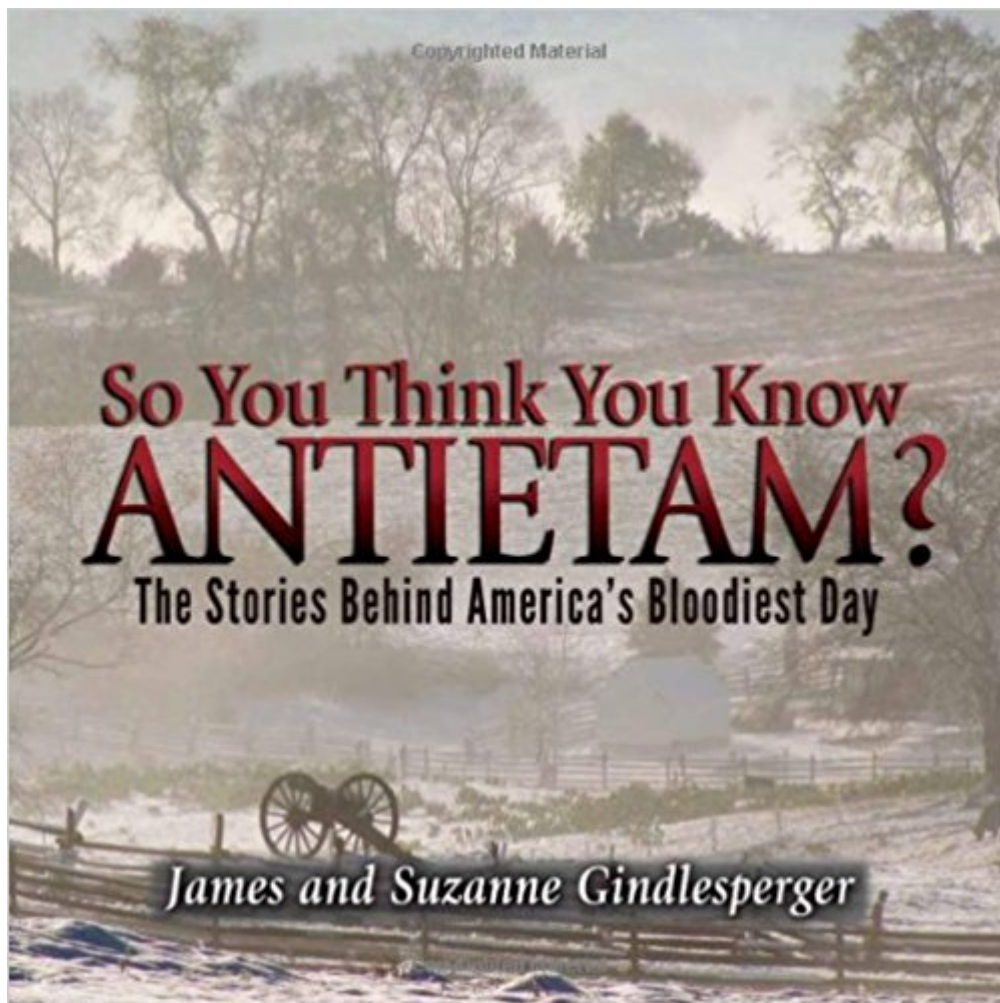




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# So You Think You Know Antietam?, The Stories Behind America's Bloodiest Day



## Synopsis

September 17, 2012, marks the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Antietam--America's bloodiest day. To the people in the North it was Antietam, after the stream whose name translated from the Native American as the swift current. Those in the South referred to it as Sharpsburg, after the nearby town. Whatever the name, this much is undisputed: it was the bloodiest one-day battle in United States history. Following just 12 hours of combat, some 23,000 American soldiers were killed, wounded, or missing. The site of the battle of Antietam is remarkably preserved and looks much the same today as it did on that fateful day 150 years ago. Administered by the National Park Service, the Antietam National Battlefield contains nearly 100 monuments, each with its own story. So You Think You Know Antietam? honors those who took part in this darkest of days in our nation's history by telling the stories behind the monuments. Who designed the monuments and what do the symbols represent? Why are no Confederate soldiers buried in the national cemetery? What connection did Clara Barton have with the battle? Who was Johnny Cook and what did he do? Written with casual visitors and armchair travelers in mind, So You Think You Know Antietam? answers the above questions and more. Readers will learn some of the lesser known stories about Antietam and the human side of war through poignant vignettes that reveal the ironies and tragedies not normally found in typical guidebooks. Featuring close to 300 color photos, ten color-coded chapters and maps, and GPS coordinates of all monument locations, So You Think You Know Antietam? is a well-organized, attractive book meant to enrich the reader's experience.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

James and Suzanne Gindlesperger are the authors of *So You Think You Know Gettysburg?*, which was the bronze winner for ForeWord Reviews' Book of the Year Award in 2010. James is a "Friend of the Field" at Gettysburg and the author of three books about the Civil War: *Escape from Libby Prison*, *Seed Corn of the Confederacy*, and *Fire on the Water*. Suzanne is the cofounder of Pennwriters, a professional organization of published and aspiring authors. The couple lives in Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

Short and sweet descriptions about the monuments on the field is most useful. Each monument is accompanied by a picture and a brief summary of when it was dedicated and also a brief account as to what the monument portrays.

I enjoyed reading it. Very detailed account of Antietam.

Coming off the success of their prior book with a similar name except dealing with Gettysburg (see my review here on ) it was only natural for husband and wife authors James and Suzanne Gindlesperger to create another highly readable and visually appealing book dealing with another great Civil War battle. This time around they have chosen to tackle Antietam. On that September day in 1862 approximately 23,000 men were casualties with over 3,500 paying the ultimate price. Now the well preserved battlefield stands as a monument to these men no matter which side they were fighting for or what their reason for fighting was. Part history, part travel log, part pictorial reference this is a book that should be on the library shelves of anybody interested in the battle of Antietam or any student of Civil War memory. While not a good introduction to the battle itself this is a great book for anybody travelling the main park service roads. While this book can certainly be read on it's own (that's what I did) it's value would be on the battlefield and for those interested in the dozens of monuments that commemorate various people, places, brigades, and more. The book is broken into ten chapters each covering a section of the battlefield. Each chapter begins with a brief outline and includes a Mapquest map helping travellers keep their bearings. For each battlefield marker included there is a photo as well as GPS coordinates. Modern photos are sometimes supplemented by historical photos and artwork. The text accompanying each stop on the tour describes the significance of the subject and often times points out information about the physical monument including dedication dates and artist information. The four appendices cover Robert E. Lee's "Special Order 191" or his lost order, orders of battle for both sides, and a listing of Medal of Honor

winners associated with the battle. I would challenge almost anybody (licensed guides and park rangers don't count) to not learn something new from this book. With beautiful photos and interesting and highly readable text this is surely a book that will find its way on to the shelves of many Civil War readers. Highly recommended!

So You Think You Know Antietam? The Stories Behind America's Bloodiest Day offers descriptions and photographs of 129 monuments and sites on the Antietam/Sharpsburg battlefield. GPS coordinates are given for every site. Much of the photography is in color with several black and white wartime images, including portraits of officers. Included are the Lincoln-McClellan Meeting site, the farms, special topographic features such as the Rock Ledge in the West Woods, the Antietam train station, Lee's headquarters, Sharpsburg's Slave Block, and the National Cemetery. War Department markers, wayside markers, artillery pieces, hospitals, fences, and reenactors are briefly described in the final chapter. The appendices includes the full text of Lee's Special Orders 191, the Federal and Confederate Orders of Battle, and the U.S. Congressional Medal of Honor winners. [Comment](#) | [Permalink](#)

As a kid, I grew up very near the Antietam battlefield. I traipsed all over it, and read as much as I could about the battle, both then and as an adult. How exciting to come across a book that would possibly tell me some things that I didn't already know. How disappointing it was, however, to find out this is really just a guidebook to the battlefield - and mostly just to the monuments at that. Further, the description of the monuments are a tad on the boring side. They usually describe the action the regiment engaged in during the battle (and most monuments are at the regimental level), then a little something about who the monument was made by and when it was dedicated. It just reminded me of a really long list, with particular items the authors needed to check off. Oh, almost forgot ... The maps are atrocious. That said, it's definitely not that bad as a guidebook. I would definitely not recommend reading it on its own, however - unless you're a real die-hard Antietam fanatic.

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