Additional Area Civil War Sites

1. Sugarloaf Mountain – This was the site of a Union Signal Corps station that remained in operation throughout much of the war.

2. White’s Ferry – Originally called Concord’s Ferry, this crossing was established in 1817 about four miles north of Leesburg. After the war, the ferry was bought by Confederate veteran Elijah White and became known as White’s Ferry. It is the only operational ferry on the Potomac.

3. Harman’s Island – About two miles long and four hundred yards wide, this island traverses the Potomac at Ball’s Bluff. Union troops first had to cross the wide Maryland channel of the river to get to the island, then the narrower, narrower Virginia channel to reach Ball’s Bluff. This double river crossing created a bottleneck which made both the advance and the retreat very difficult.

4. Chances and Olds Canal – Finished in 1835, the canal stretched 184.4 miles from Georgetown, DC to Cumberland, Maryland. The canal was a major transportation route for goods moving between the Ohio Valley and Washington, DC. During the battle of Ball’s Bluff, Union troops used the tow path to get to the crossing point on the Maryland side. At least one canal boat was used to transport troops to Harman’s Island.

5. Poolesville – Located four miles from Ball’s Bluff, this small Maryland town served as division headquarters for General Stone’s “Corps of Observers.” From here, Stone was responsible for watching approximately 20 miles of the Potomac River.

6. Edwards Ferry – A major commercial crossing point before the war, Edwards Ferry was the site of a small diversionary crossing made by a detachment of the 3rd New York Cavalry on the morning of October 22nd. This was done to divert Confederate attention away from the Union raiding party then operating upstream at Ball’s Bluff. A skirmish also occurred there on the afternoon of October 22nd between Union troops from Brig. Gen. Willis Gorman’s brigades of Stone’s division and Col. William Burkhard’s 13th Mississippi which resulted in the capture of the Mississippian. Union troops continued to cross all day on October 22nd, totaling 2500 by nightfall and nearly 4500 by the morning of October 25th, 1861.

7. Dranesville – Learning that the Confederates had withdrawn from Leesburg on October 17th, Gen. George McClellan ordered the division under Gen. George McClellan to advance westward from its camp at Langley to a position near Dranesville. From there, McClellan was to march toward Leesburg. By October 19th, McClellan was conducting a reconnaissance-in-force but was confused by the reappearance of the Confederates in Leesburg. That night, General McClellan ordered General McClellan to withdraw to Langley on the morning of October 20th but gave him permission to remain an extra day in order to produce a map of the local roads. Thus, McClellan withdrew on the morning of October 21st, not knowing that fighting had broken out only a few miles away at Ball’s Bluff.

8. R.L.H. Railroad – Extending from Alexandria, the Alexandria, Loudoun, and Harpers Ferry Railroad ended in Leesburg. A locomotive and several cars were removed from the line by the 8th Virginia’s Colonel Eppa Hunton prior to the Battle of Manassas. Federal troops controlled this line throughout the war.

9. Burnt Bridge – A bridge over Goose Creek was destroyed by Confederate troops in June 1861 due to the threat of a Union advance. The area continued to be a location for Confederate camps. The 8th Virginia left from this location to fight at Ball’s Bluff.

10. Goose Creek – At the point where the bridge over the Alexandria–Washington Turnpike (today’s Rt. 7) crossed Goose Creek, Col. Nathan Evans set up a defensive position on October 19th to halt any advance by Gen. McClellan’s forces from Dranesville.

11. Fort Evans – One of the three earthen fortifications built to protect Leesburg, it was named for Col. Nathan Evans, the Confederate commander. From here, Evans directed his troops at Ball’s Bluff and Edwards Ferry. The fort was abandoned in March, 1862 when the Confederates withdrew from Loudoun County.

12. Big Spring – Located just north of Leesburg, this was the campsite of Co. K, 17th Mississippi, which was picketing the nearby Potomac River at the time of the battle of Ball’s Bluff. It was this Confederate company which discovered the Union crossing and first engaged the Federals on the morning of October 21st.

13. Smart’s Mill – Owned by John Smart, this mill became an important landmark associated with the battle of Ball’s Bluff. On the morning of October 21st, a very brief exchange of fire occurred between Confederate pickets and a few Union soldiers just south of the mill. During the Union rout at the end of the day, Smart’s Mill was the site of the Elapse of Capt. William F. Bartlett of the 30th Massachusetts and a mixed group of some 80 Union soldiers. Locating a small boat at the mill, Bartlett managed to ferry these men to safety a few at a time. It was the largest number of Federals to escape from the battlefield in one group.

14. Carter’s Mill – Col. Nathan Evans withdrew his brigades to Carter’s Mill, several miles south of Leesburg, on October 17, 1861. Evans again withdrew the bulk of his forces to Carter’s Mill shortly after the Battle, leaving a small force in and around Leesburg to watch the Federals at Edwards Ferry.

15. Harpers Ferry – On October 16, Evans sent two companies of the 8th VA, and artillery from the Richwood Howitzers to Harpers Ferry to help Confederate forces there repel a Union attack, and on the night of October 16 or 17, withdraw the balance of his force to Carter’s Mill, a few miles south of Leesburg. After hearing of the move to Carter’s Mill, his immediate superior, General Beauregard, expressed his concern in writing to Evans, prompting Evans to return his forces to Leesburg on October 19.