



Self-guiding Tour of Cedar Creek Battlefield



"THE FIRST VERMONT BRIGADE AT THE BATTLE OF CEDAR CREEK" BY JULIAN SCOTT, 1874 COURTESY OF THE VERMONT STATE CURATOR'S OFFICE

The Federal victory at Cedar Creek on October 19, 1864 ended Confederate Army resistance in the Shenandoah Valley. It renewed optimism in the North and helped Abraham Lincoln’s reelection three weeks later.

Tour the Battlefield

This 17.5-mile tour has nine stops, and takes about two hours. The tour route follows public roads and is marked by directional signs and numbered stops. Exhibits at each stop describe and illustrate the scene of battle.

Audio Tour An audio tour accompanies this self-guide on the NPS App, which is available for iOS- and Android-powered devices. It can be downloaded for free through the App Store and Google Play.

Roads Valley Pike (U.S. Route 11) is a heavily traveled route, while others are narrow county roads with low clearances. Buses and RVs should not attempt this tour.

Notes Set aside about 90 minutes to tour the grounds and manor house at Belle Grove Plantation. Mount Carmel Cemetery is an active cemetery; be respectful. The house and property at Miller’s Mill are private and not open to the public.

Get Started Stop 1 is a gravel pull-off on Valley Pike just south of Belle Grove Road. From the pull-off, you can look on Belle Grove Plantation and the heart of the Cedar Creek Battlefield.



Road signs along the auto tour route mark the stops and directions.

Stops

- Stop 1: Cedar Creek Battlefield** While the U.S. Army camped across the fields and around the manor house in October 1864, the Confederates looked for ways to score a much-needed victory.

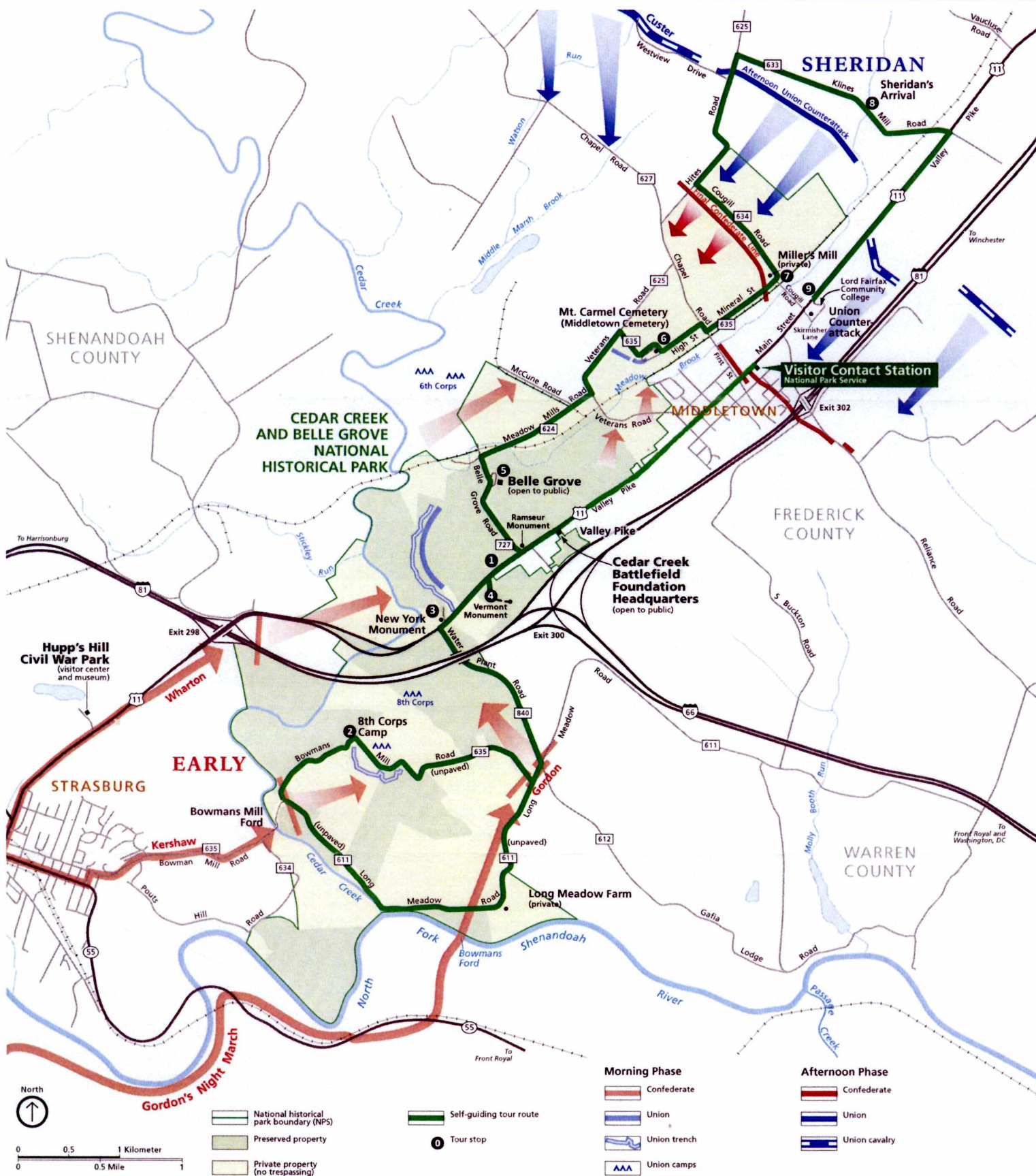
Stop 2: Thoburn’s Redoubt After an all-night march along the base of Massanutten Mountain, the Confederates came out of a dense fog to attack the Federal positions. The first Confederate assault struck here at 5 o’clock in the morning. The attack surprised and routed the U.S. 8th Corps.

Stop 3: 128th New York Monument The monument marks the left end of the U.S. 19th Corps, which occupied a fortified

- trench line on a ridge above Cedar Creek. The Confederates struck the unprotected left flank, catching the Federals by surprise.

Stop 4: Morning Attack Trails The trails cover one area where the Confederate attackers overran part of the Federal defenses. Only the 8th Vermont’s desperate stand delayed the Confederate advance. The trails include a stop at the 8th Vermont Monument.

Stop 5: Belle Grove Plantation Heavy fighting swirled around the 1797 plantation manor. Federal commanders tried to evacuate their headquarters before the Confederates overran the area at around 7 o’clock in the morning.



The map shows the Confederate advance from the southwest past Belle Grove to their farthest advance just north of Middletown, where the Federal counterattack drove their reversal and retreat. Red lines and arrows mark Confederate positions and movements under General Early while blue ones mark Federal positions and movements under General Sheridan.

Stops & Directions (Continued)

Stop 6: Mt. Carmel Cemetery Fighting among the cemetery headstones, a Federal division held this prominent hill for one and a half hours. They withdrew only after a half-hour of bombardment and a third Confederate assault on the hill.

Stop 7: Miller's Mill The brick house marks the farthest advance of the Confederate army. Confederate Gen. Early formed his line along Miller Lane, modern Cougill Road. This "fatal halt" gave the Federals a chance to regroup.

Stop 8: Rienzi Knoll U.S. Gen. Sheridan returned from Winchester at around 10:30 a.m. near this spot. The sight of their general rallied the Federal troops. During the pause in the Confederate advance, Sheridan prepared a counterattack.

Stop 9: Union Counterattack Field At four o'clock in the afternoon, the Federal counterattack struck the Confederates here. After fierce resistance, the Confederate line collapsed, setting off a full-scale retreat.