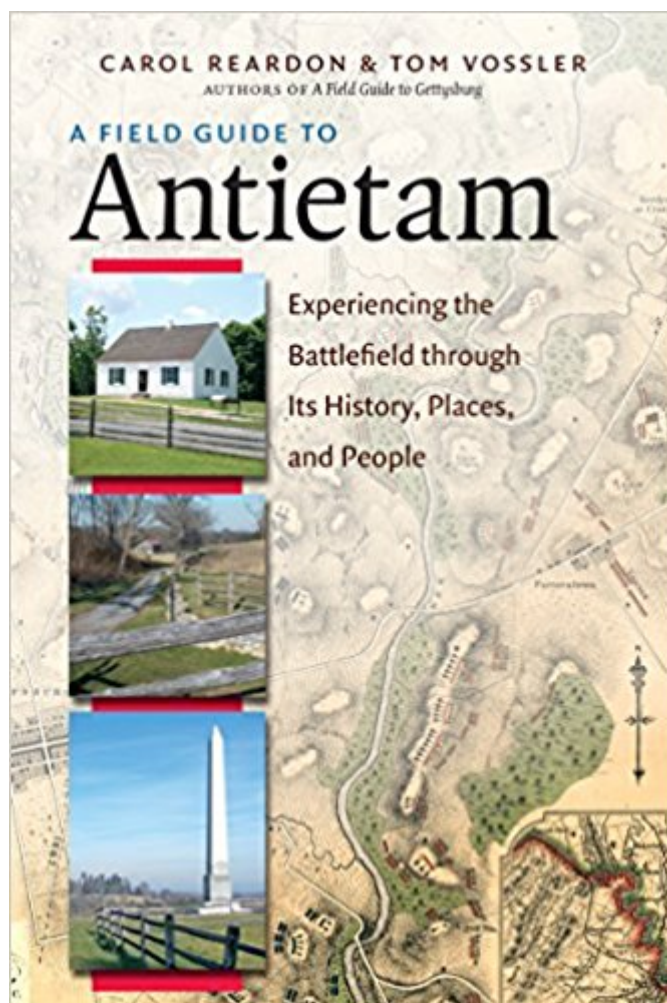


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# A Field Guide To Antietam: Experiencing The Battlefield Through Its History, Places, And People



## Synopsis

The Battle of Antietam took place on September 17, 1862, and still stands as the bloodiest single day in American military history. Additionally, in its aftermath, President Abraham Lincoln issued his famous Emancipation Proclamation. In this engaging, easy-to-use guide, Carol Reardon and Tom Vossler allow visitors to understand this crucial Civil War battle in fine detail. Abundantly illustrated with maps and historical and modern photographs, *A Field Guide to Antietam* explores twenty-one sites on and near the battlefield where significant action occurred. Combining crisp narrative and rich historical context, each stop in the book is structured around the following questions: \*What happened here? \*Who fought here? \*Who commanded here? \*Who fell here? \*Who lived here? \*How did participants remember the events? With accessible presentation and fresh interpretations of primary and secondary evidence, this is an absolutely essential guide to Antietam and its lasting legacy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Carol Reardon and Tom Vossler have now produced a pair of truly exceptional battlefield touring guides. In content and presentation, their Gettysburg and Antietam volumes are originally designed tools with unique facets that clearly set them apart from a crowded field of largely imitative contenders. Hopefully, this is only the beginning.-- Andrew J. Wagenhoffer, *Civil War Books and Authors* Give[s] an inside look and human feel to the participants and their experiences in the text. . . . Informative, easy to use, and eminently affordable.--*Journal of America's Military Past* An

innovative and highly effective formula for guiding visitors through a battlefield.--Civil War News  
Reardon and Vossler have created a terrific field guide for on-the-ground exploration of Antietam.--National Parks Traveler

An impressive and thorough guide to one of the most important battles of the Civil War, *A Field Guide to Antietam* is a clear, concise way for visitors to understand Antietam from the ground up.--Tom Clemens, National Park Service Certified Antietam Battlefield Guide

A textbook way to start a review is with an analogy. Here's one for you: If this book was music, it would be a well conceived Greatest Hits record. There are a lot of reasons for buying a Greatest Hits record, but never because you're a die hard fan who's seen the band live a hundred times. Die hard fans end up owning everything ever published on the subject. For them, no single record, or book, or whatever is gonna get it. The average Civil War fan, however, has a different experience. Normally, they've read a few books on Gettysburg, but never got around to Antietam. For them, Antietam is the ugly step brother in a family photo. "*A Field Guide to Antietam*", is tailor made for this kind of Civil War fan. Everything a new, or casual reader would want is here: First of all, you get a concise overview of who did what, when & where, complete with casualty figures for each unit involved. You get quotes from the participants, including some from decades after the battle. You get period photos & modern photos; battle maps & park maps; navigational aids & cautions. You also get a generous sampling of soldier vignettes; soldiers from both sides, officer & enlisted. The vignettes are an absolute delight, some the product of original research. In short, there is no Antietam synopsis which functions better than this one. It's the perfect first book to read on this subject; a literary Greatest Hits album if you will! You can enjoy it just fine without getting off the couch, but it's compact and designed specifically to read as you survey one of this country's most beautiful and pristine military parks. Matter of fact, if you make the pilgrimage to Antietam this summer, do yourself a favor and follow the program laid out by the authors. You won't need any stupid cell phone app! Stand where advised and read aloud for your family or group. Don't bore them; just a few paragraphs at a time. Point out the landmarks as you go and help them imagine the action unfolding. Finish each segment with a soldier vignette. You'll be amazed how effective this approach is, especially with kids. If you do it right, you'll run out of time about halfway through the battle. This is no design flaw. It's an excuse to come back again and finish!!

This is a very detailed guide to the Antietam National Battlefield. It is organized around twenty-one

"stops", some of which contain multiple "sub-stops". Most of the discussions for each location contain the following sections: Orientation; What Happened Here? (a description of the fighting or other events of significance that occurred at that location); Who Fought Here? (a listing of the major units from the Union and Confederate Armies that engaged there); Who Commanded Here?; Who Fell Here? (profiles of a few individual officers and soldiers who died there); Who Lived Here? (the civilians who lived at that location and how their lives were disrupted); and What Did They Say about It Later? (a few first-person accounts of what happened at that spot, drawn from letters and memoirs). At first, this approach seemed a little stilted to me, but ultimately it has much to commend it. I especially appreciated the discussions of the impact of the battle on the civilians who lived on these farms around Sharpsburg, Maryland. There are numerous photographs, both historical and contemporary. The contemporary ones are in color and should be quite helpful in orienting a battlefield visitor. In addition, for almost every stop there also is a schematic map of the relevant landscape and the forces arrayed across it on September 17, 1862, together with helpful symbols indicating the position and orientation the visitor should assume when reading the text. The various stops are presented so as to trace, in rough chronological order, the major events of the Battle of Antietam, beginning with Lee's placement of his defenses and ending with his retreat across the Potomac at Boteler's Ford. (There are two additional stops: the Stephen P. Grove farm, where Lincoln visited General McClellan after the battle, and Antietam National Cemetery.) The book would not serve well as an introduction to the Battle of Antietam. For one thing, it is too detailed. For another, it does not contain much analysis, either at the macro or micro level. As a field guide, its virtues include the photographs and schematic maps and its comprehensive sweep. A FIELD GUIDE TO ANTIETAM covers areas of the battlefield that often receive short shrift or are ignored altogether. And depending upon the predilections and needs of the individual reader, another virtue is the level of detail of the guide and its descriptions of the action. Reading and following the guide closely would, I am sure, give a visitor a very good understanding of the ebb and flow of the Battle of Antietam. I bought this in preparation for a visit two friends and I plan to make to the Antietam National Battlefield next week. It will be my fourth time there; for my friends it will be their first. I skimmed through the guide so that I would be sufficiently familiar with it on the actual battlefield. It gradually dawned on me that A FIELD GUIDE TO ANTIETAM is too extensive and contains too much detail for us to use it as our principal guide in the day-and-a-half we have allotted for Antietam. I suspect that it would take three days to take the entire tour laid out herein, reading and assimilating all the detailed information. I nevertheless would like to do that someday on, yes, yet a fifth visit.

This is an extraordinarily useful book. Like its predecessor covering Gettysburg, the maps and pictures which orient the reader on the battlefield are very useful - one is not left to guess which way one should face to understand what happened. In addition to the What Happened Here, Who Fought Here, Who Commanded Here, and Who Fell Here that you find in many guidebooks, the authors also covered Who Lived Here and What They Said About It Later which adds perspective, as do the individual vignettes. I toured the Antietam battlefield with Carol and Tom earlier this week as part of a Civil War Institute program with book in hand. The book is the next best thing to being on the battlefield with them.

More than just a travel guide this is a history tour that captures your interest. It is a well written page turner,

An excellent book and guide to the battlefield. I also have the guide to Gettysburg and the authors really know their stuff. I haven't been back to Antietam for a couple years but plan to return soon and I'll definitely have this book along. I highly recommend this book to anyone with an interest in the battle of Antietam.

One of the best "tour" category books I have in my library, and I have most of them. Wish I had had this book when I toured Antietam several years ago.

This is a great guide to better understand the battle.

A brilliant follow-up to the authors' previous guide to Gettysburg. Carol Reardon is as fine a author as she is a battlefield guide and speaker.

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