

The Dispatch

The Newsletter of the Monocacy National Battlefield
Foundation

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Summer 2025



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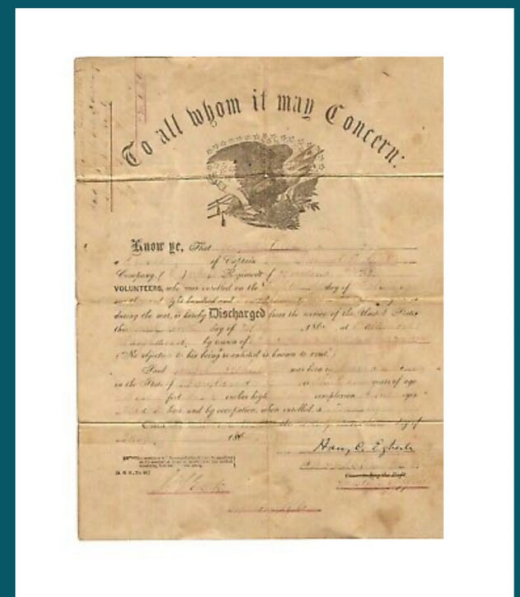
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meeting that mission.



The discharge certificate for Joseph Arthur was purchased by the Foundation in January 2025. Find the document in the research center at the visitor center of the Monocacy National Battlefield

Arthur mustered into "G" Co. MD 3rd PHB Infantry on 2/18/1864 and fought at the Battle of Monocacy. He is interred at Bethany Cemetery in Taylorsville, Carroll County, MD. Plot: row 04-05.

Photo courtesy of Robert Ferro.



From the Superintendent's Desk

Preserving the Past, Progressing the Present: Summer at Monocacy by Superintendent Derek Carter, Monocacy National Battlefield

As we move through the summer of 2025, I'm pleased to share a snapshot of the exceptional work underway at Monocacy National Battlefield. The commitment of our team across divisions continues to protect this hallowed ground, enhance the visitor experience, and uphold the stories we are entrusted to tell. From ecological stewardship to historic preservation and public engagement, this season has been one of forward momentum.

Natural and Cultural Resource Management: Stewardship in Action

Our field season is in full swing with seasonal Biological Science Technicians, Sylvie and Shelby, actively removing invasive plant species throughout the park. Current focus areas include mugwort, Johnson grass, Japanese hops, mile-a-minute, and wineberry. This work directly supports native habitat restoration and the health of our pollinator corridors.

Park Biologist Allie is leading a rare plant survey not only here at Monocacy, but across the National Capital Region, lending her expertise to other park units. In parallel, our team has been conducting archaeological compliance work in support of upcoming interpretive enhancements, including artillery signage and new trail markers. Condition assessments of existing archaeological sites are also ongoing.



Resources employee, Shelby Smith, spot spraying invasive plants in the park

Looking ahead, the team is preparing ground sites for FY26 pollinator strips to reduce invasive growth along key roadways and corridors. Amphibian and bird surveys continue, contributing to long-term ecological monitoring.

Importantly, the selection of a Principal Investigator for our Ethnographic Overview and Assessment has been finalized. This study, a collaboration with the National Capital Region anthropology program, will identify and document Traditionally Associated Groups, exploring their cultural ties to this landscape—both historic and ongoing. It's a critical step forward in understanding and honoring the broader human history of Monocacy.

Facilities Management: Preserving Place

This summer has brought an array of critical projects from our dedicated Maintenance Division. Facility staff are currently replacing the Visitor Center HVAC system with a more efficient unit that will support both heating and cooling—an essential infrastructure improvement to house our forthcoming museum exhibits.

Our thanks to the public and our partners for their patience as this work continues.

At the Best House, fresh linseed oil paint and structural repairs are underway to preserve the historic siding. At the Worthington House, the Historic Preservation Training Center and park staff continue work on a significant rehabilitation of the front porch—an important milestone in the ongoing exterior preservation of that property.

Elsewhere in the park, we are working with engineers on the aging culvert under Worthington Lane, with design work setting the stage for a full rehabilitation in the coming year. The stone walkway at Gambrill Mill is also scheduled for replacement to provide a more stable and safer surface for our visitors. Meanwhile, our team remains committed to daily trail maintenance and grounds keeping to ensure accessibility and safety throughout the park.

Interpretation and Education: Welcoming and Engaging

The summer has brought new energy to our interpretive efforts. We welcomed Charlie Miller, our first Foundation-sponsored intern and a recent Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College graduate. Charlie has been hard at work researching the B&O Railroad blockhouses and supporting visitor services. Returning seasonal Conner McKenzie also rejoined the team after a successful term through Conservation Legacy last year—we're glad to have him back!



Artillery Firing demonstration during the 161st Anniversary of the Battle of Monocacy event.

This period has also been focused on exhibit review and planning for summer events, including our 161st Anniversary of the Battle of Monocacy. While our HVAC issues have temporarily delayed the museum exhibit installation, we've continued to serve the public through the Tenant House and are grateful for the flexibility of our staff and volunteers during this transition. [1]

Visitor Resource Protection: Ensuring Safety and Presence

Throughout the summer, our Visitor and Resource Protection staff have remained vigilant in maintaining a safe and welcoming environment for all guests. Their ongoing presence and responsiveness during the height of the visitor season have been essential to the park's daily operations, special events, and after-hours support. Their efforts are often behind the scenes—but they are critical to our mission.

Looking Ahead

As summer unfolds, I remain deeply proud of the park's progress and the people behind it. Thank you to the Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation for your continued support and partnership. Your advocacy allows us to pursue our preservation mission with purpose.

[1] On August 1, 2025, the main visitor center at the Battlefield re-opened to the public.

A Louisiana Giant in Confederate Gray
by Park Ranger Matt Borders, Monocacy National Battlefield

The carte-de-visite, or paper image, of William Peck was purchased by the Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation in 2022 and shows him in his Brigadier General's uniform. One of the largest officers in the American Civil War, William Raine Peck stood 6' 6" and weighed approximately 330 pounds. Born in Jefferson County, Tennessee on January 31, 1818, he moved to Louisiana in the 1840's. There he purchased a plantation near Milliken's Bend, across the Mississippi River from Vicksburg, eventually building a mansion that he named "The Mountain". Peck represented Madison County, Louisiana in the Louisiana State Legislature for several years and later was an ardent supporter of secession. He was even a signatory to the Louisiana Ordinance of Session in January 1861. [1]

He enlisted as a private on July 7, 1861, in the 9th Louisiana Infantry, but was commissioned Captain of Company E the same day by the Governor of Louisiana. While the 9th Louisiana arrived in Virginia too late to take part in the 1st Battle of Bull Run, the regiment was soon attached to the Louisiana Brigade that fought with Major General Thomas J. Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley. There they earned a reputation as Jackson's shock troops, even eclipsing briefly the vaunted Stonewall Brigade. For his efforts, Captain Peck was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel of his regiment in May 1862.[2]

In July 1862, the 9th Louisiana was transferred to the Louisiana Brigade of Brigadier General William Stark and fought with that command until the Spring of 1864. During this period William Peck was promoted to Colonel of the 9th Louisiana Infantry on October 8, 1863. Following the Battle of the Wilderness in May 1864, Peck's brigade was merged with their original brigade and the Consolidated Louisiana Brigade fought together through the rest of the war, including here at Monocacy. It was during the Battle of Monocacy that William Peck was specifically referenced by his division commander, Major General John B. Gordon for "admirable conduct" during the battle.[3]

Colonel Peck went on to serve through the rest of the war, being wounded at 3rd Winchester on September 19, 1864, and promoted to Brigadier General on February 18, 1865. Though he had often overseen his brigade prior to being promoted to Brigadier, William Peck was not present at Appomattox and instead was paroled at Vicksburg, Mississippi on June 6, 1865. He returned to "The Mountain" after his parole and lived only another six years, passing away on January 22, 1871. His body was returned to Tennessee for burial in his family plot where he rests today in Westview Cemetery outside Jefferson City.[4]

Though somewhat washed out, his rank is clear due to the laurel wreaths on his collar. Notice too that the photographer has taken the effort to colorize the image slightly, picking out the burgundy of the chair on which General Peck is sitting. Why this was chosen for colorization is not clear but makes for an interesting contrast with the rest of the image.

This acquisition furthers the Foundations mission to assist Monocacy National Battlefield in acquiring artifacts of particular interest and importance to the Battle of Monocacy and its participants.



[1] Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Gray: Lives of the Confederate Commanders*, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1995 printing), 231; Louisiana Ordinance of Secession, St. Charles Parish Virtual Museum, [19th Century Page 081 Image 0001.jpg \(1200x914\)](#), accessed 6/1/2025 ; William Raine Peck, Find A Grave, [William Raine Peck \(1818-1871\) - Find a Grave Memorial](#), last updated 3/4/2000.

[2] David G. Martin, *Jackson's Valley Campaign: November 1861-June 1862*, (New York City, NY: Gallery Books, 1988), 146 ; W. R. Peck, Service Records, National Archives, [Page 16 - US, Civil War Service Records \(CMSR\) - Confederate - Louisiana, 1861-1865 - Fold3](#), accessed 6/1/2025.

[3] War Department, *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1891), 352.

[4] *Generals in Gray*, 231 ; William Raine Peck, Find A Grave, [William Raine Peck \(1818-1871\) - Find a Grave Memorial](#), last updated 3/4/2000 ; W. R. Peck, Service Records, National Archives, [Page 29 - US, Civil War Service Records \(CMSR\) - Confederate - Louisiana, 1861-1865 - Fold3](#), accessed 6/1/2025.

“But a Mere Speck of Crimsoned Earth” by David M. Hall

-6-

Edwin M. Haynes, Chaplain of the 10th Regiment of Vermont Volunteers, on July 9, 1864, and afterwards the author of the 10th's regimental history, published in 1894, wrote of Monocacy:

“The battlefield was but a mere speck of crimsoned earth, on the broad theatre of our vast military operation.”[1]

Sandwiched between the horrors of the Overland Campaign in the Spring of 1864 and the subsequent triumphant but costly Shenandoah Campaign of the late summer and autumn, the strategic import of Early's demonstration on Washington seemed almost inconsequential, in the immediate aftermath when the officers wrote their battle reports of that year's campaigns.

The 10th's Colonel William H. Henry's official after-action reports did not mention the Battle of Monocacy, despite his regiment's notable role in the fight. As the years passed and the significance of the Battle that Saved Washington understood, the record was augmented by veterans of the fight including Private Oscar Wait who published an elaboration of his wartime diary,[2] and Brevet Brigadier General W. W. Henry, who finally reported on the fight in a letter to Haynes dated April 28, 1893.[3]



Col William W Henry

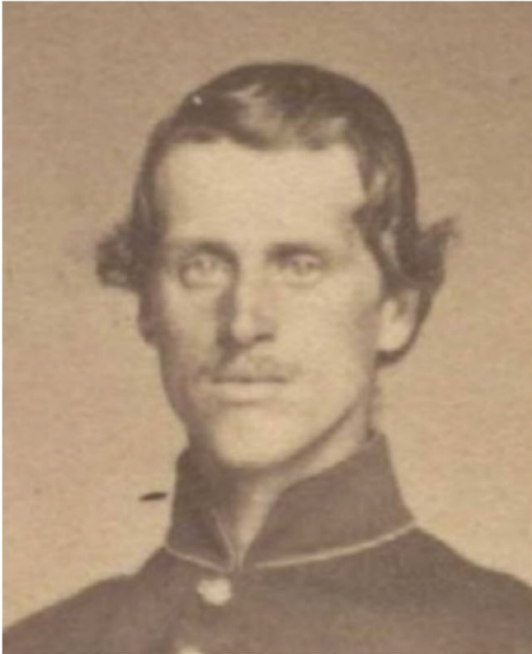
On the morning of July 10, the Tenth was being held in reserve on the leeward slope of the Thomas' hill field, sheltered from the fire of Confederate artillery deployed on the opposite side of the Monocacy. As the reserve, several detachments from the regiment were made: 75 men under Captain George Davis to picket the railroad and Georgetown Pike bridges on the Frederick side of the river and others of Company D, led by Lt. Lemuel A. Abbott, to support Alexander's Baltimore Battery of Light Artillery.

In the early afternoon, the Confederates of Gordon's division were observed massing for an attack from the Worthington Farm, so the 10th was sent hustling east on the Georgetown Turnpike-the trace of which is located on the south side of modern Araby Church Road-to defend the far left of the Union line. By 2 p.m., the Vermonters were deploying at the intersection Urbana Road- now Baker Valley Road- with the turnpike: the present day location of the 10th Vermont monument.

Among the sweaty, but ready soldiers of the Tenth was twenty-two year old Private Oscar E. Wait, of Company I, who noted in his diary:

“Our position..couldn't have been a better one. The road where we lay...was lower than the fields alongside. In our front was a high board fence, and a high ridge under it formed by the Maryland farmers' habit turning their furrows out year after year made it equal to a first- class breastwork. Beyond that ridge [to the south] was a large wheat field and beyond that quite a valley.”

As the Vermonters arrived at their critical position, the second attack of CS General John McCausland's dismounted troopers drove the Federal skirmishers from the Thomas grounds and house. From the house, butternut sharpshooters opened fire on the Yankees deploying in the sunken turnpike. The Vermonters responded with their own sharpshooter. Henry recalled the deadly duel in the letter to Haynes:



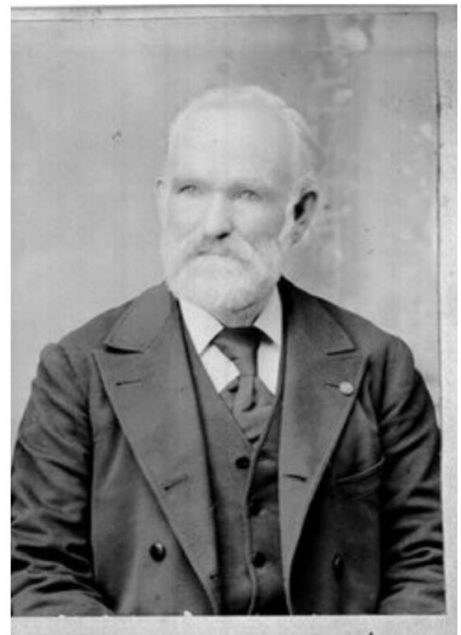
Sharpshooter Pike

"...the rebels had taken possession of the Thomas House, which was about thirty-five rods in our right front, their sharpshooters were firing on us quite lively from the second story windows. Sergeant [Lyman] Pike was one of our best sharpshooters and was having all the fun he wanted firing at those rebs in the window, while I was watching them with my glass and giving him points. Soon I saw a head and gun coming in sight around one of the window casings, and directed Pike where to look...almost at the same instant both fired, I felt a bullet go under my chin, and the reb pitched out of the window. The brave Color Sergeant Billy Mahoney, was watching us, and...caught me by the coat-tail and pulled me on the ground, saying, 'that will do, Colonel, the blooming rebs mean you,' and a moment after the brave Sergeant Pike dropped upon us, shot dead."

Meanwhile, the soldiers were settling into place and preparing for what they knew was coming next. Pvt. Wait described the scene:

"...a thin line of bareheaded men; some were tearing cartridges and standing them in little convenient groups; others picking caps from their boxes to hold in their hands or loosening bayonets that happened to be wedged into their scabbards...Word was quietly passed down the line to remember the buckshot; after the first volley to double the powder and drop six or a dozen of shot on top of the ball."

At about 3:30 p.m., the Confederates of Evan's Georgia Brigade of Gordon's Division, made their appearance atop the saddle of Brooks Hill,



Oscar W Wait

"by the time we had wiped the sweat from our eyes we could see columns of the enemy on the other side of the ravine [through which now runs I-270] headed straight toward us and filing into line just out of effective reach."

The attack column descended into the valley, [or ravine], momentarily out of sight. Wait continued,

"Next we saw saw the tops of their flags gradually rising from the valley. Word passed along the line to aim low and wait for orders. Colonel Henry said: 'Let them come up Bunker Hill fashion. We want to see the C.S.A. on their buckles...Remember it will be short range, and don't shoot over; the belt is high enough...Don't waste a shot'...On came the gray lines as though on parade..the cadence of their step seemed perfect."

Men's fingers rested on trigger guards, grimly awaiting the order to fire, and then,

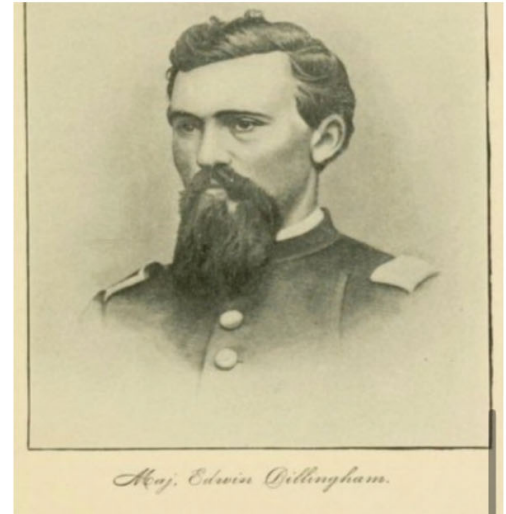
"...[when] the butternut-colored battalions were within two hundred yards...Colonel Henry, rising to his feet shouted 'Fire', a sheet of flame ran along that roadside, a torrent of bullets tore through the ranks of those astonished Georgians, and their line reeled like wheat before a puff of wind; then each regiment closed on its colors, let out a terrific, hair-raising yell, and with fixed bayonets rushed for the fence...at fifty to one hundred yards they meet our second volley - a torrent this time of mostly buckshot that we could almost hear rattling among shin bones of the charging enemy. Then for the first time the brave fellows hesitated... [their] Officers made themselves conspicuous and every one that did so dropped; while the men, instead of coming on, halted and commenced firing. This was short pistol shot [range]; revolvers began to play their part, our charges were doubled, and our efforts redoubled, until finally the rebel line wavered, bent, broke, and like stampeded sheep started for the hollow that they came from in the first place, while we blazed away at their coat tails."

For the Vermonters, this was sweet revenge for the slaughter the Rebs had inflicted during Union assaults at Wilderness, Spotsylvania and Cold Harbor. George P Shedd, then a Sergeant in Company D, remembered his grim satisfaction, and a comrade's reaction to the tortured contortions of the Georgians being hit by buckshot:

"We had the nicest chance at them I ever had. We stood in the Pike and a cut through a knoll made us a fine breastwork. We had a fine range on them, and did splendid execution. Joseph Sander was with me...and every time he saw one fall or cut an antic he would open that big mouth of his and laugh to split himself. I saw all the charging done by the Rebs on our line of battle and could see all their wounded going back across the field to their rear..there were not a few I can tell you." [4]

After the first attack was repulsed, Col. Henry re-positioned a detachment under Major Edwin Dillingham along the Urbana Road, to put enfilade fire on the Confederate flank. Henry recalled,

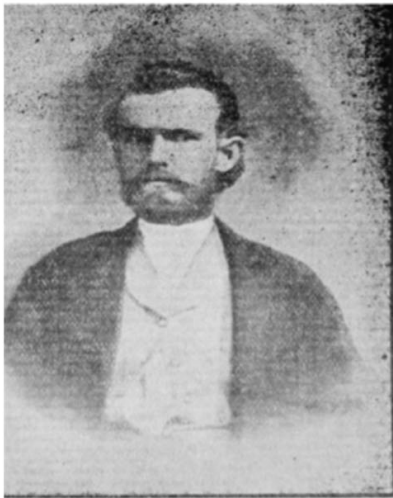
"I can remember...seeing Major Dillingham as Gordon's three lines were crossing the Thomas meadow. I happened to be near the left of the regiment...near the Urbana road, and I ran out into that road to see what the Major would do. He was the only one I could see, as his three small companies were lying along in the bushes by the fence on the west side of the road and firing as fast as they could load. The Major was standing in the road, swinging his sabre and yelling to his men so I could hear him: 'Give it to them, boys, we have them on the flank...pitch it into them: this is fun!'"



Wait recalled the repulse of Evans' second attack:

"The raking fire of Dillingham's men shrieked to out buckshot accompaniment. The rebel yell was hushed, and almost without losing a step, everyman of them seemed to turn on his heel and make for the rear. Just out of buckshot range they halted and faced us again. An officer grabbed one of their flags from its bearer and rushed forward alone, but while he was shouting to his men to follow him, down he went, flag and all, and the men whom he tried to lead dropped to the ground and commenced firing. Next came an hour or so of sharp-shooting between lines not more than twenty rods apart."

On the receiving end of the 10th's deadly fire, Private George W. Nichols, 61st Georgia Infantry, later wrote:



G. W. NICHOLS,
1868.

"We advanced to within thirty yards of the line of Yankees, but...had to fall back, for our men were killed and wounded until we did have but a mere skirmish line. If it hadnot been that Hay's Louisiana Brigade crossed over the river and...flanked the Yankees out of their position, we would have suffered worse than we did. It made our hearts ache to look over the battle-field and see so many of our dear friends, comrades and beloved officers, killed and wounded. Our loss was terrible..while the Yankees lost but few...We could not see a Yankee on our part of the line during the whole advance. All that we could shoot at was the smoke of their guns, they were so well posted." [5]

Although the 10th's defense of the critical intersection stymied the onslaught of Evans' Georgians, by 3:30 p.m., the Union defensive along the Georgetown turnpike and on Thomas hill field was disintegrating due to a combination of pressure from Gordon's successive assault lines and many of the U.S. regiments being out of ammunition. Nevertheless, Henry's men continued their spirited, stand-off firefight with Evans' remnants, until the colonel looked and saw, "a break in our line on my right. It was nearly three hundred yards to the left of the next regiment, and I wanted very much to see that gap filled."

Henry ordered Adjutant Wyllys Lyman to go ask for reinforcements but Confederates had surged into the gap and were firing directly on the Vermonters' flank. Lyman immediately drew a torrent of fire but managed to dive behind a large tree bordering the pike. Henry saw the futility of their position and called Lyman back, miraculously unscathed. Henry remembered "I saw the line give way on the right and knew we had all got to get out of there lively if we did not want to go to Richmond. [as prisoners]"

The colonel sought to reform his regiment, calling in Dillingham's flankers. The rebels were closing fast as the 10th scaled another board fence on the north side of the pike and double-quickened northeast toward the railroad and National Road, the designated line of retreat to Baltimore. Before going over the fence, Henry took one last look at the line his soldiers had so ferociously held, and saw a sight he could not forget: Sergeant Willie Peabody, "a noble fellow, First Sergeant of Co. C, from Pittsford, Vt.,...lying there in the road, shot through the bowels, begging me not leave him..but we could not take him, we had all we could do to get away ourselves."

In a good day's work, the 10th had inflicted staggering casualties on their foes with little loss to themselves. Nichols wrote:

"It was called our victory, but it was a costly one, for it cost Evans' Brigade over five-hundred men, in wounded and killed. The Sixty-first Georgia went into the battle with nearly one hundred and fifty men, and after the battle was over we could not stack but fifty-two guns by actual count."

By contrast, the casualties of 10th Vermont, including the detachments, were 5 Men killed, 1 Officer and 27 men wounded, and 23 men missing, the latter mostly during the ensuing retreat.

At the conclusion of the Monocacy chapter of his regimental history, Chaplain Haynes took some grim satisfaction reflecting on the Confederate's sacrifice at Monocacy: "The Confederates gained no honor in this action, and had nothing to show for their inconsequent victory." [6]



Chaplain Haynes

[1] Haynes, E. M. (Doctor of Divinity) A History of the Tenth Regiment, Vt. Vols., etc. The Tuttle Company, Printers, Rutland, Vt., 1894. p. 210.

[2] Wait, Oscar E., Three Years With The Tenth Vermont edited by Don Wickman: Civil War Enterprises, Newport Vermont, Printed in Canada, Copyright 2006. pp. 104-105, and all quotes from Wait.

[3] *Ibid*, Haynes, Letter from BBG W. W. Henry dated April 29, 1893, pp. 201-203, and all quotes from Henry.

[4] Shedd, George P. Letter to George E. Davis dated June 10, 1887, Monocacy National Battlefield Research Library.

[5] Nichols, G.W., A Soldier's Story of His Regiment (61st Georgia) and Incidentally of the Lawton-Gordon-Evans Brigade, Army Northern Virginia, Part of Digital Records of Cornell University. In Library of Congress 1898. pp. 170-171, and all quotes from Nichol.

[6] *Ibid*, Haynes, p. 211.

David Hall is an independent Civil War researcher and a frequent contributor to the newsletter.



The Vermont monument on the Monocacy National Battlefield is a granite monolith approximately eight feet in height, and bears a bronze tablet in the shape of a Greek Cross upon which is inscribed:

This monument was erected by the STATE OF VERMONT to designate the position of the TENTH VERMONT INFANTRY during the battle fought here on the ninth day of July 1864 to save Washington, "and we saved it." Seven companies occupied the Washington Pike, while three companies occupied the Buckeystown Road opposite the Thomas House. 1915

Find the monument on the northwest corner of the intersection of Araby Church Road and Baker Valley Road.

Foundation Business Report

Upcoming Events

"In the Streets" sponsored by "Celebrate Frederick"

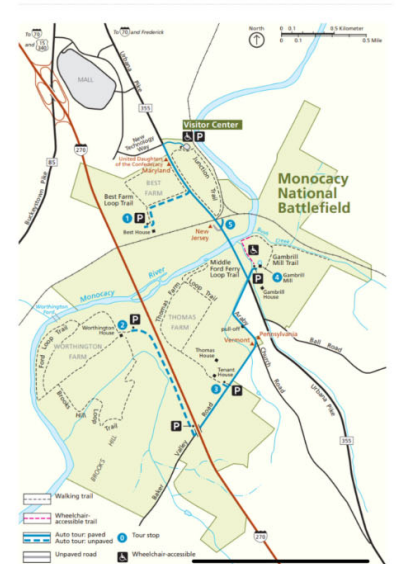
Saturday, September 13, 2025 (11:00-5:00)

Meet and mingle with board members under our tent to learn about our activities around Frederick. Get free copies of a Monocacy Battlefield map or our newsletter, The Dispatch.

"Kris Kringle Procession" sponsored by "Celebrate Frederick"

Friday, December 12, 2025 (6:30-8:00)

Let's ring in the magic and merriment of the holiday season with the 41st annual Kris Kringle Procession. Follow board members on the parade route through the streets of Frederick to join in the festive cheer.



MNBF YouTube Channel

Visit our YouTube channel for more and different content on the history of the peoples, places and events associated with the Battle of Monocacy. Be on the lookout for new postings in September and October. Thanks to Board members, Brad Stone and Clinton Eppleman, for their contributions to our channel. Find us at www.youtube.com/@MonocacyNBFoundation.

Submissions

We welcome your articles and photographs (pdf) about people, places, history and natural resources of Monocacy National Battlefield and Frederick County. Send them to monocacynbf@outlook.com.

Acknowledgements

This issue of The Dispatch is brought to you by Editor Lynn Bristol, Charley Mitchell and Clinton Eppleman.

Make a donation. You can pay by credit card on our website at monocacynbfoundation.org or by sending a check by mail to the address:
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Frederick MD 21705
Thank you for your generosity!