



CIVIL WAR ON THE POTOMAC

The river was a great dividing line between north and south, and crossed dozens of times by both Union and Confederacy. The most important battle near the Potomac was at Antietam, September 17, 1862--the Civil War's "bloodiest day." It was the first of Robert E. Lee's attempts to carry the war into the north. After staggering losses on both sides, Lee was turned back into Virginia. Lee's failure caused Great Britain to postpone recognition of the Confederacy and gave Lincoln the opportunity to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. The battlefield, 12 miles, is preserved and operated by the National Park Service, including a visitor center and slide show. Antietam National Cemetery is the burial site of 4776 Federal soldiers, most Confederates were buried at Hagerstown and Shepherdstown. Other highlights of the battlefield include Burnside Bridge, where four Union divisions were held off by a few hundred riflemen; the Cornfield, where more fighting took place than any other; Bloody Lane, a fierce fighting location; Dunker Church near contested high ground; and the Hawkins Zouaves Monument, site marking the end of the battle.

- 1 **Snyder's Landing:** Site of Snyder coal and grain warehouse; destroyed in Great Flood of 1936.
- 2 **Cholera Epidemic:** 1832 outbreak in this area caused panic among canal workers, halting construction.
- 3 **Mercersville:** Named after Canal Co. president Charles Mercer.
- 4 **Feeder Dam No. 4:** Built 1832-1834. Blackwater formed behind dam, allowing boats to reach Williamsport 15 miles farther upstream. Winch house is partially restored.
- 5 **Inlet Lock:** Barges passed from canal to river by being raised to river level as they went upstream. There is no canal, only a towpath, from here to Lock 41 (Mile 88.9).
- 6 **Charles Mill:** Built on Downey Branch in 1779, produced flour, feed, and plaster. Closed in 1922. Exterior has been restored.