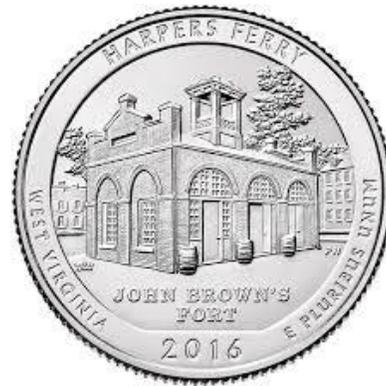


# Sites of Civil War Trails Signs

“John Brown and Harpers Ferry -- plus Charles Town and Shepherdstown”



## CivilWarTraveler.com

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# “John Brown and Harpers Ferry -- plus Charles Town and Shepherdstown”



The shots fired in Harpers Ferry during a raid by John Brown in October 1859 are regarded by many as the first of the Civil War.

After months of training and planning at the Kennedy Farm a few miles away in Maryland, Brown led his tiny "army" into Harpers Ferry late in the evening of Oct. 16. His objective: Capture the armory there, then inspire and arm a slave rebellion.

The plot never had a chance. After causing quite a commotion, Brown and a few survivors were trapped and captured Oct. 18. He was taken to nearby Charles Town where he stood trial and was hanged. His last message proved prophetic:

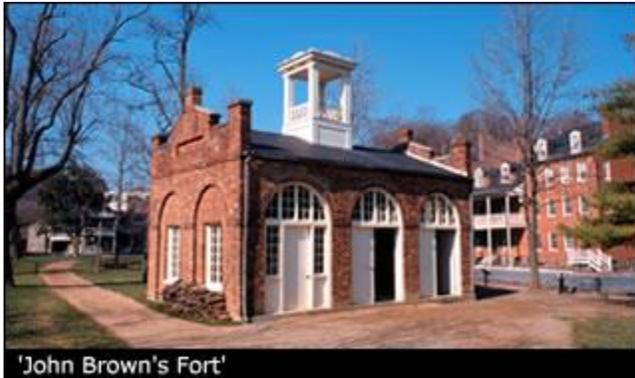


*"I, John Brown am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with Blood."*

A few of the characters who would play leading roles in the war to come had some sort of connection with this event. Regular army officers Robert E. Lee and J.E.B Stuart led the forces that captured Brown. Among the 1,500 who attended his hanging were Thomas J. Jackson (later Stonewall) and John Wilkes Booth.

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## Harpers Ferry



### **Harpers Ferry National Historical Park**

*Park entrance off US 340 and Washington Street 304-535-6029*

Much of Civil War interest is in this beautiful park at the confluence of the Potomac and the Shenandoah Rivers. John Brown's 1859 raid and Civil War activities are interpreted throughout the restored lower town area, which also features information about all periods of the town's history and residents. More Civil War information is available at the main visitor center on Bolivar Heights (a shuttle bus delivers visitors to lower town). Trails on Maryland and Loudoun Heights also offer wartime interpretation and views. An interactive interpretation center with a film is offered in the town historic district. Much to see. Park is open daily 8 am–5 pm. \$6/private vehicle or \$4/person walk-in or bike-in.

### **Jackson at Harpers Ferry**

*Trails sign at 37 Washington St, Harpers Ferry WV 25425*

Thomas J. Jackson (later “Stonewall”) began his associations with Harpers Ferry when he traveled here with VMI cadets to provide security for John Brown’s execution in 1859. He assumed his first Civil War command here shortly after Virginia’s secession and returned in 1862 to capture the Union garrison shortly before the Battle of Antietam.

### **St. John's Lutheran Church**

*Trails sign at 943 Washington St, Harpers Ferry WV 25425*

The church bell still in place here rang the alarm on Oct. 17, 1859, as John Brown and his raiders entered Harpers Ferry. Some terrified residents gathered here. Following the outbreak of the war the church was used as a Union hospital and was damaged by cannon fire during the battle here in 1862. The repair is still visible.



### **Allstadt House**

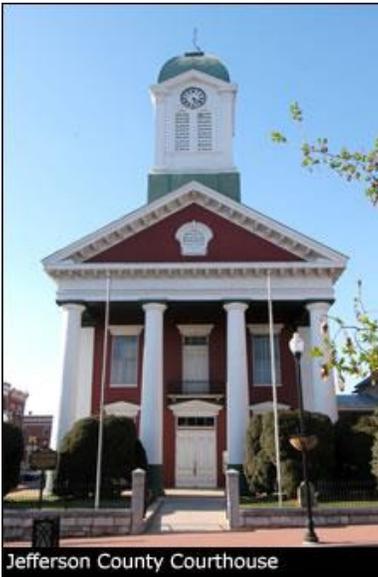
*Trails sign at 231 Allstadt Road, Harpers Ferry WV 25425*

John Brown's raiders knocked down the door here early in the morning Oct. 17. 1862. John Allstadt, owner of the house; his son; and seven slaves were taken hostage, brought to Harpers Ferry and guarded in the fire-engine house. The assault by U.S. Marines the next day freed the prisoners.

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## Charles Town

John Brown was tried and hanged here following his capture at Harpers Ferry in 1859.



### **Jefferson County Courthouse**

*Trails sign at 100 E Washington St, Charles Town WV 25414*

Exhibits on the first floor satisfy public interest in the events surrounding Brown's trial with a nice display of period illustrations and text. Walking tour information is available. The site where Brown was executed is noted with an historical marker in the yard of 515 Samuel St a few blocks from the courthouse.

### **Jefferson County Museum**

*Trails sign at 200 E Washington St, Charles Town WV 25414 304-757-8628*

Much on Brown, the trial and hanging in Charles Town. Artifacts include the wagon Brown rode on his way to the gallows. Open Tuesday-Saturday 11 am-4 pm mid-March through mid-December. \$3/adult. 304-725-8628

## **John Brown Hanging Site**

*Trails sign at 512 Samuel St, Charles Town WV 25415*

John Brown was hanged on this site Dec. 2, 1850. Six of his men followed him that day. Among those present that day were Thomas J. Jackson (later “Stonewall”) and John Wilkes Booth. The house on the site was built in 1892 by John Gibson, who commanded the militia standing guard that day.

## **The Greenback Raid**

*Trails sign, 8001 Charles Town Road, Charles Town WV 25414*

On Oct. 14, 1864, Confederate John S. Mosby’s Partisan Raiders cut the rail line near here and captured a westbound train. As an unexpected bonus, the train carried \$172,000 paper “greenbacks,” which the raiders took and later divided. The break in this important Union supply line was quickly restored.

## **Rutherford House**

*Trails sign at 417 Washington St, Charles Town WV 25415*

On Sept. 17, 1864, commanding Union Gen. U.S. Grant traveled here to meet with Gen. Philip Sheridan to coordinate plans to defeat Confederates in the Shenandoah Valley and protect the B&O Railroad. Meeting in this house, Grant ordered Sheridan to move quickly, which he did. Fighting began at Winchester just a few days later.

## **Edge Hill Cemetery**

*Trails sign at 417 Washington St, Charles Town WV 25415*

Two figures from John Brown’s 1859 Raid are buried here. Fontaine Beckham was the mayor of Harpers Ferry at the time of the raid and was one of the civilian casualties. John Brown’s jailor in Charles Town, John Avis, also is buried here.

## **Cameron’s Depot Engagement**

*Trails sign at 120 Sheriden Drive, Charles Town WV 25414*

Union Gen. Philip Sheridan and Confederate Gen Jubal Early eyed each other warily following Early’s summer 1864 Raid on Washington. When Sheridan was falling back from Berryville to Halltown, Early, thinking Sheridan timid, attacked. The daylong battle here Aug. 21, 1864, failed to break the Union lines. Sheridan went on the offensive a month later, eventually driving Early from the Valley.

## **Zion Episcopal Churchyard**

*Trails sign at 321 E Congress St, Charles Town WV 25414*

Several Civil War and John Brown Raid figures are buried here in the shadow of the 1851 church. George Turner was shot by John Brown's raiders in 1859, one of the four local civilians killed. Col. R. Preston Chew led Confederate Gen. J.E.B Stuart's Horse Artillery during the war.

## **Kabletown Engagement**

*Trails sign at 3047 Kabletown Road, Charles Town WV 25414*

This was the site of one of the largest engagements during a cat-and-mouse game between Mosby's Confederate Rangers and a group of Union soldiers formed to disable them. Bothered by Mosby's attacks, Union Gen. Philip Sheridan formed this group, "Blazers Scouts," to chase Mosby down. However, on Nov. 18, 1864, Mosby's men hit hard here, killing 16 Scouts and scattering the rest.

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## **Shepherdstown and Area**

A popular Potomac River crossing during the war, the fords near here were used often, especially by Confederates on their forays into Maryland. Lee's army crossed back into Virginia just east of here at Boteler's Ford following the battle of Antietam in September 1862. Fighting broke out Sept. 19–20 as Union forces struck Lee's rear guard. (Stop at the Antietam National Battlefield visitor center for driving tour information about that event.)

The old town section appears little changed since the 19th century and is a real treat. Elmwood Cemetery is the final resting place for more than 250 Confederate soldiers including Henry Kyd Douglas, a member of Stonewall Jackson's staff. It's located on Duke Street just south of downtown. Visitor Center located at 102 E. German St.

## **Shepherdstown in the Civil War**

*Trails signs in front of the college administration building on German Street*

Following the battles at South Mountain (Sept. 14, 1862) and Antietam (Sept. 17, 1862), nearly the entire town was turned into a hospital. Private homes, public buildings and even barns were used to house thousands of the hurt, straining the resources of the town.

## **Molar's Crossroads**

*Trails signs at intersection of Bakerton and Knott Roads south of Shepherdstown*

Confederate Gen. A.P. Hill's 3,000-man division passed by here en route from Harpers Ferry to the battlefield at Antietam. Hill ended his 17-mile march just in time, coming out at the critical part of the battlefield late Sept. 17, 1862, probably saving the day for Lee's army.

### **Elmwood Cemetery**

*Trails sign, 4878 Kearneysville Pike, Shepherdstown WV 25443*

A total of 114 Confederate soldiers who died during and following the nearby Battle of Antietam are buried here. Many of the men who died in the battle and were buried elsewhere initially are unidentified.

### **Fountain Rock**

*Trails sign, 4198 Kearneysville Road, Shepherdstown WV 25443*

On July 19, 1864, Union cavalry burned this 1834 home of Dr. Henry Boteler in partial retaliation for Confederate Gen. Jubal Early's burning of the Maryland governor's house during his Raid on Washington. The fire destroyed not only the house, but also Boteler's valuable library and letters.

### **Keyes' Switch Engagement**

*Trails sign, 411 Millville Road, Millville WV 25432*

On April 5, 1865, just four days before Lee's surrender at Appomattox, elements of Mosby's Confederate Rangers attacked the Union Loudoun Rangers here and routed them, killing two, wounding four and taking 64 prisoners.

### **Duffields Depot Raid**

*Trails sign, 14 Melvin Road, Shenandoah Junction WV 25442*

As Confederate Gen. Jubal Early moved northeast toward Washington DC Mosby's Rangers aimed to disrupt Union communication lines along the B&O Railroad. Mosby decided to capture this depot (built in 1839) and guardhouse that housed a Federal garrison. The Confederates took away prisoners and burned most of the buildings, but spared the depot. This is the oldest surviving purpose-built combined freight and passenger station in the country.



