

Winchester AT WAR

Battlefield Driving Tour

Second Battle of Winchester

June 13 – 15 1863

1863 Timeline

Early May

Lee defeats Union forces at Chancellorsville, near Fredericksburg.

June 3

Lee's army begins to move north.

June 9

Confederate cavalry under Gen. James Ewell Brown "Jeb" Stuart defeats Union cavalry at Brandy Station, east of the Blue Ridge.

June 13 - 15

To clear the way for Lee's army to move north through the Shenandoah Valley, Gen. Richard S. Ewell defeats Gen. Robert H. Milroy's Union garrison at the Second Battle of Winchester.

June 15

Confederates begin crossing the Potomac into Maryland.

Late June

Lee moves into Pennsylvania and Federals cross north into Maryland east of the Blue Ridge.

June 30

Confederate Gen. Henry Heth receives permission to take his division the next day to Gettysburg in search of shoes.

July 1 - 3

On July 1, Heth finds Union forces defending Gettysburg and for the next three days, the Battle of Gettysburg rages through the town and the surrounding fields.

Early to mid-July

Confederates retreat southward, crossing the Potomac into the relative safety of the Shenandoah Valley.

July 23

Confederate forces withstand the final Union attempt to cut off their retreat at the Battle of Manassas Gap (Wapping Heights).

1863: Lee's Gettysburg Campaign

In the summer of 1863, Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee made the Shenandoah Valley an "avenue of advance" for his invasion of the north. The Shenandoah Valley's bountiful farms were a welcome respite for Lee's long-suffering Army of Northern Virginia, supplying it with food and livestock.

But more importantly, Lee used the Blue Ridge to screen his army from Federal eyes, thus avoiding a general engagement until he and his troops were ready. The Valley was a natural avenue of invasion that led perfectly to the Cumberland Valley in Pennsylvania where Lee hoped to draw the Federal army away from war-weary Virginia.

After the cavalry battle at Brandy Station on June 9, Gen. Richard S. Ewell's Second Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia was assigned the task of clearing Union forces out of the Valley. This he accomplished at Second Winchester (June 13-15), defeating (and nearly destroying) a Union division under Gen. Robert Milroy. With cavalry holding the Shenandoah Valley gaps, the Confederate army marched behind the screening Blue Ridge into Maryland and then penetrated deep into Pennsylvania – until meeting a devastating defeat at the hands of the Army of the Potomac under Union Gen. George G. Meade at Gettysburg on July 1-3.

The retreating Confederates crossed the Potomac at Williamsport, and once again found safety and provisions in the Shenandoah Valley. During the retreat, Meade's army came close to penetrating Lee's defensive screen only once – at Manassas Gap east of Front Royal on July 23. But the inability of the Federal army to coordinate their attacks allowed the Confederate army to escape, bringing an end to the campaign.

Second Winchester: Prelude to Battle

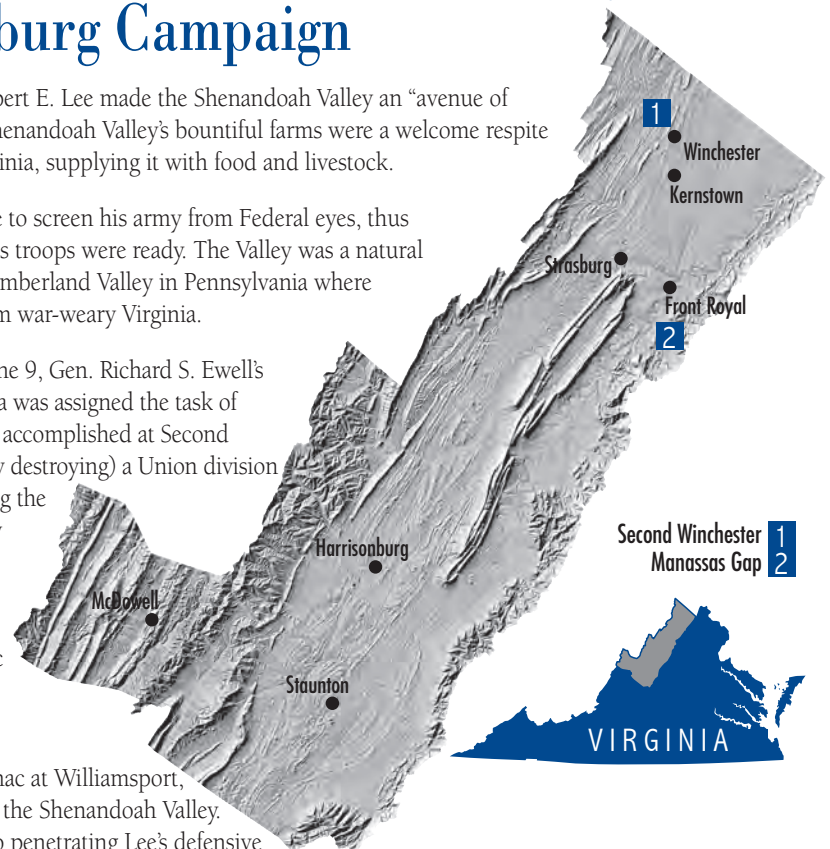
After Gen. Robert E. Lee's smashing victory at the Battle of Chancellorsville in early May 1863, Lee determined to launch a second invasion of the north. In order to guarantee success, Confederate forces first needed to clear Union forces from the lower Shenandoah Valley, most notably a division of approximately 8,000 troops commanded by Gen. Robert H. Milroy.

Throughout late May and into early June, Milroy's scouts reported regularly that Lee's army was on the move and a portion might strike Milroy's command. Union scouts believed they had acquired such specific information that they anticipated Confederate forces would strike Winchester on June 10. Milroy, who initially discounted the idea of a massive Confederate attack, awaited June 10. When the day passed without incident, Milroy became ever more confident that the Confederates would not dare strike.

While Milroy settled into his false sense of security, Lee's army moved north. Gen. Richard S. Ewell, commander of Lee's Second Corps, spearheaded the Confederate army's advance west of the Blue Ridge mountains. Ewell, who knew the Shenandoah Valley well from his days with Stonewall Jackson in the Valley in the spring of 1862, was ordered to march to Winchester, dislodge Milroy, and then move north across the Potomac River.

Ewell made his presence known on June 12 when the van of his column reached Middletown. A small force commanded by the 87th Pennsylvania's Col. John W. Schall engaged the lead elements of Ewell's force and stopped their advance, albeit momentarily.

After the skirmish at Middletown on the 12th Milroy concentrated his command and prepared to block the southern approaches to Winchester.



Tour Starting Point ~ Opequon Presbyterian Church, Kernstown (217 Opequon Church Lane, Winchester, VA) *Note: visitors are encouraged to visit the Kernstown Battlefield Association Property, which borders the church to the north, to explore this phase of the engagement a bit more closely. The KBA property is open May-October, Saturday and Sunday. For more information visit www.kernstownbattle.org

Second Battle of Winchester

Stop 1 ~ Opequon Presbyterian Church

Standing near the signs, which discuss the two battles of Kernstown, look to the north. You are viewing the historic Pritchard Farm. The prominent rise of high ground behind the red-brick Pritchard House is known as Pritchard's Hill.

After the skirmish in Middletown on the 12th, Milroy set up a defensive line to protect the southern approaches to Winchester. On the morning of the 13th Ewell divided his force and sent Gen. Edward Johnson's division to strike Winchester via the Front Royal Road, while Gen. Jubal Early's division marched to Winchester on the Valley Pike.

To protect the Valley Pike approach, Milroy turned to Gen. Washington Elliott. In an effort to slow Early's advance Elliott posted infantry and two guns from Battery D, 1st West Virginia Artillery commanded by Lt. Charles C. Theaker atop Pritchard's Hill. As Early's column approached Kernstown, Theaker's guns opened on the Confederate column. Early stated simply: "I soon discovered a battery of artillery on Pritchard's Hill which opened on us."

Gen. Early moved Gen. Harry Hays' Louisiana brigade to flank the Theaker's guns. Heavily outnumbered, the West Virginia section and Elliott's supporting infantry withdrew from this hill, north to Winchester.

Directions to Stop #2: Follow Opequon Church Lane back to Rt. 11. Turn left onto Rt. 11 and get into left lane when it becomes two lanes. Follow Rt. 11 North for 2.1 miles and then turn left onto Jubal Early Drive and then get into the left lane. Follow Jubal Early Drive for 0.9 miles and then turn right onto Ramseur Ln. At less than 0.1 miles pull over on right when you see the water tower on your right side; it marks the crest of Bowers Hill.

Stop 2 ~ Crest of Bowers Hill

By the late afternoon of the 13th, Elliott's command reformed on the north side of Abram's Creek (to your south, or left) while Early's men pursued. In an effort to slow the Confederate advance the remaining guns of Capt. John Carlin's Battery D, 1st West Virginia Artillery took position on the crest of Bowers Hill. When the Confederates closed to within 800 yards of the base of Bowers Hill Carlin's gunners opened fire. When the fire commenced a Union soldier recorded of its impact on Early's men: "The word 'fire' was given and crushing and crushing went grape and canister through the masses of men. The cry of 'Oh, Lord, Oh Lord, Oh Lord' came loud and plaintive, full one-fourth of a mile away."

Sensing that the Confederates were stunned, Elliott launched an attack with the 123rd Ohio and two companies of the 12th West Virginia in the fields which once stood to your south. At the same time the 12th, Pennsylvania Cavalry launched an attack against the Confederates closer to the Valley Pike.

As night descended over the battlefield Union troops held their position atop Bowers Hill.

Directions to Stop #3: Follow Ramseur Ln. for 0.1 mile to Mahone Dr. and turn left onto Mahone. Follow Mahone to stop sign and turn left onto Meadow Branch Ave. When Meadow Branch Ave becomes two lanes at 0.4 miles stay in left lane. Follow Meadow Branch for 1.0 mile and then turn left onto Valley Ave. (Note at 0.6 miles it will become Braddock Street). At 1.5 miles pull over on right at metered parking spot for your next stop, the large tan and white columned building to your left (just before the intersection with Piccadilly)—presently Kimberly's Gifts.

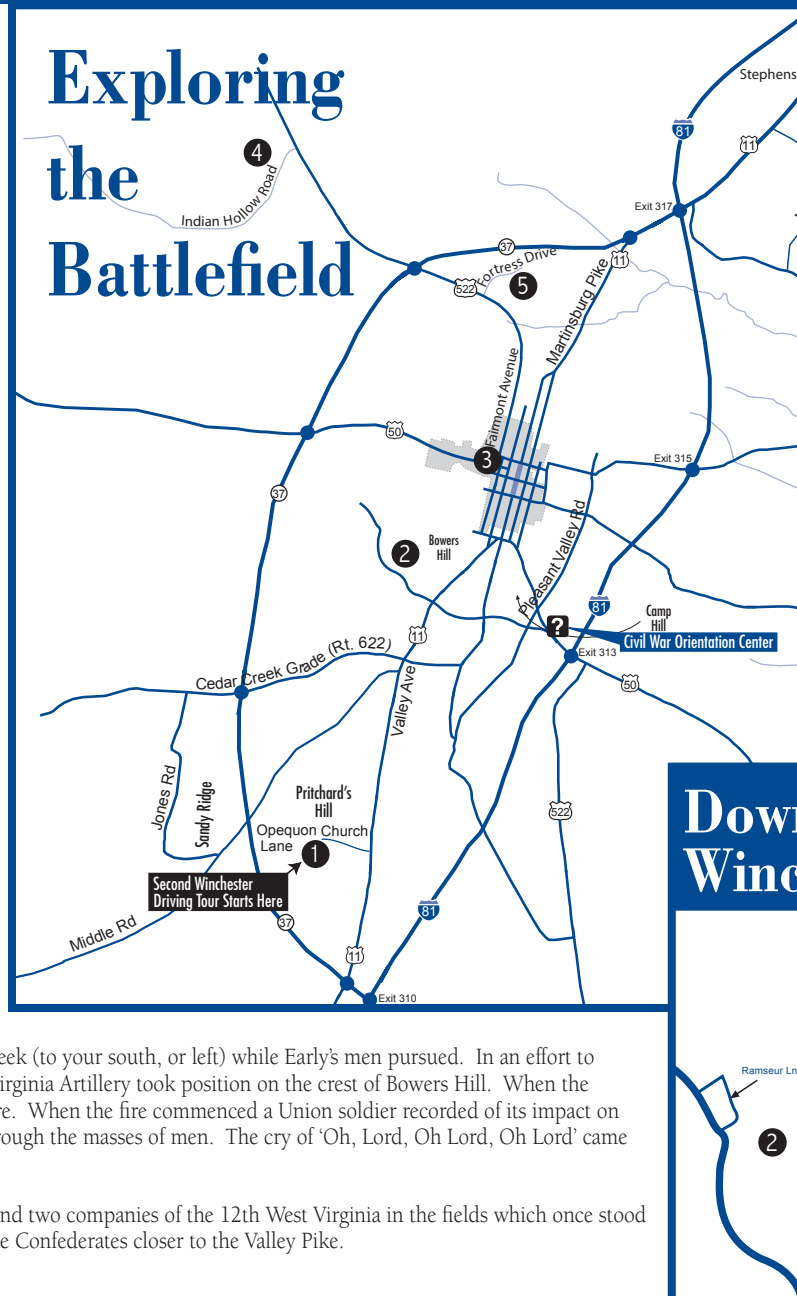
Stop 3 ~ Logan House

This stately structure served as Gen. Milroy's headquarters during his nearly six-month occupation of Winchester. In April 1863 Gen. Milroy expelled the Logan family from their home and exiled them from Winchester on the charge that they mistreated a Union scout.

After the fighting subsided on the 13th, Gen. Milroy held a council of war and ordered his regiments into the three fortifications his division had spent nearly half a year constructing—West Fort, Star Fort, and Fort Milroy.

When the sun rose on June 14, Ewell looked to Bowers Hill and saw that Elliott's men had vacated the position during the night. He promptly sent Gen. John B. Gordon's brigade, the Maryland Line, and two artillery batteries to secure the heights. Ewell next put in motion his plan to drive Milroy from his fortifications north and west of town

Directions to Stop #4: From parking space proceed to the intersection with Braddock and Piccadilly Street. Turn left onto Piccadilly Street. Note that at 0.1 mile Piccadilly bends to the right and becomes Fairmont Ave. When the road becomes two lanes after 1.1 miles get into left lane. You are now on Rt. 522 North. After 1.7 miles turn left at traffic light onto Indian Hollow Road and proceed into the parking area for the Virginia Farm Market. Proceed on foot to the interpretive marker beside the picnic shelter and orient yourself looking south. West Fort, your next stop, will be marked by the tree line to your front.



Visitor Information ?

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

Winchester-Frederick County Visitor Center and Civil War Orientation Center

1400 S. Pleasant Valley Rd., Winchester - 877-871-1326

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

www.visitwinchesterva.com



Stop 4 ~ Attack on West Fort

On the morning of the 14th, Gen. Ewell determined that if he was going to break Milroy's command, he first needed to capture the smallest of Milroy's fortifications—West Fort, marked by the tree line to your front. Only a few, faint remnants of West Fort remain today. To accomplish his mission Ewell turned to Early's division to execute a flank march.

With the aid of local guides, Early marched his command from Bowers Hill to the west and then north to strike West Fort. Early's division completed the flank march of nearly ten miles by about 5:00 p.m. and prepared to assault West Fort.

Around 6:00 p.m. Early placed two cannon on the ridges north and west of West Fort (the area to your right) and ordered them to open fire. After an artillery barrage of forty-five minutes the fire slackened and Hays' Louisiana brigade spearheaded the attack. As they charged through the orchard they encountered little fire from the Union defenders—the 110th Ohio, one company of the 116th Ohio, and six cannon. Once Hays' brigade neared the base of West Fort, the Union defenders, some of whom were armed with Henry Rifles, unleashed a furious fire.

Once Hays' brigade regained their composure they stormed the ramparts and captured West Fort. Now Ewell turned his gaze to Milroy's two remaining fortifications.

Directions to Stop #5: From the Virginia Farm Market parking area return to Rt. 522. Turn right onto Rt. 522 South and get into left lane. At 1.4 miles turn left into the crossover and cross Rt. 522 onto Fortress Drive – paying attention to oncoming traffic. Proceed a short distance up Fortress Drive until you see the Star Fort site sign on your right. Pull onto the grassy area near the sign, then follow the path and directional signs into Star Fort's interior.

Stop 5 ~ Star Fort

Initially constructed as a series of gun emplacements in 1861 and dubbed "Fort Alabama," it was not until Milroy occupied Winchester in 1863 that those emplacements were expanded into the formidable Star Fort.

During the Second Battle of Winchester, troops from Col. Andrew McReynolds' brigade defended Star Fort along with artillery from Capt. Frederic W. Alexander's Baltimore Light Artillery. After the Confederates captured West Fort, the guns from Star Fort lobbed shells into it, forcing the Confederates on three occasions to pull back to the reverse slope of West Fort for cover.

As darkness descended over the battlefield, the firing stopped. At approximately 9:00 p.m., Milroy held a council of war and determined to withdraw. By 3:00 a.m. on June 15 Milroy's command evacuated Winchester.

Directions to Stop #6: Turn left back onto Fortress Drive and drive back to the intersection with Rt. 522. Turn right onto Rt. 522 North and get into right lane. After 0.6 miles take ramp onto Rt. 37 North. Follow Rt. 37/11 North for 3.8 miles and then turn right onto Rt. 761. Follow Rt. 761 for 0.3 miles and then turn right onto the Old Milburn Road (a gravel road) and pull off at the interpretive markers on your right.

Stop 6 ~ Stephenson's Depot

Gen. Ewell sensed that Milroy might withdraw during the night, so he ordered Gen. Edward Johnson's division north to Stephenson's Depot to cut off any potential Union retreat route. Johnson established his line here, facing to the west, its center anchored near the bridge.

In the early morning hours of June 15, Johnson's division fired into Milroy's column, which hoped to escape via the Martinsburg Pike. Milroy's brigade commanders attempted to organize, but the destructive fire from Johnson's division, coupled with panicked sutlers, teamsters, and several thousand African Americans who feared a return to slavery, made those efforts futile.

Ewell inflicted heavy losses on Milroy's command at Second Winchester. The Federals suffered a total of 4,443 casualties, 95 of whom were killed, 318 wounded, and the remainder captured. Ewell suffered minimal losses—47 killed and 219 wounded.

After the defeat at Winchester, General-in-Chief Henry Halleck ordered Milroy's arrest. Although a court of inquiry later exonerated Milroy for his defeat at Winchester, the pain of that loss burdened him throughout the remaining years of life.

Directions to Stop #7: Continue on Milburn Rd. for 0.4 miles and then turn right onto Rt. 838 (McCann's Ln.) Follow road for 0.5 miles and then turn right onto Rt. 11 North. Follow Rt. 11 North for 1.0 mile to the Emmanuel Methodist Church parking lot and then proceed to the large stone and bronze monument for your last stop.

Stop 7 ~ Snowden Andrews Monument

This monument, erected to the memory of Lt. Col. Richard Snowden Andrews, was dedicated on December 4, 1920. Andrews commanded an artillery battalion in Ewell's corps and it was two of his guns, commanded by Lt. C.S. Contee, that anchored the center of Johnson's line at the bridge, located near your previous stop. Andrews was wounded in the action on the morning of the 15th while directing artillery fire. Andrews' family commissioned the monument.

This concludes your tour. For more information about Civil War sites in the area, visit the Winchester-Frederick County Visitor Center and Civil War Orientation Center. (Tour prepared by J.A. Noyalas)



"[As] the shells burst over the fortification we could see the men inside by the light of the explosions and could see also their great guns belch forth."

Emma Macon, Citizen of Winchester, June 14, 1863

Shenandoah AT WAR



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



www.VirginiaCivilWar.org



www.Virginia.org

www.ShenandoahAtWar.org



To sign up for our monthly "Shenandoah At War" e-newsletter, email us at info@svbf.net.

The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District is managed by the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation.