



# Hiking Through History: Civil War Sites on the Appalachian Trail

*Leanna Joyner*

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**Hiking Through History: Civil War Sites on the Appalachian Trail** Leanna Joyner  
2015 Book of the Year (Adventure & Recreation), *Foreword Reviews*

A walk through a substantial slice of the history embedded in the Appalachian Trail corridor from Underground Railroad sites and W.E.B. Du Bois birthplace in New England to the Union occupation of present-day Hot Springs, N.C. Each site has a full-color map for a quick hike, and most have current and contemporary photographs. Extensively researched on foot and in library by a thru-hiker and now Appalachian Trail Conservancy trail-management staff member.

In the mid-19th century, the route that became the Appalachian Trail was closer to the gates of Hell than the legendary birds-chirping, leaves-rustling footpath to relaxation, inner calm, and contemplation it is now known for.

From northwestern North Carolina to the roads to Antietam and Gettysburg, it was a place for skirmishes with Confederate guerrilla forces and all-out battles between North and South.

Two future presidents fought together in two of those battles. One of those Union officers was assassinated 39 years to the day after a pre-Antietam battle at Fox Gap in Maryland. Hundreds died on these lands, and hundreds more were wounded or sickened.

In the decades before the war, the route clearly was one path north toward freedom for escaped slaves and a route south toward their destiny at Harpers Ferry for John Brown's band of 1859 revolutionaries. In the decades to follow the Civil War, some of those emancipated slaves took over the lands of their former owners and developed their own, free communities adjacent to what became the A.T. by 1937.

Those stories and more are included in *Hiking through History: Civil War Sites on the Appalachian Trail*, published by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, lead private guardian today of the 2,189-mile national scenic trail.

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