Militarily, the handwriting on the wall was all too clear. In late November, within five months of the staggering midsummer news from Gettysburg and Vicksburg that Lee’s army had been crippled and Pemberton’s abolished, Bragg was flung bodily off Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, impregnable though both positions had been said to be, and harried southward into Georgia. With these defeats in mind, it was no wonder that every Sunday at Saint Paul’s in Richmond the congregation recited the Litany with special fervour when it reached the words, “From battle and murder, and from sudden death, good Lord, deliver us.” The good Lord might, at that. For though military logic showed that the South could not win an offensive war, fought beyond the Potomac or the Ohio, there was still a chance that it could win a defensive one, fought on its own territory. It could win, in short, because the North could lose.

— From The Civil War: A Narrative (Volume III) by Shelby Foote

Recommended Reading

- Battle Cry of Freedom – James M. McPherson
- The Civil War: A Narrative trilogy – Shelby Foote

Activity Level

Although we do walk numerous battlefields, there is nothing that is overly taxing. The longest trek is Pickett’s Charge at one mile on a grass path.
This Hallowed Ground

Tour

This Hallowed Ground is one of our most memorable tours! It gives you a panorama of the major events that began and ended the Civil War, starting with First Manassas, culminating with Gettysburg and breathing the air of finality at Appomattox.

The Civil War was the defining event in American history. It was an ordeal by fire that, according to the most recent historical estimates, cost the lives of as many as 750,000 American soldiers and left more than 300,000 wounded—casualties higher than all our other wars combined.

We study the military campaigns and strategy and delve into the causes as well as the people who were willing to sacrifice their lives and property for their country, whether north or south. Who were those soldiers whose hearts were, in the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes, “touched by fire?” How were they trained? Until the turning point at Gettysburg, why did the Confederate officers and soldiers in the East often tactically outmaneuver, fight harder, and campaign better than the Union generals? And, finally, why did the North win?

Our professional historian will lead the group and conduct informal discussions throughout the tour. We can learn from, and be inspired by, the skill, the courage, and the endurance displayed by the generation that brought us through the Civil War. In addition to retracing battles we include education sessions to enhance our understanding of the war and people.

HIGHLIGHTS

• Manassas, Gettysburg, Appomattox - This tour is a study of the causes behind the conflict and the major battles that began and ended the Civil War, starting with First Manassas, culminating with Gettysburg and closing with the surrender at Appomattox.

• Harpers Ferry - We visit Harpers Ferry at the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers, where John Brown staged his infamous raid that failed to incite a slave rebellion. He was captured and hanged there. Stonewall Jackson later captured the town, arsenal and entire Union garrison as a prelude to the Antietam Campaign.

• Antietam - Antietam was the site of the bloodiest day of war in American history when, on 17 September 1862, there were 23,000 casualties.

• Gettysburg - At Gettysburg we study the three days that marked General Lee’s final attempt to score a major victory in the north.

• Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Spotsylvania, Wilderness - We tour the area of four major battles: Confederate victories at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville leading up to Gettysburg; then Spotsylvania and the Wilderness Campaign fighting to keep the Grant’s Union armies at bay.
DAY 1  Welcome Reception
Schedule your flight to the Washington Dulles International Airport. The group will meet at a nearby hotel where we will have a Welcome Reception at 6 p.m. followed by dinner at 7 p.m.

DAY 2  Manassas: Confederate Victories, Union Disarray
Our program begins with a visit to the battlefield at Manassas. Both the North and South thought that a war would be short. Union leaders believed their greater resources and manpower would prevail while the Confederates doubted northern resolve. The first battle of Manassas (Bull Run) July 21, 1861 saw the proud but green Union Army facing the better led Confederates who won a decisive victory. The Union Army retreated unpursued to Washington. Innocence and illusion were over for both sides. By the time of Second Manassas at the end of August 1862, both armies had gained combat experience, but the result was an even more significant Confederate victory.

DAY 3  Harpers Ferry, Antietam
Nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains at the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers, Harpers Ferry is one of the loveliest places in the eastern U.S.

This was the scene of John Brown’s raid in October 1859— a desperate act that hastened the outbreak of war. Brown was hanged for treason on December 2, but the raid hardened radical sentiment for he was seen a martyr in the North and a radical insurrectionist in the South.

The Battle of Antietam (Sharpsburg), September 17, 1862, was the bloodiest single day battle in American history with 23,100 men killed or wounded. Although neither side gained a decisive victory, Lee’s withdrawal and failure to carry the war effort effectively into the North caused Great Britain to postpone recognition of the Confederacy. It also gave President Lincoln the opportunity to compose and later issue the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, declaring all slaves free in the states still in rebellion.
**DAY 4  Gettysburg: Days One and Two**

The **Battle of Gettysburg**, lasting three days, July 1, 2, and 3, 1863, was the bloodiest battle and the turning point of the Civil War. More than 50,000 Americans of both sides were casualties. Gettysburg was **General Lee**’s final attempt to carry the war north. Although nearly two years of fierce fighting still lay ahead, after Gettysburg the prospects of a Union victory changed from if to when. We will stand at **Little Round Top**, where the 20th Maine Regiment, led by Colonel Joshua Chamberlain, repulsed several Confederate assaults and preserved the Union position at **Cemetery Ridge**. This action was described by author Michael Shaara in his epic narrative *The Killer Angels*.

**DAY 5  Gettysburg: Pickett’s Charge, Lincoln’s Address, The Civilian Experience**

Today we walk the field of **Pickett’s Charge**, perhaps the most famous attack in American history. As noted by historian James McPherson, “Pickett’s Charge represented the Confederate war effort in microcosm: unsurpassed valor, apparent initial success, and ultimate disaster.” Of the 14,000 Confederates who attacked, only about half returned.

Some four months after the battle, **President Lincoln** came to Gettysburg to deliver one of the greatest speeches in American history. We will visit **Shriver House**, a museum dedicated to the civilian experience during the struggle. Dinner will be at the **Dobbin House**, the oldest building in Gettysburg (1797) and a stopping point for escaped slaves on the **Underground Railroad**.
**DAY 6  Fredericksburg–Richmond: The Heroism of Clara Barton–Chancellorsville**

This morning we will return south to Virginia and visit **Fredericksburg** – a region of four major battles: Fredericksburg, December 1862; **Chancellorsville**, May 1863; **The Wilderness**, May 1864; **Spotsylvania Court House**, May 1864. **Richmond**, the soul and Capital of the Confederacy, was the northern army’s main target. The direct route from Washington to Richmond passes through Fredericksburg. **Clara Barton**, later to found the American Red Cross, won fame and gratitude for her heroic nursing of the wounded of both sides. We visit **Chatham Plantation**, where the “holy angel” from Massachusetts worked at her makeshift “hospital.” Barton had already helped the wounded at **Antietam** and **Second Manassas**. Later, she would serve at the Wilderness and Spotsylvania and become supervisor of nurses for the Union Army of the James.

Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville were decisive Confederate victories. Wilderness and Spotsylvania were tremendous but tactically inconclusive battles in **Grant’s 1864 Overland campaign**. After visiting Fredericksburg, we’ll continue to Chancellorsville, where we analyze the battle, see where Stonewall Jackson received his mortal wounds and discuss the aftermath.
**DAY 7  Petersburg: The Confederacy and the Antebellum South**

By the summer of 1864, the war in Virginia settled into a brutal siege around Richmond and nearby **Petersburg** that would last until the spring of 1865. We will visit the fascinating National Battlefield at Petersburg, scene of the **Battle of the Crater**. After walking the ground over which the battle took place, we travel a short way to visit the memorable **National Museum of the Civil War Soldier** at **Pamplin Historical Park**. The Museum tells the story of the nearly 3,000,000 Americans — northerners and southerners, whites and blacks, immigrants and native born — who fought in the Civil War. While at the Museum, we will explore **Tudor Hall Plantation**, which features a working kitchen and slave quarters that present a multi-media exhibit on antebellum slavery and plantation life.

**DAY 8  Appomattox**

The final campaign began at **Petersburg** the longest siege in American history, June 1864—April 1865. The siege was a **precursor of the trench warfare of the First World War** fifty years later. Only the considerable skill, courage and endurance of Lee’s army kept the Union forces out away from Richmond. But on April 2 the northern army broke through and cut off the Confederate supply lines from the South, forcing Lee to retreat to the west. Grant pursued relentlessly, and virtually surrounded Lee’s army and forced the surrender on April 9 at **Appomattox Court House**. The United States was reborn. After visiting Appomattox, we will return to our hotel for our farewell dinner.
Please note that a minimum number of participants are required to run this pre-tour extension.

**PRE-TOUR DAY 1  Welcome Reception**
Guests fly into Dulles airport for an evening Welcome Reception at a nearby hotel.

**PRE-TOUR DAY 2  Manassas, the “Stonewall Brigade,” and Jackson’s Valley Campaign**
At the Manassas Battlefield, we learn about the events of the Confederate victory in the first major battle of the Civil War in July 1861 where Thomas Jonathan Jackson earned the sobriquet, “Stonewall.” Jackson’s steadfast position became the rallying point for the Southerners as their lines began to falter.

Next is Cross Keys and Port Republic. Fought on successive days in July 1862, Jackson won victories over Union General John C. Fremont. Fremont had recently taken charge of operations in the Valley after transfer from the western theatre. Spend the night in Lexington, Virginia.

**PRE-TOUR DAY 3  VMI at Lexington, Lee Chapel and Grave, The Battle of New Market**
This morning we head to the Virginia Military Institute, where Jackson, a professor of physics, also instructed the cadets in artillery and tactics. We walk the Parade Ground from where Stonewall led the cadets to provide security at Harpers Ferry for John Brown’s hanging in 1859 and later serve as military trainers for new army recruits in spring of 1861. We will visit the tomb of Robert E. Lee, who served as President of Washington College after the war, and the Stonewall Jackson grave site.

Leaving Lexington, we proceed up the Shenandoah Valley and stop for a picnic lunch en route to New Market. Although it took place in May 1864, the year after Jackson’s death, it was a situation in which his beloved VMI cadets set out on a forced march to fight side-by-side the Confederate troops where Colonel George S. Patton, Sr. commanded a brigade. After New Market, we settle into our lodging and dinner in Winchester.

**PRE-TOUR DAY 4  Phil Sheridan in the Valley, Hallowed Ground Tour Start**
In the morning, we take a tour of Kernstown, Jackson’s only setback in his campaign—and the last time he called a war council the night before the battle. Afterwards, we will study the battle of Third Winchester, tour the town and stop for lunch. We then proceed to the Battle of Cedar Creek, which pitted Jubal Early’s Confederates against Phil Sheridan in the culmination of the 1864 Valley Campaign.

90-minute drive back to Dulles airport hotel for rendezvous with the guests for the Hallowed Ground Tour.