



MONOCACY NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD
FOUNDATION
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The Dispatch



A Quarterly Newsletter of the Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation

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"With Blanched Face and Clenched Teeth"

Lt. Abbott at the Battle of Monocacy

By David M. Hall

"[I was] lying on the ground with blanched face and clenched teeth to keep from crying out with pain, which pride prevented"ⁱ This was how the diarist, Lemuel Abijah Abbott, then a 2nd Lieutenant, Company D, 10th Vermont Volunteer Infantry, described his situation on the afternoon of 9 July 1864 at the Battle of Monocacy. He was on a hill above the Thomas Farm, his hip "mangled" by an exploding shell, and the enemy was closing in.ⁱⁱ

Abbott enlisted in the 10th Vermont at Montpelier on 28 July 1862. His descriptive service record read "Age 21 years; height 5 feet 11 inches, Complexion dark, eyes black, hair black."ⁱⁱⁱ His birthplace was given as Barre Vermont and his occupation was stone cutter. Abbott's family owned a granite quarry in Barre, hence his occupation. This stone cutter had also been a cadet at Norwich University, a military school in Northfield Vermont. Because of this prior military training, he was mustered in as 1st Sergeant, Company B, on 1 September 1862 and undertook the role of drillmaster. He was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant of Company D on 26 January 1863. Abbott was a competent, diligent, and dutiful young officer, ambitious for promotion and recognition as a combat leader with the accompanying fame and glory.

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*

Mary Turner, Editor

The 10th spent the balance of 1863 in the “school of the soldier” picketing the Potomac line from Seneca Creek to the mouth of the Monocacy River. The regiment deployed to Frederick and Monocacy from 30 June to 2 July 1863; the sounds of the Battle of Gettysburg were audible in the distance. They joined the dilatory pursuit of Lee’s defeated army into Virginia. On 27 November, the 10th experienced its christening fight at Payne’s Farm near Locust Grove in Orange County, Virginia.

Abbott, with Company B, participated in two assaults against Confederate positions behind successive fence lines bordering fields, which the 10th advanced across under close-range fire. In an addendum to his diary, he recalled:

I was the only officer over the fence,..and had fearlessly endeavored..to take the second line of fence, which was just what was needed...I had been the furthest [sic] to the front of anyone...I foolishly ran forward under heavy fire a few steps...when on turning around I found myself alone with bullets flying about me faster than ever...the men rapidly scaling the fence twenty yards to in the rear...in full retreat.

He confessed that “I was disgusted at not being fully supported,” referring not to his men but to the officers of other units failing to join in the assault, dooming it to failure and the cost of many lives. Of the soldiers whom he led, Abbott wrote 40 years later: “The men of Company B had gone further ahead of any over the fence”.

As a result of this experience, Abbott was confident that he had the physical courage, tactical acumen and leadership skills to be an effective combat leader. He also decided that the same was not true for his superior officers. As his confidence grew, so did his bitterness, resentment and contempt for “band-box” soldiers: those headquarters staff officers and adjutants who looked the military part but were loath to face the fiery maelstrom of the front line. Abbott contrasted such behavior with his conviction that “The company commanders of this regiment did not follow their men into battle...but led them continually” adding “and I always did.”

The 10th went through the grueling ordeal of the month-long Overland Campaign, which began in May 1864. Throughout, Abbott did his duty faithfully and bravely. As grim attrition cut down more line officers, he assumed temporary command of various companies, often more than one. Though he thrived on leading men, he was still a mere 2nd Lieutenant who assumed the responsibilities of a 1st Lieutenant or even a Captain. Abbott thought he knew why he wasn’t being recognized and it still rankled decades later when he reflected in his diary on this time and his post-war military career:

I was with one exception alone with no company commander to observe and report my work, and my different regimental commanders didn’t take sufficient interest to do so, even if where they could observe; but the fact that I was almost invariably selected to command different companies in battle when needed..should have [been] reason enough for at least one brevet during the war, if nothing more, which since, in the regular army, [it] would have saved me from frequent undeserved embarrassment.

Abbott arrived at another conviction during the carnage of the Overland Campaign: “I hate shells and solid shot.” He shared a traumatic, indelible memory of what occurred on May 5, the beginning of the Wilderness fight:

...a shell..exploded in the ranks of Company K, killing a private and wounding others. The shell had burst actually inside the man, completely disemboweling and throwing him

high in the air in a rapidly whirling motion above our heads with arms and legs extended, until his body fell heavily to the ground with a sickening thud.

I was...hardly two paces away and just behind the man killed. We were covered with blood, fine pieces of flesh, entrails, etc., which makes me cringe and shudder whenever I think of it...I was whirled about in the air like a feather, thrown to the ground on my hands and knees...face cut with flying gravel or something else, eyes and mouth and ears filled with dirt..feeling nauseated for the shake-up. Most of the others affected went to the hospital, and I wanted to but didn't give up...". Admitting that, "I feared of being accused of trying to get out of a fight.

Abbott and his men often supported batteries in combat, and the young Lieutenant admired the courage of artillerymen under fire:

It is awe-inspiring to see the regularity, the determined set look and precision with which our begrimed artillerymen stick to their work; shot and shell screeching by don't seem to disturb them. I was spellbound and speechless with awe and admiration for their splendid pluck and nerve...No words can picture such a scene.."

But despite his admiration, he arrived at another conviction, "I'd rather be a 'doughboy' [an infantryman] – anything but an artilleryman."

On 9 July 1864, on Thomas' Hill Field, Abbott found his convictions, fears, and resentments converging. Earlier that day, when 1st Lieutenant George Davis was tapped to lead the skirmishers defending Monocacy Junction, command of Company D devolved on Abbott. When Confederate attacks shifted to the left, Colonel Henry of the 10th sent the company to support Alexander's Battery on the hill. Abbott would have preferred to lead the men in a desperate infantry assault or in a stand-up fire-fight rather than being defenseless behind the cannon crews, clinging closely to the ground for its scant protection against the enemy fire that was meant for the guns. The young Lieutenant dreaded the shell and solid shot. When he was wounded by the shell-burst, it was a moment of visceral fear for the 22 year old anxiously pawing at his hip to discover the extent of the damage.



Major Lemuel A. Abbott
From FindaGrave.com

Major John A. Salisbury, a regimental staff officer, came upon the young Lieutenant writhing on the ground. Abbott viewed the Major, at 37 years of age, as "an elderly man". He was a popular father figure among the young soldiers of the 10th. As he absorbed the deteriorating tactical situation, Abbott recalled that Salisbury

"advised me to go to Colonel Henry for permission to go to the rear as it was well known that soon the Union forces would have to hastily retreat, as the enemy had crossed the Monocacy River on both flanks and were fast surrounding our intrepid little force with overwhelming numbers... and Salisbury..did not think me in condition to keep from being captured."

As he had been at the Wilderness, Abbott feared being accused of trying to get out of a fight. He remembered

...being the only officer with and in command of my Company, I declined to ask for such permission...knowing that everyone who possibly could should remain on the fighting line in such a vital emergency as the possible loss of the National Capital..especially an officer for the effect such an example would have on the men...

Hearing the wounded man's refusal, Salisbury told him "if you don't go and ask the Colonel for permission to go, I will" and then left to find Henry.

While waiting for the Major's return, Abbott's condition worsened "the whole limb having been numbed by the shock produced by the shell [now] caused excruciating pain [and] had mangled the flesh and turned it black and blue for several inches around." Salisbury returned and announced "Colonel Henry has denied my request".

Years later, in his diary, Abbott elaborated on his memories of the retreat and his complex after-thoughts:

[My] valiant little command was in places virtually cutting its way through the enemy's lines, which almost completely enveloped it, in full retreat...But I did not take to being captured as some who were able-bodied did, and hobbled away.

Abbott's debilitating wounds led him to retire from the regular army in 1885 as a Major. He remembered the events of that day in 1864 and the impact it had on his life with lingering resentment:

Feeling piqued...not [being] allowed to go sooner to the rear from the battlefield in my maimed condition – although I would not have gone anyway, but wanted permission, because I thought I deserved it, as up to that time I had never asked to do so in any battle..but stubbornly, grieved and in constant pain, marched with my command all night the following day to the Relay House near Baltimore, bathing the wound occasionally en route with cool water from a friendly well or running stream...which was a great relief.

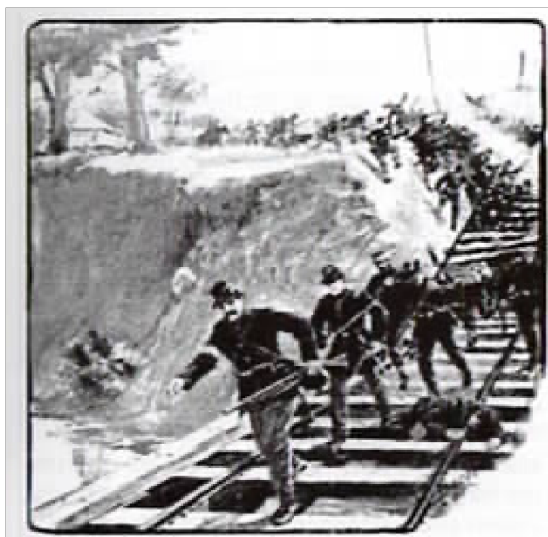
But my feelings were greatly wounded at the lack of consideration received...from Colonel Henry. As my pride got the best of my judgment I have suffered as a consequence ever since. Had I ridden instead of marched, it would have at least saved a game leg and hip of undue strain and from disappointing results, for had I been in active service at the breaking out of the Spanish-American war...but for this wound, it goes without saying that I would then have been given a high rank and in the end retired from active service with the rank any way of Major-General.

The valiant old warrior died 3 February 1911 in Aberdeen Washington where he had retired after years of service on the frontier. He is buried in Barre, Vermont.^{iv}

David M. Hall is an independent Civil War Researcher

What's New in the Park?

Battlefield Celebrates its 160th Anniversary



Monocacy National Battlefield will host the 160th anniversary of the battle July 5-7, 2024. The weekend of events will start with ranger led caravan tours of the battlefield on July 5th at 10:00 am and 1:30 pm. That evening at 7:00 pm a panel discussion on the battle and 1864 Maryland campaign will be held at City Hall in downtown Frederick. We are honored to have Dr. James J. Broomall, Director of the George Tyler Moore Center for the Study of the Civil War; Gail Stephens, former battlefield VIP and author of *Shadow of Shiloh*; Ryan Quint, ranger at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park and author of *Determined to Stand and Fight*; and Dr. Jennifer M. Murray, Department of History, Oklahoma State University as members of the panel.

On July 6-7, there will be a variety of activities at the Thomas Farm and area around the visitor center. Offerings will include several guided hikes, infantry and artillery demonstration, and ranger programs about the battles at Monocacy and Fort Stevens. There will be a medical field hospital throughout the event at the visitor center with continuous programming, as well as period music throughout. ASL interpreters will also be on hand for the programming.

Saturday July 6:

- 9am** Worthington / Thomas Farm Hikes
- 11am** Infantry Demonstration at Thomas Farm
- 12pm** Artillery Demonstration at Visitors Center
- 1pm** Fort Stevens Talk at Visitors Center
- 2pm** Infantry Demonstration at Thomas Farm
- 3pm** Artillery Demonstration at Visitors Center
- 4pm** Best Farm to 14th New Jersey Monument Hike

Sunday July 7:

- 8am** Jug Bridge Hike - Meeting at Maryland National Guard Armory
- 11am** Infantry Demonstration at Thomas Farm
- 12pm** Artillery Demonstration at Visitors Center
- 1pm** Battle of Monocacy orientation at Visitors Center
- 2pm** Infantry Demonstration at Thomas Farm
- 3pm** Artillery Demonstration at Visitors Center
- 4pm** "Retreat from Battle" hike at Gambrill Mill

Check Out the Foundation!

New Members on Foundation Board

Rosemary Martin and Brad Stone have begun three year terms on the Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation Board of Directors. Both come to the Board with backgrounds in Civil War history and experience with volunteer organizations.



Rosemary currently serves as National Vice President of the Auxiliary to Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (ASUVCW) and has held other various offices at the National level. She also holds offices in the ASUVCW Department of the Chesapeake and the ASUVCW Antietam Auxiliary #3. The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) awarded her the Mary E. Walker Medal at both the Department and National Levels (an award presented by the Commander-in-Chief or a Department Commander to a female member of one of the Allied Orders in recognition of and appreciation for her outstanding service to the SUVCW).

She has a Master of Business Administration (MBA) and over 25 years of experience in project, program, and technical leadership and management in support of the Federal Government, Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the private sector, both nationally and internationally. Her business background includes corporate strategy, planning, governance, resource management and allocation, implementation and change management, and quality, risk, budget, training, procurement, and systems management while working in manufacturing, telecommunication and information technology, biotechnology, and service industries.

Brad currently combines his interest in the Civil War and medical history by volunteering as a docent on a regular basis at both the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, MD and aboard the U.S.S. Constellation in Baltimore Harbor. He has given presentations on a variety of Civil War topics at a number of leading institutions, including the Gettysburg Heritage Center in Gettysburg, PA; the Clara Barton Missing Soldiers Office Museum National Park in Washington, DC; the Antietam National Battlefield Park in Antietam, MD; and the U.S. Navy Museum at the Navy Yard in Washington, DC. Several of his talks have also been nationally televised on C-SPAN3 American History TV. In fact one of these talks – on animals in the Civil War - was shot on location at the Monocacy Battlefield.



He is a former U.S. government senior public affairs executive who headed the public affairs operations of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

We welcome both of them to the Monocacy National Foundation Board of Directors.

First “First Saturday Hike”



The Foundation’s first “First Saturday Hike” of the year was deemed a success despite cold winds and drizzly weather on 2 March 2023. We met at the Jug Bridge Monument Park where Ranger Ryan T. Quint from the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania Military Park in Virginia was the guest presenter. He spoke on “Then Came the Tug of War: Fighting at Monocacy’s Jug Bridge.” Ranger Quint told of the two sides who fought for the bridge in the Battle of Monocacy on 9 July 1864 under the command of Maj. General Robert Rodes (Confederate) and Brigadier General Erastus B. Tyler (Union). Quint’s illustrations were in the style of a “battle in a box”: photos of maps and important figures who played a role, and multi-colored ropes on the ground to create a map of the roads, railroads, and bridges involved in the battle. He focused on the importance of the Union forces holding the bridge for as long as they did to facilitate the retreat of their troops back to Baltimore.

Ranger Quint is the author of “Determined to Stand and Fight: The Battle of Monocacy” which is available in the Battlefield Visitor Center bookstore.

Be sure to check our website (www.monocacynbfoundation.org) for information about future First Saturday Hikes.

Upcoming Events

Meet the Author:

National Museum of Civil War Medicine 48 East Patrick Street, Frederick, MD.

In honor of Juneteenth, Dr. Emilie Amt will be our special guest speaker on the social history of the African American experience in Washington and Frederick Counties in the era of slavery. Her extensive research using primary reference materials and interviews of extended families in the region are a highlight to her presentations. Dr. Amt is the author of “Black Antietam: African American Experiences of the Civil War in Sharpsburg.” Her book will be available for purchase and signing after the program.

Admission to the event is free (and a donation to the Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation is appreciated). A regular admission fee is required to visit the Museum.

June 22 @ 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm. Free

160th Battle Anniversary Bus Tour: From Monocacy to Fort Stevens

The Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation (MNBF) is pleased to sponsor a historical bus tour of the battles that saved Washington in 1864 as a prelude to the 160th Anniversaries of the Battle of Monocacy (9 July 1864) and the Battle of Fort Stevens (10-11 July 1864). Our tour guides are Ranger Matt Borders of the Monocacy National Battlefield; Gary Thompson, President of the Alliance for Preservation of Civil War Defenses of Washington; and Charles Mitchell, author and faculty of the University of Maryland. Board a tour bus at the Frederick Visitors Center and join us as we trace the steps of Jubal Early's Maryland campaign starting Monocacy Junction (Monocacy National Battlefield) then onto Fort Stevens with stops in Urbana, Rockville and Silver Spring. Space is limited. Purchase your tickets via the MNBF website at <http://monocacynbfoundation.org/donate/>. Write "Bus Tour" in the "Comment" box.

June 29 @ 8:30 am – 5:00 pm. \$95.

Artillery Day at the Monocacy National Battlefield

Visitor Center, 5201 Urbana Pike, Frederick, MD.

The sound and fury of the artillery will shake the ground of Monocacy National Battlefield with cannon fire demonstrations. Different types of cannons will be fired throughout the day at 11am, 1pm and 3pm at the Monocacy National Battlefield Visitors Center.

You can experience the acoustic and the concussive differences at the point of firing (Visitors Center) from the downwind position of 1.5 miles (Gambrill Mill) by planning your day around two firings.

Stop by our tent to meet the directors of the foundation out front of the Visitors Center. Get a free copy of our newsletter, *The Dispatch*. Sign up to join our mailing list. We need you and a small donation goes a long way.

September 7 @ 10:00 am - 4:00 pm. Free.

"In the Streets" Festival by Celebrate Frederick

Market Street Frederick, MD Frederick, MD

Get to meet and mingle with foundation board members at "In the Streets", Frederick's showcasing of its local, non-profit organizations. Listen to the story about our mission. Get a free copy of our newsletter, *The Dispatch*. We will tell you about our events programming and co-partnership with the National Park Service's Monocacy National Battlefield. Look for a special activity at our table under our tent.

September 14 @ 11:00 am - 5:00 pm. Free.

“It Was a Cruel Sacrifice of Men”

A Confederate Account of the Battle of Monocacy

By Mary Turner

Behind the scenes in the Visitor Center Library there is a small group of volunteers who do research to be used in the interpretation of the Monocacy Battlefield. Sometimes that research sends us down a rabbit hole that seems to have no end. Other times, while looking for one thing, a serendipitous find appears that may be more important than what we were originally searching for.

Such was the case for me recently when Ranger Tracy Evans asked me to find a speech that she thought Judge Glenn Worthington (one of the Battlefield’s founding fathers) had made at the dedication of the United Daughters of the Confederacy’s (UDC) monument on the corner of the Best Farm. With some help from Alan Duke, another researcher, we discovered that newspaper coverage of the event did not mention the judge, and that someone else had made the dedicatory speech. The Maryland Room at the Frederick County Public Library had nothing to aid the search, so I went further afield, to the Maryland Center for History and Culture (formerly the Maryland Historical Society) in Baltimore. They are the depository for the papers of the Maryland Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. This collection consists of five file boxes full of materials. Four of those boxes contain seventeen albums of newspaper and magazine articles, pictures, and programs, and the fifth is full of files.

The scrapbooks yielded much information relating to the establishment of Monocacy National Battlefield, obituaries of officers who had served in the battle, and stories of

encampments of veterans on the anniversaries of the battle. More than fifty of these articles were photographed and are now in the battlefield’s research files. Among these was a short article about a speech Judge Worthington made at a Memorial Day celebration for the Fitzhugh Lee Chapter of the UDC at Mt. Olivet Cemetery. But there was nothing of the speech!

The box of files was saved for last. About half way through the box was a file containing what appeared to be presentations or essays written by women of various UDC chapters across the state. They covered a variety of subjects including battles won by the Confederacy and prominent generals. The essays were numbered – some were dated to 1912 and 1913 – and the authors’ names and UDC chapters were identified on each piece. A title list was at the front of the folder.

There was one exception. Essay #7 was identified by title only: “It was the summer of 1864.—” Of course, lots of things happened in the summer of 1864, but it was worth a look. What I found was a first-person account of the Battle of Monocacy written by an unknown member of the 12th Battalion, Georgia Light Artillery.

His account begins in Lexington Virginia where General Jubal Early’s army paid homage at the grave of “our famous leader ‘Stonewall Jackson’”^v Then they make their way north up the Shenandoah and across to Frederick:

A short distance from Frederick City towards Washington City, flows the

Monocacy River, and on its opposite banks, the enemy in unknown numbers barred the way, for we proposed now to make a dash for the Federal Capitol. Reconnaissance led General Early to suppose that few troops were in front and instead of calling for a division of infantry, called only for Evan's Georgia Brigade to cross the river and drive the enemy.

He assures his readers that "They knew no fear and they gallantly stepped to the front." While it is highly unlikely this soldier actually heard General Early make his pre-battle announcement, he includes this version in his account of fifty years later: "Boys, there are a few cavalry on the other side of the river and we want you to go over and drive them back." Sadly, the 12th Georgia found out otherwise:

We went into the river below the bridge, crossed steep banks on both sides, formed line of battle, threw out line of sharpshooters, who soon began firing. Our line of battle following, soon came out of the woods and we saw the enemy's line of sharpshooters across a field of wheat and two lines of battle in rear of them and about 600 yards from us-(in the railroad cut of the B & O R.R.. The cut being equal to strong breastworks)[.] Their line extended as far as we could see to the right and left of us. Instead of 'a few cavalry', the strongest kind of a line of infantry and our orders were to drive them back. With a rush and a yell, the battle was on."

He vividly describes the wounding of Brigadier General Clement A. Evans early in the battle, and then the loss of six color bearers in the regiment although he could not have witnessed how they died or were wounded.

Then his narrative becomes more personal:

About midway of the field was a residence and some farm houses. [T]here was a pump in the yard and our men were suffering for want of water. Twenty-five or thirty of them were shot down around the pump. I ran the risk and got a cup of water and while pumping, several balls hit the pump stock and handle. We went through the house, Barksdale, (my comrade) and I, two shells struck the house while we were in it and knocked the bricks everywhere. I saw in the dining room a glass pitcher with syrup in it. I poured it into my cup and eating biscuit and syrup as we hurried out the door on the side toward the enemy. Barksdale was shot in the leg. I helped him behind the house and went on with the charge, our ranks receiving no reinforcements and seemingly fighting the battle alone. Suddenly to the left of us came dashing the welcomed sight of the Louisiana brigade and uniting our forces, made a final charge on the enemy's works and captured them, the enemy leaving and hastening down the road towards the Federal Capitol.

He then states that "Of the many battles in which our company fought from '61 to '65 the casualties at Monocacy Junction were the greatest." Of the forty-two men in his company who entered the battle only ten remained untouched at the end, with thirty-two dead or wounded. He concludes: "It was a cruel sacrifice of men for a little military glory." He then recounts General Gordon's response to the battle: "The field was strewn with the dead and dying and well was it when Gen. Gordon rode up and with tears in his eyes, thanked the men and

regretted the sacrifice of so many of the brigade he loved so well.”

A researcher can take away several things from this account. First, it was written fifty years after the battle and may well contain stories he has heard from others in his brigade such as the wounding of General Evans, the death or injury of six color bearers, and General Gordon’s words to his troops. But other parts contain details that are personal experiences: the wounding of his comrade, the crystal pitcher of syrup, and the balls hitting the pump as he got his cup of water.

This essay offers a third account of the battle around and through the Thomas House along with those of Major Peter Vredenburg of the 14th New Jersey Regiment and Mamie Tyler who sought

shelter in the cellar with the Thomas and Gambrill families and some of the farm’s enslaved population. It also provides us with several clues about the identity of the author: he names one of the color bearers and his comrade, Barksdale, both of whom served in the 12th Battalion, Georgia Light Artillery. Barksdale was in Company E in July 1864, so it seems likely that the author was as well. He also was one of the ten who survived the battle unscathed. Hopefully, sometime in the future, we will be able to put a name to the author.

This search did not provide a copy of Judge Worthington’s speech to the Fitzhugh Lee Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. We’ll have to keep searching for that as well.

Mary Turner is a Research Volunteer at Monocacy National Battlefield.

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The deadline for submission of
articles, stories and/or
photos will be
15 May 2024

End Notes

“Blanched Face and Clenched Teeth”:

ⁱ Quotes in Major Lemuel Abijah Abbott: *Personal Recollections And Civil War Diary*, 1864. Free Press Printing Co. 1908.

ⁱⁱ Troop information in Edwin Mortimer Haynes, D.D.: *A History of the Tenth Regiment, Vt. Vols.*, Second Edition. The Tuttle Press, 1894.

ⁱⁱⁱ Compiled service records of Abbott, Lemuel A., 10th Infantry U.S. Volunteers, <<http://www.FOLD3.com./image/31200441>.

^{iv} Lemuel A. Abbott. Photo posted by Jeffry Burden.

<http://www.FindaGrave.com/memorial/128440405/lemuel_abijah-abbott/photo#view-photo=224357610>

“It was a Cruel Sacrifice of Men”:

^v All quotes are from an unknown author, Presentation #7 “It was the summer of 1864.—”, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Special Collections, MSS 2924. H. Furlong Baldwin Library, Maryland Center for History and Culture, Baltimore MD.