

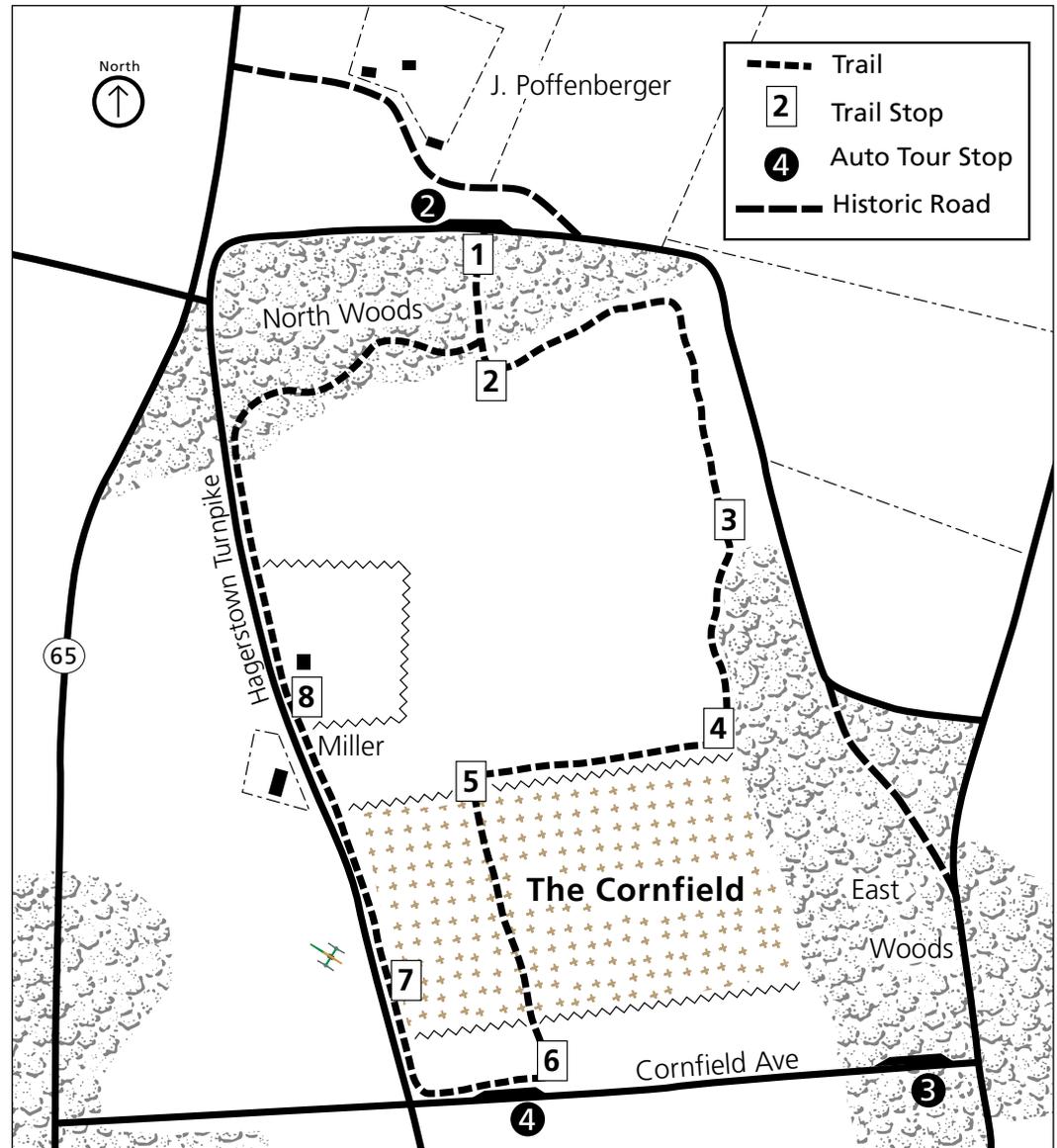
# The Cornfield Trail

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Antietam National Battlefield  
P. O. Box 158  
Sharpsburg, MD 21782



## Trail Map



## Introduction

The Cornfield Trail starts at Auto Tour Stop 2. The trail is 1.6 miles in length and takes approximately sixty to ninety minutes to complete. The trail is gently rolling, but the surface can be slightly uneven, so good walking shoes are recommended.

Please stay on the trail and remember you are in an agricultural area. There are groundhog holes and poison ivy, so watch your footing. Please note that the actual Cornfield is not always planted in corn. The National Park Service issues permits to local farmers who plant crops and pasture

animals that help the park maintain the rural appearance of the landscape.

You will be hiking most of the area where the early morning action of battle took place. More than 25,000 men in blue and gray struggled mightily for control of this northern end of the field. As many as 8,000 men were killed or wounded from dawn until 9:00 a.m. during two major Union attacks and a Confederate counterattack.

## DIRECTIONS

Head south for about 100 yards to Stop 2

Trail turns left (east) for about 100 yards. Turn right and continue south on the edge of the East Woods to the Cornfield.

Continue south along the East Woods to the north-east corner of the Cornfield

Trail turns right (west) and follows the northern boundary of the Cornfield

Continue south and through the Cornfield. You have traveled .6 of the 1.6 miles of the trail.

Head west to the Hagerstown Turnpike and turn right (north).

Continue north on the Hagerstown Turnpike to the D. R. Miller farm.

Continue north on the Turnpike, then up to the right through the North Woods back to your car.

### Stop 1 - Parking area at Driving Auto Stop 2

Wednesday morning, September 17th, the Battle of Antietam began as Major General (MGen) Joseph Hooker's 1st Corps of 8,000 men moved south from here. His objective was high ground about one mile

south (where the visitor center is today); halfway there is the infamous "Cornfield." You will be following in the footsteps of Hooker's men for the majority of this hike.

### Stop 2 - Out of the Woods and Into The Fire

You have just moved through what was a small woodlot known as the North Woods that is being restored by the National Park Service and thousands of volunteers. Around 5:45 a.m. Hooker's men moved out,

their battle lines extending nearly a quarter mile on either side of you, where they were met with devastating Confederate artillery fire from the south and west.

### Stop 3 - Tricky Terrain and a Complicated Advance

Three 1st Corps brigades moved through this area. One commander was wounded and another panicked and ran away, delaying two of the brigades. This meant that BGen Abraham Duryea's Brigade of

about 1,000 men advanced alone into the Cornfield at about 6:00 a.m. The two delayed units finally joined them, but in thirty lonely minutes almost half of Duryea's men would be killed or wounded.

### Stop 4 - Corner Of Death At Antietam

This corner witnessed horrific fighting throughout the morning. One soldier remembered "*The sight at the fence (north Cornfield fence) where the enemy was*

*standing when we gave our first fire was awful beyond description, dead men were literally piled upon and across each other.*"

### Stop 5 - The Most Sacred Ground - The Cornfield

You are about to enter the Cornfield. Take a moment to reflect on the dreadful carnage that occurred here. All morning, soldiers from both sides attacked around

and through this field. By 9:00 a.m. the Cornfield changed hands too many times to count and the casualties were staggering.

### Stop 6 - Confederate Defense and Counterattack

As the men in blue broke out of the corn they faced a solid line of Confederate infantry in the open fields about 100 yards to their front. Deadly Confederate volleys initially halted Hooker's advance, but more Union troops were sent in, pushing the Southerners back. Stonewall Jackson

counterattacked with BGen John Bell Hood's Division. Hood's men drove north, driving the First Corps back. The 1st Texas Infantry drove through the Cornfield. In this gallant charge through the corn, the 1st Texas lost 82% of their men killed or wounded.

### Stop 7 - Battery B, 4th U.S.

Just across the road are two cannons representing Battery B, 4th U. S. Artillery. Battery B moved forward with the initial Union attack. As soon as the guns moved into this position, they came under intense fire from Stonewall Jackson's

men. Although Battery B suffered nearly 50% casualties in the fighting, it's firepower, coupled with the musketry of Hooker's infantry, and the timely arrival of the 12th Corps, helped shatter Hood's counterattack.

### Stop 8 - The Miller Farm

This battle not only destroyed the lives of soldiers on the field, it devastated the community where it was fought. David R. Miller owned this farm which included the

Cornfield. He, like the majority of local residents, ran to escape the terror of battle, only to return to a farm that would never be the same.

The landscape that you have just walked was the scene of some of the most horrific fighting in the history of our nation. General Joseph Hooker wrote, that the Battle of Antietam "*was fought with great violence on both sides. The carnage has been awful.*"