

CIVIL WAR TRAILS MARKER GUIDELINES

Audience Assumptions: The typical Civil War Trails visitor is a tourist who knows little about the Civil War and nothing about what happened at any particular site. Tourists expect to read a story in clear, concise prose, and leave with an understanding of what happened at the site, what led up to it, what followed it, and what's important about it. They will be bored by discussions of troop movements, regiments and corps, etc. They will be excited by the human angle, including historic photographs and short, relevant quotations. We want tourists to believe that their time at the site was well spent.

Marker elements: Civil War Trails markers consist of the following elements: main text, images (historic photos and engravings preferred), and image captions (a very brief title or explanation and a credit for the institution providing the image). Depending on the topic, the marker may also display a map (usually to illustrate troop movements) and may include 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. For instance, if possible, leave most troop movements out of the main text and put them on the map instead. If the main text or sidebar describes the career of an individual, then all we need in the photo caption is his name (the text does the caption's work). Avoid repetition.

Text Length: 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).

Format: All text should be provided (main text, captions, sidebar) in one Word document per marker. Text can be e-mailed or provided on a CD or floppy disk.

Site-specific text: Each marker text should say exactly what it is the tourist is supposed to be looking at or aware of. “Gen. Sherman’s headquarters was in the brick building on your right.” “The North Carolinians charged across the field in front of you from left to right.” “You are standing where the 20th Maine Infantry stood that day.” “Jackson’s corps marched down the road behind you to the trenches on your left front.” This should be said as close to the beginning of the text as possible.

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, as briefly stated as possible.

Human interest: Tourists are interested in people 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.

Maps: Please provide us with a sketch map showing the location of the marker, which way visitors will be facing at the marker site (just 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 just for the editor's use—not for publication—in understanding the relationship between the text and the terrain, since it's unlikely that we will visit the site before the marker is erected. Sometimes, however, we do include a map on the marker to explain troop movements, the relative position of landmarks, road networks, the locations of buildings mentioned in the text, etc. Usually, we'll ask you to provide such a map if we think it will help tourists. 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). Please also indicate the exact spot where the marker will go, and draw an arrow to show in which direction visitors will be facing. We will reorient the map if needed to show that direction as “up” on the marker, regardless of which way is north.

Images: Please provide 2 to 4 black-and-white or color images for each marker. If the images are copyrighted or if permission is required by the institution holding them, please get permission (use and publication fees may be required), and give us the necessary credit lines to use with the images. Historical photographs and engravings are preferred. 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 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. But do avoid modern photographs, especially those that show what the tourist can see for himself at the marker site.

Image format: We prefer digital images, provided they are scanned at a high resolution: 300dpi at 8 x 10 inches. You may e-mail them or scan them onto a CD and mail it to us. Please provide scanned images in .tif or .jpg. We can also use high-quality 8 x 10 glossy prints from film negatives, and we will return prints if you want us to. Please do not take a low-resolution digital image and just blow it up to 8 x 10; we cannot use such images. If you have any questions, please ask.

House style: We use the phrase Civil War. We use U.S., Union, Federal, Northern; C.S., Confederate, Southern (not Yankee or Rebel, unless quoted). Every general (lieutenant, major, brigadier, etc.) is a Gen.

Review process: Please include the name, address, e-mail address, and phone number of the contact person with all materials. We will give you an opportunity to review the marker before it is manufactured. We may also ask experts in the field to review and comment on the marker text during the process.

Complete marker package: Before we can proceed with design and production, we must have on hand a complete package of the elements to be included on the marker. They are: title, main text, sidebar if needed, captions and credits, images, sketch map for the editor's use, and maps for the markers if needed. The absence of one or more elements will hold up design and production, so please be sure you provide them all.