



THE TRAIL GUIDE

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**Adding A Historic Site
to the Civil War Trail**



Civil War Trails, Inc.
P.O. Box 1862
Williamsburg, Virginia 23187
757-378-5462
Civil War Trails, Inc., is a 501(3)(c)
not-for-profit educational corporation.

Hello—and welcome to the Trail!

*I'm excited that you're interested in Civil War Trails —
the world's largest open air museum.*

Since 1994, the Trails program has been synonymous with authentic historical content, unique and varied landscapes, and a consistent visitor experience. The support of community organizations, municipal and regional tourism offices, state departments of transportation—and people like you—is what make this program successful, and contributes to why Civil War Trails is lauded as the country's most successful tourism program.

Armed with a paper map or digital app, visitors follow our signature red bugle across the countryside and down unpaved roads, through cities and downtowns tracking, tracing, and chasing the incredible, emotional, and personal history of the American Civil War. Across five states—Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, West Virginia, and Maryland—visitors can find one of our 1,550 signs, hop on the Trail, and follow in the footsteps of war-weary soldiers, beleaguered citizens, and those seeking their own freedoms. There is no other program which pilots visitors from site to site, allowing them to land on the ground where the tumultuous events of the Civil War unfolded.

Our signs do more than simply guide visitors to historic sites—they offer a pathway to explore communities. The Trails program offers visitors a chance to see communities and the wide amenities and experiences they have to offer. Whether by design or by chance, our visitors are inclined towards the unique, one-of-a-kind experiences they cannot find at home or on the bypass. Visitors “on the trail” don't just follow the bugle, they also enjoy nearby wineries, pick-your-own farms, and unique shops. They come for the history, and stay for the local experience.

To follow Civil War Trails is to be immersed in the story of the American Civil War. Across highways and byways, back roads and main streets, visitors wind their way from site to site, piecing together our nation's story. They connect with the hillsides where artillery batteries held armies at bay. They stand along stone walls where infantrymen took cover, and in alleys where citizens and slaves grappled with privation. These places, sites, and stories cannot be accessed remotely, felt digitally or read in a book—they must be experienced.

See you on the Trail!



Drew A. Gruber
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



From Idea to Installation

OUR PROCESS

From idea to installation, our interpretive signage program may take several weeks to several months for completion. Much of this depends on you! Rest assured—the end result will be worth the wait. Well researched, engaging signs provide a unique resource for the community and a compelling amenity for visitors.

WHAT YOU NEED TO GET STARTED

- A location on or in clear view of a historic site or event
- Property owner(s) permission
- Safe and adequate parking
- Ideas for interpretive text based on primary source evidence
- A sustaining sponsor

Once you complete these initial steps and have contacted Civil War Trails, Inc., move on to assembling your completed content packet.

WHAT A COMPLETED PACKET INCLUDES

- Sign title and subheading
- Main text of sign
- Sidebar (if needed)
- Image captions and credits
- Images (.tif, .jpg)
- Map of sign location
- Additional maps (if needed)

Once you've assembled your content packet, we'll take it from there.

PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

- Review of submitted content packet by CWT staff (three weeks)
- Sign design and customer review (three weeks)
- Fabrication (two weeks)
- Site coordination with CWT staff and property owner(s)
- Submission of press releases to relevant media
- Installation day
- Final invoice and membership letters sent



Content Guidelines

How to make a good sign — Great!

AUDIENCE ASSUMPTIONS

Assume that the visitors know little about the Civil War, and are of all ages and backgrounds. Visitors engage best with a story presented in clear, concise prose, and leave with an understanding of what happened at the site. Visitors will not relate to tedious discussions of troop movements, regiments and corps, etc. They will be excited by the human angle, including historic photographs and short, evocative quotes. Successful signs will allow visitors to feel engaged and that their time was well spent. Visitors should leave inspired to learn more, or excited to stop at another historic site.

SIGN ELEMENTS

Civil War Trails signs consist of the following elements: main text, images and image captions. Depending on the topic, the marker may also display a map, an inset quote or two, and/or a sidebar (to elaborate on an interesting place, event, quote, or person mentioned briefly in the main text). All of these elements should work together—and with the landscape itself—to tell the story. If possible, leave most troop movements out of the main text and put them on the map instead.

TEXT LENGTH AND FORMATTING

250–300 words total (including main text, illustration captions, and sidebar if any). We will edit to fit,

but would prefer to work with text close to this length (not 500–600 words). The text should be submitted as a Microsoft Word document.

HOUSE STYLE

We use the phrase Civil War. We use U.S., Union, Federal, Northern; C.S., Confederate, Southern (not Yankee or Rebel, unless in a primary source quote). Every general (lieutenant, major, brigadier, etc.) is a Gen. Please utilize active, not passive voice. For instance: “The cavalrymen charged the infantrymen,” not “The infantrymen were charged by the cavalrymen.”

SITE-SPECIFIC TEXT

A successful sign connects the visitors with the landscape, giving them the necessary context to envision an event as it unfolded historically. Each sign should begin with exactly what the visitor is looking at or how the historic event happened around them, promoting them to break from the text and look up. For example:

“This brick building housed Gen. Humerdinck’s headquarters.”

“The North Carolinians charged across the field towards you.”

- A** Main Text
- B** Images and Captions
- C** Map
- D** Pull Quote
- E** Sidebar



Continued ...

CONTEXT

Most battles were part of a campaign; something occurred that led up to what happened at the site. Likewise, most battles or other events had consequences: things happened as a result. Please give the relevant context to what happened at the site in a couple of sentences, stated as briefly as possible. The same rule holds true for ancillary information or sidebar items such as related landmarks, architecture, cemeteries, etc.

HUMAN INTEREST

Our visitors are interested in individuals and their stories. If someone who witnessed or participated in a battle or other event wrote a personal account, it may be worthwhile to quote a short excerpt. Please quote exactly, including spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc. Utilizing quotes from lesser-known participants or from local repositories are a great way to make the sign unique and highlight “new” perspectives. Lesser-known quotes, photos, etc. are always welcome over the more popularly known primary source material.

MAPS

Please provide us with a sketch map showing the location of the sign, which way visitors will be facing at the site (draw an arrow in the right direction), and any landmarks mentioned in the text (field, house, church, earthworks, crossroads, etc.). A hand-drawn map is fine; it's only for the editor's use—not for publication. Sometimes, however, we do include a map on the sign to explain troop movements, the relative position of landmarks, road networks, etc. With few exceptions, we will redraw any map you provide to conform to our style, so feel free to photocopy a map you think will be useful and draw whatever is needed on it (this goes for the sketch map, too). Maps may be scanned and e-mailed.

IMAGES

Please provide 2 to 4 images for each sign. We always prefer color images when possible, and images which are in local repositories or are lesser known, instead of “mug shots” of generals. If the images are copyrighted or if permission is required by the institution holding them, please get permission and provide us with the necessary credit lines to use with the images. You may need to pay a reproduction and/or use fee. Explain to the repository that the image is for a historical sign to be created

by a nonprofit 501c3 educational corporation, and some or all of the fees may be waived or reduced. We prefer historical photographs and engravings over modern renditions. Keep in mind, however, that by “historical” we don't mean that the image must date from the Civil War. An early-20th-century photo of a site or house may serve very well. Likewise, a good “artist's conception” of a battle or other scene, especially if it shows the scene from the visitor's position, can be used. Avoid modern photographs, especially those that show what visitors can see for themselves at the site.



IMAGE FORMAT

We use high-resolution digital images: 8 x 10 inches at 300dpi. You may send them as email attachments, use an online FTP service or mail them on a CD or flash drive. Please provide images as uncompressed .tif or .jpg files. Do not send small, low-resolution digital images (for instance, from a website); we will not use such images. Please do not scan a photo in a book unless you have permission from the publisher or copyright owner. All images must contain a citation and/or associated permissions from the owner or repository. If you have any questions, please email John Salmon at: jssalmon@verizon.net



CIVIL WAR TRAILS, INC.

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Sign Location and Sponsor Information

(Please type or print neatly)

LOCATION INFORMATION

Name of proposed sign:

Location (physical address, GPS, and/or landmarks):

SPONSOR INFORMATION FOR INITIAL COSTS (\$2,600)

Initiating Organization:

Primary Point of Contact (Name):

Address:

Email:

Phone (and alternative):

SPONSOR INFORMATION FOR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE (\$200)

Member Organization:

Primary Point of Contact (Name):

Address:

Email:

Phone (and alternative):



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Permission for Temporary Easement/Entry Agreement

(Please type or print neatly)

Permission is hereby granted this _____ day of _____, 20_____, by:

Three horizontal lines for signature and name.

to Civil War Trails, Inc., and its contractors to enter upon that portion of my/our land to install a historical marker as part of the Civil War Trails program. I/we understand that I/we will be contacted prior to said installation and that I/we will have the final authority as to the marker’s placement and location.

I/we understand that the Civil War Trails, Inc., or its contractors will maintain the marker as long as it remains on my/our property, is sponsored and that the marker will be removed at anytime in the future if so requested by me/us or my/our successors.

LANDOWNER SIGNATURE

DIRECTOR, CIVIL WAR TRAILS

LANDOWNER ADDRESS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CIVIL WAR TRAILS

Two horizontal lines for address.

SIGNATURE OF INITIATING ORGANIZATION

SIGNATURE OF SUSTAINING SPONSOR (MEMBER)

(ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER)

(ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER)

Two horizontal lines for address and phone number.

Two horizontal lines for address and phone number.



Civil War Trails, Inc.

By the Numbers

PROGRAM COSTS

New Trails Sign Package: \$2,600

- Includes design, fabrication and install of signage
- Placement on print and digital media

Annual Membership Fee: \$200 per sign

- Covers the interpretative and directional sign maintenance
- Provides a great deal of marketing leverage

OUR VISITORS

Trip Length

- Stay twice as long as average guests
- Over half stayed between 2–5 days

Spending Habits

- Over 1/3 spent between \$250–\$750
- A 1/4 of the budget was spent on food and beverage

Other Attractions

- Over 3/4 also enjoyed a state park, beach, camping, hiking, etc.
- Nearly 1/3 also enjoyed fine dining, wineries, breweries, etc.

Statistics drawn from information provided by the Virginia Tourism Corporation, Visit North Carolina and the Maryland Office of Tourism Development, 2011–2015

