watch for traffic** (cars drive at high speed on this road), turn right onto Port Republic Road. After 200 yards, turn right onto Artillery Road. Continue for 0.6 miles, then turn right onto Bowtie Lane. Continue for 200 yards and park in the small parking area to the right. Continue on foot to enter the gate onto Artillery Ridge, then take the trail along the fence to the first Civil War Trails marker.

### Stop 3 ~ Artillery Ridge (Confederate Defensive Line)

You’re standing on Mill Creek Ridge (today known as Artillery Ridge), near the left flank of the main Confederate defensive line. (In front of you you can see a road trace climbing the bluff. The 15th Alabama likely used that path to climb the ridgeline after they were driven south from Union Church.) Union commander Gen. John C. Frémont assumed that Ewell’s left flank was the strong side of the Confederate line and ordered his artillery to soften Ewell’s position. An artillery duel ensued from 10 a.m. until noon. As the duel ended, Frémont ordered Gens. Robert H. Milroy and Robert C. Schenck to demonstrate against the Confederate center and left (towards this position) to draw support troops away from Ewell’s right. Meanwhile, to the east, Gen. Julius Stahel’s Federal brigades advanced – only to be shattered and thrown back by a surprise volley from Gen. Isaac Trimble’s Confederate brigade. (The “Slaughter of the 8th New York”.) Later in the day, Union troops under Union Gen. Robert Milroy advanced to attack the Confederates on this side of the battlefield. Using the cover of heavy artillery fire, Milroy used a series of ravines to advance as far as the heights opposite this ridgeline. While Confederate resistance was stiff, Milroy was still working his way forward when he received orders to fall back from Fremont, who was concerned about Confederate pressure on the other side of the battlefield. Milroy, still confident of success, was dumbfounded – and reluctantly pulled back.

*Directions to Stop #4:* Take Bowtie Lane back to Artillery. Turn left and continue for 200 yards to the intersection with Port Republic Road (Va-253). Again being very careful to watch for traffic, turn left onto Port Republic Road. Continue for 1.4 miles to Good’s Mill Road (Rte. 708) on your right. (As you drive along Port Republic Road, note the open field and fence line to

# Exploring the Battlefield



## Visitor Information



Civil War site brochures and lodging and restaurant information plus group tour information are available at:

### Civil War Orientation Center and Harrisonburg Tourism & Visitor Services Hardesty-Higgins House Visitor Center

212 S. Main Street, Harrisonburg - 540-432-8935

Open daily - 9:00am to 5:00pm

[www.harrisonburgtourism.com](http://www.harrisonburgtourism.com)

your right. That is the site of the Confederate Gen. Isaac Trimble's repulse of the 8th New York, the pivotal action in the battle.) Turn right onto Good's Mill Road (Rte 708); this is a sharp right turn, almost doubling back. Continue on Good's Mill Road for 1.1 miles, then pull into the grass at the entrance to the Good's Mill walking trail. (Look for the Civil War Trails "bugle" directional marker.) Be careful not to block in the roadway of block any of the residents' driveways.

#### **Stop 4 ~ Goods Mill Walking Trail: Confederate Counterattacks**

This is the site of Confederate defense and counterattacks as a Union artillery battery covered the Federal withdrawal. After the Federal advance in the center of the battlefield had been shattered by Gen. Isaac Trimble's defense (the "Slaughter of the 8th New York"), the Confederates attempted to capitalize by moving forward on this side (east side of the battlefield.) Follow the trail (a grass path) around the perimeter of the property. There is a grass path leading around the perimeter of the property that includes three Civil War Trails interpretive markers. In this location, there are two interpretive Virginia Civil War Trails signs and a memorial plaque visible from the parking area. Follow the grass path around the perimeter of the property to see a third interpretive sign. Please note that there is a private residence in the center of the property—please stay on the grass path to see the sign at the rear of the property.

*Directions to Stop #5: Goods Mill is the last stop on the Cross Keys battlefield tour. To tour the Port Republic battlefield, continue south on Goods Mill Road until you reach Rt. 672, turn right and proceed to Rt. 659, Port Republic Road. Turn left and travel to Stop 4—town of Port Republic.*

*Continue south on Good Mill Road for 1.4 miles, then turn right onto Route 672. Continue for 1.0 miles to the intersection with Port Republic Road (Va-253). Turn left onto Port Republic Road (again, being very careful to watch for traffic), then continue for 2.2 miles to the town of Port Republic. Turn left onto State Route 1605 and in 100 feet pull into the parking area to the left, beside the Port Republic Museum.*

## **Port Republic Battlefield**

The day after his troops (under the command of Gen. Richard S. Ewell), defeated Union Gen. John C. Frémont at Cross Keys. Stonewall Jackson moved to attack the other Federal force east of Port Republic.

#### **Stop 5 ~ Town of Port Republic and Museum: Frank Kemper House**

You're standing next to the historic Frank Kemper House (the modern-day Port Republic Museum). Please read the orientation sign for the battle located in the parking area. The Kemper House is where Turner Ashby was laid to rest after being killed at Chestnut Ridge on June 6, 1862. If the museum is open, please take advantage of the chance to see their outstanding exhibits. In the village are located the Port Republic Museum in the Frank Kemper House and other historical sites which are interpreted by walking and driving tour guides located at the Museum. (The museum is open. There are interpretive signs at the sites along the streets, including those of bridges that figured in the Battle of Port Republic, as well as "Jackson's Narrow Escape," when Stonewall Jackson was almost captured on June 8, 1862.)

*Directions to Stop #6: Return to Port Republic Road (Va-253) and turn right. Drive one block north and turn left (west) onto Main Street (State Route 605). Continue for 0.5 miles (staying on the road when it makes a 90 degree turn to the right) to the interpretive marker in front of Madison Hall on the left.*

#### **Stop 6 ~ Madison Hall and Jackson's Headquarters**

*(Please note: the house is not open to the public.)* Fighting occurred in this area on June 8, 1862 when a Federal cavalry patrol crossed the South River and attacked through the town surprising Jackson, who had a headquarters at Madison Hall. (This incident is often called "Jackson's Narrow Escape".) Jackson and his valuable wagon train barely evaded capture.

*Directions to Stop #7: Return through Port Republic on State Route 605 (Main Street) for 0.5 miles to the intersection with Port Republic Road (Va-253). Turn right. Continue for 1.2 miles south to the intersection with US-340. Turn left. Continue 2.1 miles east, then turn left onto State Route 708 (Lynnwood Road). Continue for 0.4 miles then pull into the gravel area on the left immediately after crossing the railroad tracks.*

#### **Stop 7 ~ Battle of Port Republic: Attacks Across the Plain**

The Union troops waiting for Jackson consisted of two isolated brigades under the command of Gen. Erastus B. Tyler. You're standing along the Union defensive line. The Federals were in a strong defensive position, aligned near Lewiston Lane (modern-day Lynnwood Road), with their right anchored on the south branch of the Shenandoah River, and their left on the open crest of a ridge known as "The Coaling." Federal artillery atop the Coaling dominated the battlefield.

Confederate troops were slow to reach the battlefield, as the only route was via a makeshift wagon bridge over the South River. Concerned that delays would allow time for Federal reinforcements (especially Frémont) to arrive, Jackson launched his assaults piecemeal, with the troops he had at hand. Elements of the Stonewall Brigade attacked towards you through the wheat fields in the river plain, towards the modern-day Lynnwood Road, but were repulsed with heavy casualties – as Union artillery fire from the Coaling wreaked havoc in the rebel ranks – and then were driven back further by a Federal counterattack. Jackson soon came to realize that the attacks here were doomed to failure while The Coaling remained in Union hands.

*Directions to Stop #8: Turn right onto Rte 708 (Lynnwood Rd.) heading south. Continue 0.5 miles to the intersection with US 340. Cross US 340 (do not turn) and continue 200 feet to the church parking area on your right and park. (If a church service or church event is being held, please be especially courteous and avoid excessive noise.)*

#### **Stop 8 ~ Battle of Port Republic: "The Coaling"**

Cross the road and take the path that leads up the hill to "The Coaling." (Please note: the home at the top of the hill is a private residence; please do not go beyond the marked trail.) The path includes interpretive markers and views from points along the path. "The Coaling" is one of the signature sites of the Civil War – the pivotal position in the final dramatic battle of Stonewall Jackson's war-changing Valley Campaign. As the markers detail, Union artillery positioned here dominated the battlefield on the plains from here to the river, and helped repulse the initial Confederate attacks across that field.

After initial attempts to flank the Coaling failed, Jackson turned to the Louisiana Brigade, the "shock troops" of his army. While one regiment joined the fight in the river plain, the rest of the brigade, including the famed Louisiana Tigers, assaulted the Coaling. After a ferocious series of charges and countercharges, during which both sides took and retook possession of the heights, additional reinforcements from Ewell's division allowed the southern troops to hold the high ground for good. Ewell's reinforcements also bolstered the Confederate attacks across the river plain, and the stubborn Federal defenders were finally driven from the field, bringing an end to the hard-fought battle – and to the Valley Campaign.

After the Confederate victories at Cross Keys and Port Republic, Union forces withdrew north. Having accomplished his mission – tying up more than 60,000 Federal troops that would otherwise have been used against Richmond – Jackson was free to join Robert E. Lee in the defense of the capital. The Battle of Port Republic was the capstone to Jackson's brilliant Valley Campaign, a campaign that helped save Richmond – and changed the course of the war.

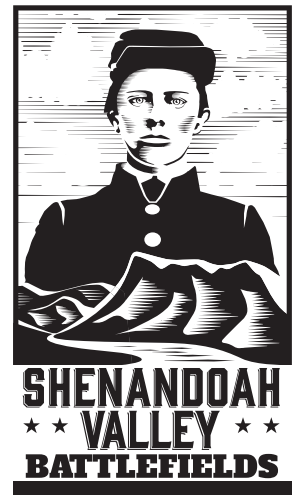
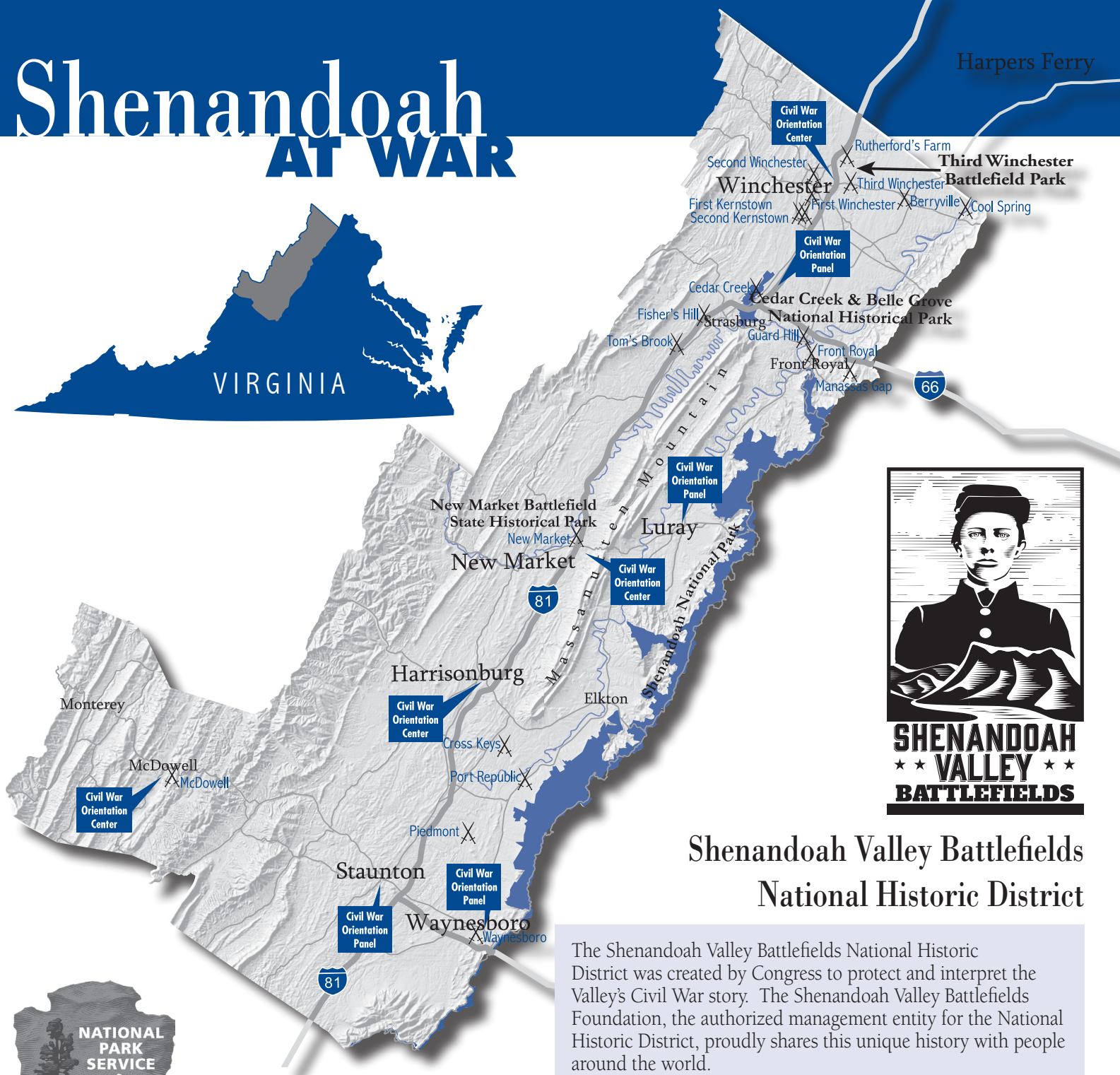
*This concludes your tour. For information on other Civil War sites in the area, visit or contact the "Visitor Information" resources listed in the box on this page, or go to [www.ShenandoahAtWar.org](http://www.ShenandoahAtWar.org).*



# Shenandoah AT WAR



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## Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District

The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District was created by Congress to protect and interpret the Valley's Civil War story. The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, the authorized management entity for the National Historic District, proudly shares this unique history with people around the world.

The National Historic District lies in northwest Virginia, within an easy drive of Richmond, Tidewater, and the DC metropolitan area.

Interstate 81 runs the length of the District, linking with I-66 in the north and I-64 in the south. From the east and west, the District is also served by US Routes 250 (Staunton), 33 (Harrisonburg), 55 (Strasburg), 50 and 7 (both in Winchester).



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



[www.CivilWarTrails.org](http://www.CivilWarTrails.org)

[www.ShenandoahAtWar.org](http://www.ShenandoahAtWar.org)



[www.VirginiaCivilWar.org](http://www.VirginiaCivilWar.org)

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