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MONOCACY NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD  
**FOUNDATION**  
PRESERVE • PROTECT • ENHANCE

# *The Dispatch*



A Quarterly Newsletter of the Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation

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## *Exiled from Command; Lew Wallace in 1862 and 1863*

By Gail Stephens

After Shiloh, Wallace felt the sting of being an outsider in the Army of the Tennessee. Restless and dissatisfied, his always acute sense of honor bruised by his commanders, he would make a decision to leave his division in late June 1862, an act he later called his "very great mistake."

Though Wallace had his problems with Grant, the man who thwarted his career ambitions for the next two years was not Grant, but Major General Henry Halleck. On April 11, 1862, Halleck arrived at Pittsburg Landing to take control of the combined Armies of the Tennessee and Ohio. A little over two months later in July 1862 President Lincoln would elevate Halleck to command of all the Union armies. From this position of authority, Halleck would thwart Wallace's command ambitions until 1864.

At the end of April, Halleck placed his two ranking volunteer officers, Wallace and Major General John McClernand, and their divisions in the reserve. Thus, they had little to do in the coming campaign to take Corinth, Mississippi, where the Confederate army had retreated after Shiloh. In making this change, Halleck acted on sentiments expressed in a letter to a friend: "It requires a professional man to conduct a law suit where a few thousand dollars are involved; but mere politicians can conduct armies where thousands of humans, millions of money & the safety of the Govt itself are involved! I am tired & sick of military charlatans." There would be no important commands for volunteers in his army; West Pointers would have the important commands. Wallace understood, commenting, "McClernand and myself are interlopers. So he and I, (particularly myself,) are undergoing the process of shelving."

Wallace's command did not move until June 2, when Halleck sent it north to secure an important railroad leading to Memphis. Memphis had been seized by

### **Submit...**

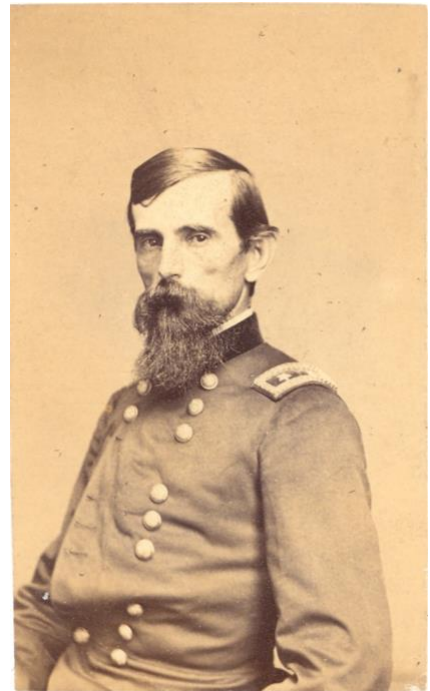
*We welcome your photos and articles about people, places, history, and natural resources of Monocacy National Battlefield and Frederick County.*

*Please send them to [monocacynbf@outlook.com](mailto:monocacynbf@outlook.com)*

*Mary Turner, Editor*

gunboats and was vulnerable. When Wallace received information from his cavalry that a large Confederate force was near the city, he moved to occupy it. However, there was no Confederate force, so Wallace's unauthorized and seemingly unnecessary movement angered Halleck, who immediately sent Grant to take charge. On June 21 Grant arrived and Wallace promptly asked for leave. Grant gave it.

Wallace never returned to the Army of the Tennessee. Instead, early July found him in Washington, DC testifying before the Congressional Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War. It is not clear why he testified but his comments certainly did not help his career. When asked about Halleck's pursuit of the Confederates to Corinth, he commented that Halleck's slow, cautious advance had allowed the Confederate commander to evacuate the town and save his army, even sending some of troops east to reinforce Richmond. Only two days later, Halleck became General-in-Chief of all Union armies.



Maj. Gen. Lew Wallace

After his testimony, Wallace returned home to Indiana. Governor O.P. Morton had engineered Wallace's assignment there in order to use his speaking skills and considerable reputation to recruit soldiers for the Union cause. His speaking tour finished, Wallace would find his division had been dismantled and there was no place in the Union army for him. He had made a bad choice. He believed Morton could get him a better command but though Morton tried, he failed. Wallace lamented that rather than making the speaking tour, he should have returned to the army. "It was my mistake, my very great mistake. I should by all means have rejoined my command."

Wallace did have one brief command that summer and it brought out the best in him. On August 14, a Confederate army, led by Major General Edmund Kirby Smith, moved out of Knoxville, Tennessee and into Kentucky hoping to draw Union forces out of the deep South. By early September, Smith had defeated a Union force sent to stop him and was only 80 miles from Cincinnati, the "Queen City of the West." The Union commander of the military department encompassing Ohio, Indiana and Illinois placed the available Wallace in charge of defending the city.

There were virtually no troops in Cincinnati, but there were people – 200,000 of them. On September 2, the morning papers published a proclamation from Wallace. Cincinnati, he wrote, must be defended and its citizens must assist. "Patriotism, duty, honor and self-preservation" called them to their task. Wallace added "This labor ought to be that of love, and the undersigned trusts it will be so. Anyhow it must be done. The principle adopted is, citizens for the labor, soldiers for the battle." He also declared martial law with the acquiescence of city officials. The citizens responded and Wallace created a militia with some of them; others finished the defensive works. Steamboat captains offered their boats to patrol the Ohio River with artillery and armed citizens. Wallace had called upon the patriotism and self-reliance of the citizens but backed it up with martial law. It worked.

*Continued on Page 3*

On September 10, thousands of battle-hardened Confederates appeared. By that time through personal charisma, organizational skills, political connections and plain hard work, Wallace had completed a line of defensive works seven miles in length with eight artillery batteries and manned by 72,000 volunteers. The Ohio River was patrolled by a flotilla of eighteen armed steamboats. The Confederates arrived in front of the works on September 10, took one look and headed back to Lexington, Kentucky. Cincinnati was safe and Lew Wallace was a hero.

Wallace's reward was to chair a military commission of inquiry into the man who should have responded with alacrity to Smith's advance but did not, Major Don Carlos Buell. Needless to say, this was not the kind of command Wallace wanted, but he had no choice. Orders were orders. The tedious commission did not end its work until May of 1863 by which time Wallace was a largely forgotten man.

Wallace would try many times during the remainder of 1863 for an assignment, but he was blocked always by the powerful Halleck, who had Lincoln's ear. In January 1864, a desperate Wallace sent a letter to Secretary of War Stanton offering to waive rank in order to return to the field. Nothing happened. However, friends of Wallace, powerful men in Washington, including Indiana Congressman and Speaker of the House Schuyler Colfax and Senator Henry S. Lane of Indiana were laboring on his behalf. Their influence and President Lincoln's sense of fairness ultimately broke the blockade in March 1864.

*Gail Stephens is an historian and author of Shadow of Shiloh: Major General Lew Wallace in the Civil War and numerous other articles and monographs.*

### ***What's New in the Park?***

There was some serious painting going on in the Visitor Center lobby in March and April. Painting the Past introduced young visitors and their families to painting miniature figures of both Union and Confederate soldiers. Ranger Matt Borders was in charge of the event.





# *Did The Uniform Save The Man: The Retreat of Colonel William Seward*

By Ken Plantz



*Colonel William Seward Jr. in his Officers Uniform<sup>1</sup>*

In 1898 Mrs. Janet Seward authored an article for the Women's Literary Club of Auburn, New York, about her life with her husband Colonel William Seward Jr. during the Civil War years. It is recounted on page 405 of Alfred Roe's book The Ninth New York Heavy Artillery published in 1899. She and their young daughter Cornelia were with him until May of 1864 when his regiment left to join the Union Forces near Richmond. While waiting for news from the front she received a letter from Colonel Clinton McDougall, William's prewar business partner. McDougall wrote, "I have just seen Will at Cold Harbor, and he is all right. Had a hard fight, in which most of his clothes [were] torn from him".

Two weeks later Mrs. Seward received a letter from Quartermaster Knowles with further details of the Colonel's fight. He writes, "The Colonel got a rap over the head with a rebel gun or sword and had one leg of his pants torn off".

Moving forward in her article, she then tells of the morning of July 10 when she first hears, to her surprise, of the battle that occurred at Monocacy Junction. "Will could not have been in that, as he is down in front of Petersburg, Virginia". Shocked and unaware of her husband's movement to Monocacy

she waited for news. On July 11 at 2:00 a.m. she received word that, as had been earlier reported, he was indeed wounded, but had not been captured.

Colonel Seward's escape after his horse was shot from under him and his fall injuring his leg has been well chronicled. A soldier found him a mule, and he rode away using a red silk scarf as a bridle. He made it safely to Ellicott Mills.

In her article Mrs. Seward adds to the story something that isn't well known. She reveals that the Colonel, due to his uniform being destroyed during his fight at Cold Harbor, was wearing a private's uniform at Monocacy. She concludes, thankfully, that his Confederate pursuers were not nearly as interested in capturing a private as they would be in capturing a Colonel.



One might question if his pursuers could distinguish his rank based on his uniform in the heat of battle, but did the unforeseen change in uniform keep the Confederates from capturing the son of Lincoln's Secretary of State? What might that capture have done to the already weary mood of the Union? An interesting "what if" to consider in the annals of the Civil War and the Battle of Monocacy.

*Ken Plantz is a Research Volunteer at Monocacy National Battlefield.*

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia: "William H. Seward, Jr."

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia: Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. United States Dept. of War, 1895

## *Decisions in Battle: “To Save Davis was to Lose Washington”*

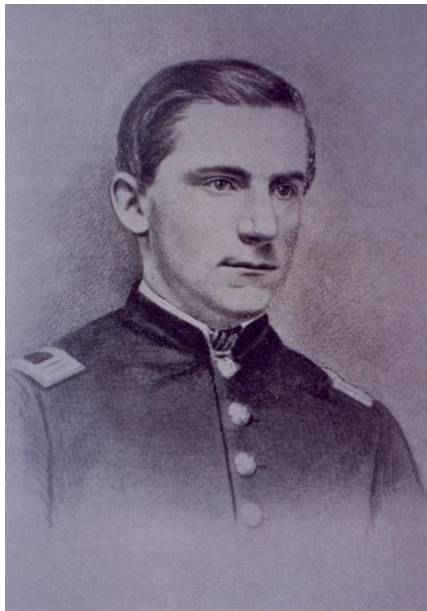
By David M. Hall

The defense of Frederick Junction on the west bank of the Monocacy by skirmishers of the 10<sup>th</sup> Vermont Infantry under 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant George E. Davis is memorialized in the four corners of the placards at the overlook on Gambrill Loop Trail. This includes the burning of the Georgetown Turnpike covered bridge, their harrowing escape under fire over the iron railroad bridge, and the Congressional Medal of Honor presented to Davis in 1892 “for distinguished conduct in the battle of Monocacy, Md., July 9, 1864”.

Sometimes we forget these were flesh and blood men re-living in their minds and hearts the trauma of combat in the years that followed, sometimes with a sense of guilt and bitterness. What history relates as the defining moments of men’s lives, like those of Davis and Maj. Gen. Lew Wallace, were often their worst moments according to their post-war accounts.

There are at least three accounts found regarding the defense of the crossings: first, Davis’ undated verbatim account published in George B. Benedict’s, Vermont in the Civil War...Volume II published in 1888 on pp. 314-315. Second was a letter dated 10 May 1893 from Davis to Chaplain E. M. Haynes for A History of the Tenth Regiment Vt. Vols. Second Edition published in 1894 pp. 197-199 and third, a letter from Lew Wallace, shared with Haynes, dated 30 March 1893 at pp. 200-201.

On the early morning of 9 July 1864, Davis and 75 hand-picked men from the 10<sup>th</sup> were detailed to defend the crossings on the west bank of the river. Lt. Col. C. G. Chandler of the 10<sup>th</sup> was to command the Divisional skirmishers. They included Davis’ men and two companies of the First Maryland Regiment, Potomac Home Brigade – a green militia outfit manning the log blockhouse on the east end of the turnpike railroad overpass bridge. One hundred more men from the 9<sup>th</sup> New York Heavy Artillery, serving as infantry, and a detail the



*Lt. George Davis*

120<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry covering the farm fields south of the turnpike from the railroad overpass east to the covered bridge were added to the group. Davis did not expect to lead anyone but his 75 that day.

Davis went to report to Chandler, but could not find him and instead he wrote to Haynes: “I was sent [to] General Wallace’s headquarters on the hill...for orders, which were to hold the two bridges across the river at all hazards.”

Soon afterwards, skirmishers of Gen. Ramseur’s Confederate Division advancing east along the turnpike from Frederick opened fire on the Maryland militia inflicting casualties, compelling their inexperienced Captain C. E. Brown to turn over command to Davis. Next the Confederates made a concerted charge on the blockhouse which Davis’ men repulsed. Then at about 10:30 the rebels made another attack along the riverbank against the embankment at the northwest end of the railroad bridge, which Davis anticipated, shifted his Vermonters and Marylanders to counter.

Wallace and the division commander, Gen. James Ricketts anxiously watched the combat from the opposite side and as Wallace remembered in 1893:

The latter attack “was decisive of the fate of the bridge. It had to go and what was worse...leaving Davis and his whole detachment cut off...I rode to see the order executed...I remember it as if it were yesterday the struggle I

had with myself to have the match applied. To burn the bridge looked like a deliberate sacrifice of the gallant skirmishers – or rather like a wicked desertion...I argued with myself...if I retire Davis, the enemy will follow on his heels; and then – and this nerved me – if the bridge was allowed to stand, Early would be en route for Washington..in an hour. **To save Davis was to lose Washington** [Note: author’s emphasis]. I gave the word and within five minutes...the old crossing was a whirl of smoke. With a last look at my skirmish line – it was still fighting – I rode away.”

Meanwhile, as the bridge burned, the pickets of the New York units guarding the left withdrew to the east bank, abandoning Davis’ remaining men to their fate.

In the 1888 narrative, Davis wrote:

*“This was a queer predicament, nothing on my left, raw recruits on my right, the enemy advancing upon our front; the Monocacy at our rear...I sent a soldier to wade or swim the river, and ask for instructions from Lieut. Col. Chandler...My soldier brought back no instructions but the comforting intelligence that [Chandler] supposed we had retreated over the bridge before it was burned”*

Davis wrote to Haynes, that Chandler “should have been on the spot personally directing all of these movements”, but “I received no orders from any source after the first gun was fired in the morning. Being only a First Lieutenant, it was a new experience to be thus suddenly thrown into such a responsible position, where authority must be used and great risk taken.”

After fighting on the west bank for several more hours, Davis saw the rest of the army on the east bank, precipitately retreating; the Division flag being carried across the railroad. Davis recalled in 1888:

*“It was now time for us to leave or be taken prisoners. We crossed the iron bridge, stepping on the ties...The enemy came at us on both flanks, firing at our backs...calling for us to surrender. Some of our men were killed; others were wounded and fell through the bridge to the Monocacy River, 40 feet below. Five of my own company [D] marching near me were taken prisoners upon or near the bridge, one of whom died in the Andersonville prison. One-third of the picket detail were killed, wounded or captured. It has always been a mystery how any of us escaped the bullet or capture.”*

Wallace concluded “the night succeeding I heard that Davis and a portion of his men had escaped. That he would attempt to cross the river by the railroad bridge...under fire at close range and forty feet in the air, never entered my mind. It was one of the bravest things of the war.”

*David M. Hall is an independent Civil War Researcher*

## ***Come Check Us Out!***

Have tent, will travel. The Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation is scheduled to participate in several special events at the Battlefield and in Frederick over the spring, summer, and fall. Come check out our new tent and at a couple of the events you might even get a free gift. Hope to see you there!

**Earth Day & Park Day,**  
April 22, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
near the Visitor Center,  
5201 Urbana Pike.

This is a day set aside for volunteers to help staff to complete maintenance and



cleanup projects. All who participate will receive a **free** eco-friendly water bottle from the Foundation.

**First Saturday Hike**, May 6, 11 a.m. on the Junction Trail and 1 p.m. on the Gambrill Mill Trail. Free guided hikes with an overview of regional B & O R.R. history.

**Frederick's 275<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**, June 10, 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. at Utica Park, 10200-B, Old Frederick Road, Frederick. Help us celebrate the 275<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Frederick County!

**Juneteenth: From Enslaved to Emancipated**, June 17, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Best Farm, 5106 Urbana Pike. Come learn more about the enslaved populations of the Battlefield's farms and their journeys to freedom. The 1 mile hike will take 1.5 hour, and go from the Best Farm to Monocacy Junction, the site of a US Colored Troops recruiting station.

**159<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Monocacy**, July 8-9, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, near the Visitor Center, 5201 Urbana Pike. Events will include special ranger programs, military living history demonstrations, and firing demonstrations by both infantry and artillery units.

**Artillery Living History Demonstration**, August 12, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. near the Visitor Center, 5201 Urbana Pike. Come find out just how loud those cannons can be at this living history demonstration. There will be military and civilian living history encampments.

**In the Streets**, September 9, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. somewhere in downtown Frederick. Come help us celebrate the fun that is Frederick!

**National Public Lands Day**, September 23, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. near the Visitor Center, 5201 Urbana Pike. Volunteers are welcomed to help keep the park beautiful and clean. All who participate will receive a **free** eco-friendly water bottle from the Foundation as long as the supply lasts.

**Our events calendar is constantly changing, so check our website at [www.monocacynbfoundation.org](http://www.monocacynbfoundation.org) for current updates.**

### **Mew Member of Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation Board of Directors**

*Richard J. Finch*

Rick Finch has joined the Foundation's Board of Directors. Some may already be familiar with him as he is a volunteer at the front desk of the Battlefield's Visitor Center. He has also worked with the American Battle Field Trust (formerly the Civil War Trust) in preserving parcels of the South Mountain Battlefield.

Rick comes to us with over forty years of experience in architectural design, engineering, project management, and historic structure rehabilitation with the Federal Government, the Maryland Department of the Army National Guard, and independent contractors. His latest project is independent research into the Reich family barn which is located near the old Jug Bridge and was witness to the Battle of Monocacy.

Volume 6, #2, Summer edition of *The Dispatch* will be published on 15 June 2023.

The deadline for submission of articles, stories, and/or photos will be 15 May 2023.

We hope to hear from you.