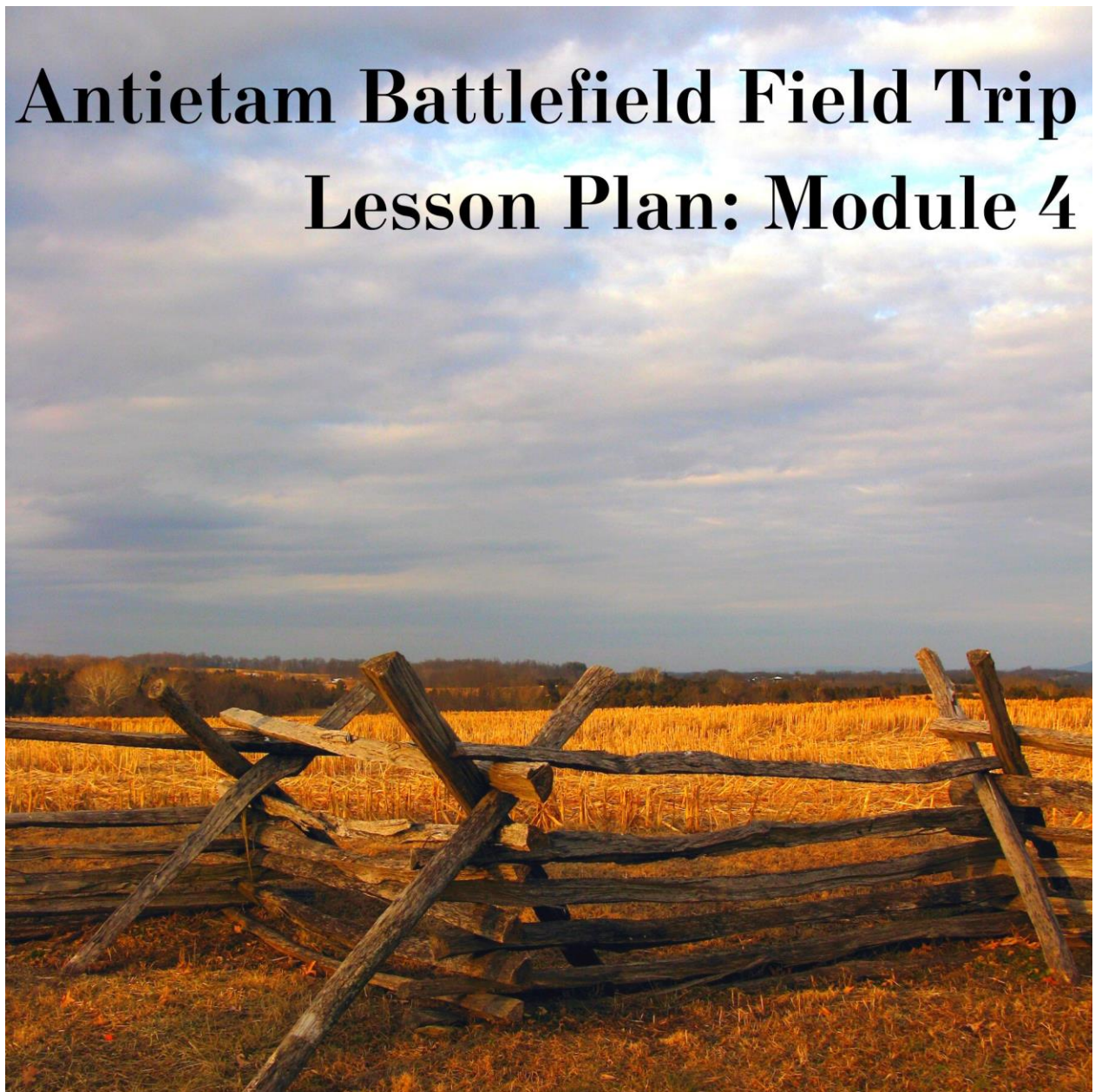




AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST ★ ★ ★

Antietam Battlefield Field Trip Lesson Plan: Module 4



American Battlefield Trust, 2022

This is an individual module from the Antietam Battlefield Field Trip Lesson Plan. It has been formatted for ease of use or printing options for stand-alone learning experiences.

We strongly recommend viewing the PDF of the entire Field Trip Lesson Plan to find maps, touring tips, and extra resources. If you want just one file, this PDF is for you. It includes all modules (lesson plans and activities), the maps, and the supplemental historic photos in one easy download.

These lesson plans are listed according to their locations on the National Park Service's Self-Guided Auto Tour route. Please consult the [Antietam National Battlefield's Self-Guided Auto Tour map](#) when planning your visit with these lesson plans and battlefield investigations.



American Battlefield Trust Field Trip Lesson

Antietam: Bloody Lane

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What can historic photographs tell us about ever-changing landscapes and their importance to American history? Why is it important to preserve this battlefield landscape for future generations?

OVERVIEW

Historically known as the Sunken Road, the Bloody Lane, located on the battlefield of Antietam, saw a staggering number of casualties during the battle. Originally, this piece of land was used as a farm lane or cut-through for local farmers. The transportation of goods required the use of wagons and without modern roads, traveling between properties was common. Due to wagons being weighed down by goods and its constant use, the soil eroded, causing the path to sink deeper into the ground.

On the morning of September 17, 1862, approximately 2,600 Confederates assumed a defensive position along and in the Sunken Road. As these troops waited for the Union army to advance, they utilized the available fence rails to build a primitive fortification to help strengthen their position. As nearly 5,500 Union soldiers marched towards the Confederates, they were hit with nearly endless volleys of fire. For nearly four hours, both armies exchanged fire at close range. The Confederate troops, although outnumbered, held their position for a good portion of the morning but were finally overrun by Union soldiers after a miscommunication by Confederate officers. At the end of this fight, nearly 5,500 soldiers were considered casualties; killed, wounded, missing, or captured. With such carnage and loss of life, after the battle, the Sunken Road would be forever known as the Bloody Lane.

Alexander Gardner photographed the aftermath of the Battle of Antietam, including the Bloody Lane. His images of dead soldiers across the landscape were exhibited in New York and shocked the nation. Photographing on a battlefield was a difficult and timely process, with photographers having to bring portable lightrooms and lots of equipment and chemicals. Furthermore, photographers were limited in their subjects; most Civil War documentary photographs were taken by Northern photographers of Eastern subjects. Hence why this was one of relatively few engagements where photographers recorded images of dead soldiers, making these photographs of Sharpsburg right after the battle an invaluable source for both contemporary and modern historians.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Knowledge (Describe)
 - Discuss the history of the Sunken Road (Bloody Lane).
 - List benefits of historic preservation for future generations.
2. Comprehension/Application/Analysis (Explain)
 - Examine and compare historic photographs to modern terrain.



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- Develop an argument to support preservation of battlefields.
3. Evaluation (Interpret)
- Analyze and appropriately discuss historic photos.

BATTLEFIELD LOCATION

Antietam National Battlefield Auto Tour Stop #8 - Sunken Road (Bloody Lane), Richardson Avenue

American Battlefield Trust Antietam Virtual Tour – Above Bloody Lane and Bloody Lane Segments

<https://www.battlefields.org/visit/virtual-tours/antietam-360-virtual-tour>

NPS Website Virtual Tour:

<https://www.nps.gov/anti/learn/photosmultimedia/tour-stop-8.htm>

ACTIVITIES

Motivational Activity:

1. Begin by providing students a brief history of the Bloody Lane as found in the **Overview** section.
2. Facilitate a discussion focusing on the modern day preservation of this piece of land. Questions may include:
 - a. Can you imagine this as a historic lane (Sunken Road) used for travel and transportation of goods?
 - b. What features show us that it has been well-preserved?
 - c. Can you imagine the intense fighting that took place on this portion of the battlefield?
 - d. What advantages or challenges would this terrain have posed to both armies during the fighting?

Procedure:

1. Break students into partners for this activity. You can either have all students work on the entire worksheet, or assign different partners to work on one photograph, depending on time or other constraints. If choosing the latter option, encourage students to compare and contrast their photographs and findings with each other.
2. Provide each pair with a copy of the [Battlefield Investigation - Bloody Lane](#) worksheet. If you are completing this on the battlefield, you may choose to print the Battlefield Investigation photos prior to the lesson. Students can also access the photos electronically from the worksheet.
3. Provide the students with background on Civil War battlefield photography, included in the **Overview**.
4. Instruct students to use the photographs provided and locate the modern day vantage point.
5. Partners will need to complete the worksheet which focuses on battlefield preservation.
6. Have students stand in the location that they have determined the historic photograph was taken. Students may choose to take a selfie or a photograph of that location.



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7. Students can compare the current state of preservation with the historic image either on the battlefield or by taking an image on their device and upon returning to the classroom, they can compare their modern day photo to the historic photograph on the worksheet.

Summary Activity:

After the allotted time, gather your class at your desired location and facilitate a brief discussion on the students' findings. Has preservation allowed for visitors to understand what happened at this specific location during the battle? What arguments do you have to support historic preservation? How does preservation impact the study of history for generations to come?

Extensions:

Have students take photos of other areas of the battlefield. Upon returning to the classroom, students should research their photo of choice and find historic photos that match their modern day photos. Students should appropriately discuss changes in the terrain, landscape, and preservation and share their findings.

RESOURCES

Teacher:

- Adelman, Garry E. and Timothy H. Smith. *Antietam: Then & Now*. Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 2005.
- [**Battlefield Investigation - Bloody Lane**](#)
- Snyder, Keith B., and Brian Baracz. *Antietam Farmsteads: A Guide to the Battlefield Landscape*. Sharpsburg: Western Maryland Interpretive Association.
- Library Of Congress
 - [**View of ditch, which had been used as a rifle-pit at the Battle of Antietam**](#)
 - [**The "Sunken Road" at Antietam**](#)
 - [**Bloody Lane, Antietam Battlefield, near Sharpsburg, Maryland**](#)
- National Park Service Website
<https://www.nps.gov/anti/learn/photosmultimedia/tour-stop-8.htm>
- American Battlefield Trust In4 Video: Soldier Gear
<https://youtu.be/1-R9uKn7Fv4>
- American Battlefield Trust In4 Video: Battlefield Terrain
<https://youtu.be/RktUeoA3F7w>
- American Battlefield Trust In4 Video: Photography in the Civil War
<https://youtu.be/kDzYkygdJO8>

Students:

- Adelman, Garry E. and Timothy H. Smith. *Antietam: Then & Now*. Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 2005.
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STANDARDS**Social Studies - National Council for the Social Studies**

- Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change
- Theme 3: People, Places, or Environments
- Theme 6: Power, Authority, and Governance
- Theme 7: Production, Distribution, and Consumption
- Theme 8: Science, Technology, and Society



ANTIETAM BATTLEFIELD FIELD TRIP LESSON PLAN: MODULE 4

**American Battlefield Trust Field Trip Battlefield Investigation
Antietam: Bloody Lane**

Name: _____

Use the historic photographs provided to locate specific areas along the Bloody Lane (Sunken Road). Complete the chart to collect your evidence of preservation efforts on this portion of the battlefield.

[View of ditch, which had been used as a rifle-pit at the Battle of Antietam](#)

Location	
When do you think this photo was taken?	
Prominent landscape features.	
What has remained the same?	
What has changed?	
How has preservation positively affected this area of the battlefield?	



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Name: _____

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The "Sunken Road" at Antietam

Location	
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[Bloody Lane, Antietam Battlefield, near Sharpsburg, Maryland](#)

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When do you think this photo was taken?	
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American Battlefield Trust Field Trip Battlefield Investigation
Antietam: Bloody Lane
Answer Key

These answers will be based on observation.
There are not right or wrong answers for this activity.



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BATTLE QUOTES — BLOODY LANE

“These men are going to stay here, General, till the sun goes down.”

John B. Gordon to Robert E. Lee

“Death from the bullet is ghastly but to see a man’s brains dashed out at our side by a grape shot and another’s body severed by a screeching cannon ball is truly appalling. May I never see such horrors as I saw that day.”

Lt. Augustus Van Dyke

“The end of the Confederacy was in sight.”

E.P. Alexander

“The rebels seemed to have a special spite against the green flag, and five color-bearers were shot down successively in a short time. As the last man fell even these Irishmen hesitated a moment to assume a task synonymous with death.”

Capt. Edward Field

“[the Federals] came like ocean billows to break on the rock of Gibraltar”

Cullen A. Battle, commander of the 3rd Alabama

“The shrieks of the wounded and dying was terrible, but they rallied and came at us again and our men again awaited until they come in range and again arose and mowed them down the second time, but they came again.”

James C. Steele of the 4th NC

“The line swayed forward and back like a rope exposed in rushing currents. A force too heavy to be withstood would strike and drive in a weak point till we could collect a few fragments, and in turn force back the advance till our lost ground was recovered.”

James Longstreet

“It appeared as though mutual extermination would put a stop to the awful carnage.”

James W. Shinn of the 4th NC

“it was simply awful the way the canister was tearing up the ground, and making kindling-wood of the fences around Piper’s buildings.”

Charles A. Hale of the 5th New Hampshire

“fear was not that I might be killed, but that I might be grievously wounded and left a victim of suffering on the field.”

Frederick L. Hitchcock of the 132 PA





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