The Dispatch

The newsletter of the Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation

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IN THIS ISSUE

"From the Desk of the Superintendent – Fall at Monocacy National Battlefield" by Derek Carter

“It Will Be Your First Trial" By David M. Hall

"Summer of History, Preservation, and Partnership" by Lynn Bristol

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To provide you with a quality educational experience, your donation payable by check or online through our website, contributes to our meeting that mission.

A recent three-part series on the Foundation’s YouTube channel features board member Brad Stone and Dr. Alexa Price from Historic Ships in Baltimore exploring the amphibious history of vessels bearing the name Monocacy, including the fascinating maritime connections that extend well beyond the battlefield.



From the Desk of the Superintendent – Fall at Monocacy National Battlefield
by Derek Carter

As summer turns to fall, Monocacy National Battlefield builds a productive season of preservation, restoration, and visitor engagement. Our staff and partners have worked diligently to create new opportunities for exploration and to improve our historic landscapes and facilities, ensuring Monocacy's stories and resources remain accessible for future generations.

Connecting Visitors to History

This summer brought several exciting opportunities for visitors to experience the battlefield in new ways. One notable addition is the Monument Trail at Thomas Farm, now open to the public. This new loop trail lets visitors explore the landscape on foot, enjoy the natural surroundings, and better appreciate the historic ground where the Battle of Monocacy unfolded.



The newly opened Monument Trail at Thomas Farm provides another opportunity to explore Monocacy's historic landscape.

Our interpretive team also hosted several engaging programs, including the park's first World Ranger Day celebration, which brought together county, state, and national park rangers from across Maryland. The event honored rangers who lost their lives in the line of duty while celebrating the important work of protecting our natural and cultural heritage.

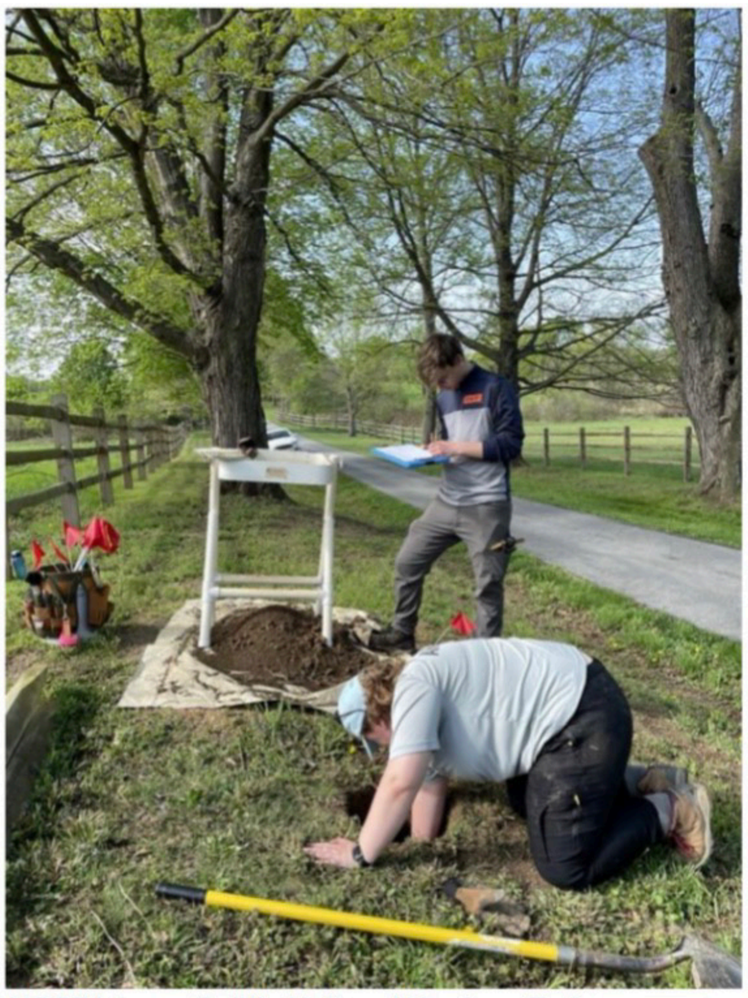


Living history demonstrations were among the highlights of Monocacy National Battlefield's inaugural 'Troops Through Time' program in September.

In September, the park introduced "Troops Through Time," a new program commemorating America's 250th anniversary through the history of military service. Spanning the French and Indian War through World War II, the event featured living history demonstrations, artillery firings, educational displays, and guest speakers. The enthusiastic reception has encouraged us to build on the program next year.

We also enjoyed another successful summer partnership with Shepherd University, welcoming intern William Faith to our interpretive team. William contributed to visitor orientation, historical research, and public programming, demonstrating the tremendous value of providing hands-on learning opportunities for the next generation of historians and preservation professionals.

Preserving Our Natural and Historic Landscapes



NCPE Interns Caitlin Hall and Harrison Taylor documenting a Shovel Test Pit (STP) for a Phase I Archeological Survey

Behind the scenes, our Resource Management team had an equally productive season, working alongside seven interns on projects ranging from invasive plant management and ecological restoration to historic structures documentation, archeological fieldwork, and Beech Leaf Disease monitoring.

A particularly exciting effort is the park's participation in the Eastern Grasslands Initiative, which seeks to restore native grassland habitats while preserving historic landscapes. By reestablishing native grasses and wildflowers, we can strengthen habitat for pollinators and other wildlife while maintaining the character of the battlefield landscape.

Our Facilities Management team is also making important progress. The Visitor Center's heating and cooling system replacement project has been awarded, with installation expected this winter and the new system operational before the spring cooling season. Repairs are also underway to stabilize the historic Worthington House's deteriorated rear deck.

Preservation occasionally requires difficult decisions. This fall, the park anticipates removing a declining tulip poplar near the historic Gambrill House after professional arborists assessed it. While losing a mature tree is never easy, we are fortunate to have a sapling propagated from that very tree several years ago, which we plan to plant in its place – a meaningful continuation of its legacy.

Improving Visitor Safety and Access

Visitor safety remains a central priority. Our law enforcement rangers continue their regular patrols and resource protection efforts, while we work with local and state partners to address several longstanding access concerns.

We continue advancing plans to close and restore the unofficial parking pull-off along Maryland Route 355 near the Monocacy River bridge. The project will address traffic safety concerns and restore the affected landscape. We are also awaiting Frederick County's pedestrian traffic analysis to determine whether a crosswalk near the Pennsylvania Monument could provide visitors with safer access for a closer look at this important memorial.

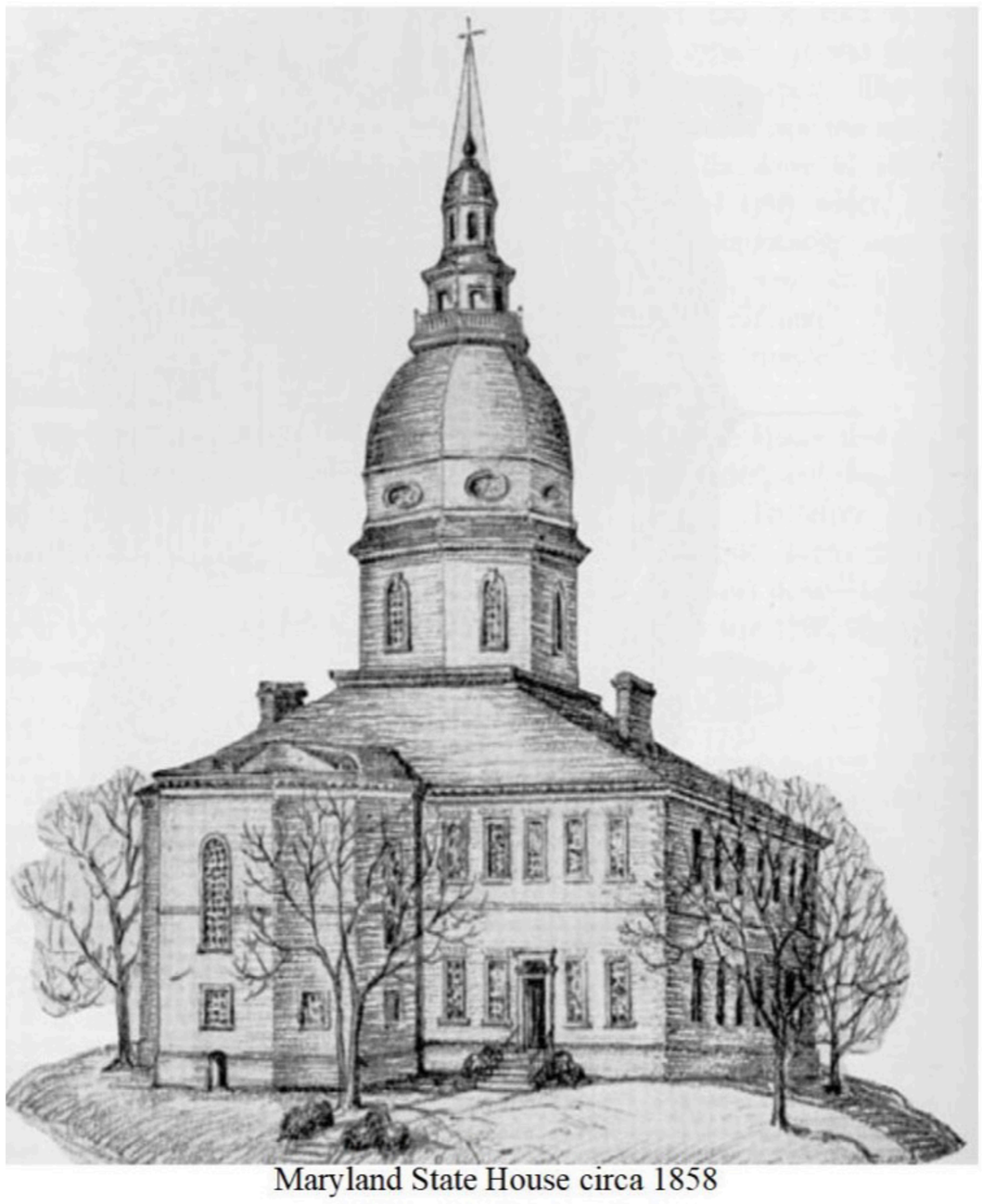
Looking Ahead

As we enter the cooler months, we're turning our attention to planning another year of preservation projects, educational programs, and enhanced visitor opportunities. We are especially excited about the Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation's support for an emerging augmented reality project at Monocacy Junction, where technology will help visitors visualize an important chapter of the battlefield's history.

None of these accomplishments would be possible without the dedication of our park staff, volunteers, interns, and community partners. We are especially grateful to the Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation for its continued support of our mission, educational programs, and preservation efforts.

As we move into the fall season, we encourage you to visit, explore one of our trails, and discover more about Monocacy's history. Whether it is your first visit or one of many, you'll always find something new to discover at Monocacy National Battlefield.

Respectfully,
Derek Carter
Superintendent
Monocacy National Battlefield



Maryland State House circa 1858

"It Will Be Your First Trial"
by David M. Hall

After nearly two years languishing in a military limbo of temporary rear echelon assignments – Lew Wallace received momentous news in the form of General Orders No. 97 – dated March 12, 1864 giving him command of the Eighth Army Corps and the operational area known as the Middle Department based in Baltimore and covering part of Delaware and Maryland, east of the Monocacy River.[1]

In the first months of the war, Wallace had been a rising star, recruiting and training large numbers of troops in his native Indiana. As a Mexican War veteran, Wallace was rapidly promoted to command of the 11th Indiana Infantry Regiment and on September 3, 1861 to brigadier-general of volunteers. Competence demonstrated in the early battles in the West at Forts' Henry and Donaldson earned him a commission as Major General, dated March 21, 1862 and a division in Major-General U. S. Grant's Army.[2] Indeed, the future had looked bright for the 35 year-old officer but then came April 6, 1862 and Shiloh.

Wallace's division, trying to get in the fight had marched/counter marched over unfamiliar forest pathways as the fighting raged nearby, arriving too late to participate in the first day's battle. The Union forces had allowed themselves to be surprised by the rapid march of CS Gen. Albert S. Johnston's formidable rebel army from Corinth, Mississippi, and probably were only saved by the untimely death of that officer on the battle's first day without informing subordinates of his battle plans. Although the Confederates were finally forced to retreat after two days of combat, the embarrassment of the first day caused Union commanders to seek scapegoats. Wallace became the object of Grant's criticism in his official report of the battle for his supposed dilatory performance as division commander.[3]

Wallace further compounded his ill-favor with another superior officer, Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck, by ridiculing his ponderous plan for the ensuing advance on Corinth in the presence of some unfamiliar officers passing through, who, unbeknownst to Wallace, served on Halleck's staff. Halleck later made criticisms similar to Grant's about Wallace's handling of his division's movements during the ensuing campaign.[4] Fair or not, Wallace was superseded in command by Grant in June of 1862 and sent home on furlough to await orders assigning him a new field command, which did not arrive until that fateful March day in 1864.

Wallace wrote as one finally free of an onus: *"At last the long wait, the feverish impatience to be recognized and get to work, the mortification in continuous series, the brutal trampling upon my pride came to an end. I was made glad by the receipt of an order which...marked a turning-point in the military part of my career."*

And there was a measure of savory vindication: *"When at length I heard the particulars of how the order came about, I was all the more pleased. It was President Lincoln's own suggestion-good enough in itself. Then I heard that General Halleck had called upon the President in person protested against the assignment, there was an added sweetness to it so strong that my disappointment in not being sent to field was at once most agreeably allayed."*[5]

Before going to Baltimore to assume his new command

"I made it my first duty in Washington to call upon President Lincoln and thank him for his kindness to me. Deeply and sincerely grateful, my expression of the feeling must have made an impression, for, coming near, he laid his large hand upon my shoulder and said, 'I believed it right to give you a chance, Wallace..." as he was leaving, Wallace later wrote, Lincoln "called me back from the door..Ah, Wallace", he said, "I came near forgetting that there is an election nearly due over in Maryland, but don't you forget it. Good-bye"

After leaving the president, the Commander of the Middle Department, went around the corner to the Department of War to call on Secretary Edwin Stanton for a less genial encounter than with Lincoln. Wallace felt the stern man sizing him up. Of the Middle Department, Stanton grimly observed *"You see that department has been a grave-yard for commanders. Ben Butler was the first, and he lost reputation, there. Schenck—Bob Schenck, of Ohio...it had been better for him had he stayed away."*

When Wallace mentioned the President's parting comment about an election in Maryland that he should not forget, Stanton responded: *"Nor must you...The last Maryland legislature passed an act for an election looking to the abolition of slavery in the state by constitutional amendment. The President has set his heart on the abolition in that way; and mark, he don't want it to be said by anybody that the bayonet had anything to do with the election. He is a candidate for a second nomination, You understand?"*

"I think so, sir.", responded the bemused Major-General, *"Anyhow, I want him renominated and elected."*

"Have you a plan?"

"I have never heard of the business before."

"Well then, it is kindness saying it will be your first trial."[6]

Wallace described himself as a "Douglas Democrat" prior to the war. Like many Westerners, his view of the slavery vs abolition question was nuanced by his patriotism for the Union:

"I had grown restive under the dominion of the Southern leaders. They were arrogant, selfish, and inconsiderate of the feelings as well as interests of the party North...however, they failed to outweigh the prejudice against the abolitionists. They were fanatics and wild men; and worse, while enemies of slavery, they were also conspirators against the Union. The indecency of Toombs, the swashbuckler, was more than palliated by Garrison, to whom the Constitution was a 'covenant with hell." Garrison was a disunionist; Toombs a slaveholder made mad by threats against his property. Garrison was a fanatic and Toombs a fool, and it was hard saying which was the more dangerous, though in my feeling African slavery was more tolerable than treason.[7]

By 1864, however, Wallace accepted that emancipation was *"the means to the righteous end!"* writing: *"No mentor was needed to tell me why the affair was so alive in Mr. Lincoln's heart; nor, to say the truth, was I unwilling to be identified with the business, my old indifference to the existence of the institution having long since gone the way of my Democracy."*[8]

Indeed, Marylanders, over whom commander of the Middle Department would have jurisdiction under martial law, had made a similar shift in sentiment. William Starr Myers, a Marylander wrote in his 1900 thesis:

"On the part of Maryland, the very fact of being a slave state naturally bound her more closely to the South.. the larger part of the people were in favor of standing by the Union. On the other hand, a majority were strongly opposed to coercing the South, and after the outbreak of hostilities, this opposition to the war ended in quite a change of sentiment in many cases, so that it is doubtful if the state would have finally remained in the Union, had it not been for the firm restraining hand of the Federal military authorities."[9]

The "restraining hand" was a euphemism for the "bayonets" Stanton had referred to.

From the beginning of hostilities, the occupation of Maryland by Federal troops had been heavy-handed and often an embarrassment even to the most ardent Unionists, when in September of 1861:



A. W. Bradford

"Federal authorities took no chances with the gubernatorial elections...Union soldiers were evident at polling places throughout the state. Men of the Potomac Home Brigade regiments were granted three day passes so they could return home to vote. Pro-Southern voters were intimidated or arrested. It was even reported that Massachusetts soldiers voted freely in the Maryland state election. With such widespread irregularities, the outcome was never in doubt. Augustus W. Bradford, running on the Union ticket, defeated Democratic candidate, General Benjamin C. Howard for the office of governor of Maryland."[10]

Despite Bradford's unconditional support for the Union and Emancipation, his assurances that Maryland could manage its own elections, duly guarding against intimidation and election fraud by southern sympathizers in the state, he was largely ignored by Federal authorities. Especially by Major-General Robert Schenck, a Republican from Ohio, who commanded the Middle Department from December 17, 1862 until his election to the U.S. Congress in the November 1863 elections.

"Major-General Robert C. Schenck...placed in command of the Middle Department, Eighth Army Corps...with headquarters in Baltimore..had been most active in his support of the National Government, as well as in using severe and stringent means to suppress all traces of disloyalty. This, of course, had aroused bitter opposition in the Southern sympathizers and also the more conservative Union people of the state."[11]

Indeed, Schenck's interference in the November 1863 State House elections reached a new level of intimidation. By General Order, No. 53, issued October 27, 1863, just days before the election, he justified the military take-over of elections, averring:

"it is known that there are many evil disposed persons, now at large in the State of Maryland who have been engaged in rebellion against the lawful Government, or have given aid and comfort or encouragement to others so engaged, or who do not recognize their allegiance to the United States, and who may avail themselves of the indulgence of the authority which tolerates their presence to embarrass the approaching election, or through it to foist enemies of the United States into power"[12]

He ordered that provost marshals and other military arrest all such persons found at, or hanging about, or approaching any poll or place of election on November 4, 1863.

Worst yet, Governor Bradford, was not even consulted or notified before the order was issued on the eve of the election. But rumors being rampant, he wrote to the one man who he thought might listen - Abraham Lincoln - on October 31, 1863:

"Executive Office, Annapolis, Oct. 31, 1863

"To his Excellency, President Lincoln:

"Sir –Rumors are to-day current, and they reach me in such a shape that I am bound to believe them, that detachments of soldiers are to be dispatched on Monday next...with a view of being present at the polls on Wednesday next, the day of our State election. These troops are not residents of the State, and consequently are not sent for the purpose of voting, and as there is no reason, in my opinion, to apprehend any riotous or violent proceedings at this election, the inference is unavoidable that these military detachments, if sent, are expected to exert some control or influence in that election. I am also informed that orders are to be issued from this military department, on Monday, presenting certain restrictions or qualifications on the right of suffrage...of what precise character I am not apprised...which the judges of the election will be expected to observe... I cannot but think that the orders...are without your personal knowledge; and I take the liberty of calling the subject to your attention, and invoking your interposition to countermand them. I cannot but feel that to suffer any military interference in the matter of our election, or to prescribe any test of oath to voters when all the candidates in the State...are loyal men –would be justly obnoxious to the public sentiment of the State...I, rely therefore, upon your Excellency for such an order as will prevent it."

Lincoln responded on November 2nd, supporting his general's view that the presence of Federal troops was appropriate due to possible violence at the polling places. Nevertheless, he rescinded the part of Schenk's order that gave Provost Marshals the power to decide who could or couldn't vote, and left it, rightfully, to the local election judges to decide, who, if anyone, was to be arrested for attempting to vote, if suspected or known to be disloyal to the Union.[13]

Despite some incidents on the Eastern Shore of poll closures and detention of some citizens known to be Democrats, the election took place, as scheduled on November 4, 1863, resulting in an overwhelming win for the Union ticket.

Schenck left to assume his seat in congress, and Lincoln seemingly determined that the next election should not be tainted by the presence of "bayonets".

On January 6, 1864, the newly convened Maryland state legislature passed a bill proposing a constitutional convention for the purpose of abolishing slavery, which was prohibited by the existing state constitution adopted in 1851. It called for a plebiscite on April 6, 1864 to approve the convention. It was this election, which Lincoln and Stanton had warned Wallace not to forget.[14]

Officially assuming department command on March 22, Wallace realized that "*April 6th was the day set for the election –or, in Mr. Stanton's words, of my first trial. I barely had two weeks in which to operate. The discovery startled me... That to be done had to be quickly –and I a stranger under hamper not to use the military... As it was, what could I do?...*[15]

Wallace attempted to ascertain the situation by reading local newspapers, consulting with other military officers familiar with the conditions in the state as well as leading politicians in the state recommended to him by Lincoln and Stanton. It was in the midst on these councils that the new military governor claimed a revelation:

"In all the talk and discussions I had heard about my department and the states of which it was composed, no one had reminded me that there was a civil governor in residence at Annapolis named A. W. Bradford. I do not remember now who first referred to his existence, but I at once asked if were loyal, and had for answer "Nobody knows." Further inquiry brought it out that none of predecessors had paid the governor the smallest attention, not even calling upon him."

Here was a chance for me!

I summoned my entire staff, and bade them get ready all their war toggery, swords, sashes, chapeaux, epaulets, spurs; for I would wait upon his excellency, Governor Bradford, in Annapolis, taking a special train. Their presence was essential to the completeness of the visit."

Writing 40 years later, Wallace's characterization of the situation with Bradford was perhaps shaped by the passage of time, or more likely an author's artistic embellishment to tell a better story. Bradford had a long history of reminding the military authorities in Maryland of his presence in Annapolis. It was, however, the solution that Wallace adopted to accomplish the President's desire for the military to have a much lower profile in the election to assure that the people of Maryland were not being coerced on such a momentous issue as emancipation. He would pay the governor due respect by going to him, in exchange for Bradford's willingness to call in the military on his authority as governor should the need arise.

Wallace and his staff, in all their military finery, took a specially chartered train to Annapolis. The general gave no specific date for the visit, but subsequent correspondence suggests the visit occurred on March 29 or 30th. The general shared his recollection of the visit in his memoir:

"We halts at the door of ...the old state-house at Annapolis, and I sent the governor my card inscribed somewhat impressively with my name and title underwritten for the occasion with 'and staff.'

"There was surprise in the executive office when the card was delivered, followed by not a little excitement as we marched in. The arrival whisked through the building, and was of such electrical effect that before the introductions and hand-shaking were through a respectable audience had assembled. And why not? It had been a long time, they told me, since the shadows of the ancient room had been so disturbed by gold-fire and sword-clang.

"The governor, a plain, farmer-like, undemonstrative person, held himself well under guard, as became a chief of one of the original colonies. I asked him, when the opportunity came round, for a few words in private, and, being led into an adjoining room, referred to the pending election and gave him some of the petitions that had reached me praying for troops at the polls. After he had examined them, I put the interrogatory: "If, just as such petitions come to me, I send them properly indorsed to you, governor, what will you do with them?"

He took a moment, given, I think, to a form of reply.

"Mail all petitions of the kind to me," he said, with singular directness, "and I will return them to you with my official request that you send troops as prayed. The matter is really within my province, and I thank you for recognizing the fact."

"It is of easy inference now how the election went. Upon petitions, referred to the governor, troops were sent to every doubtful precinct in the state, but always upon his written request. In most instances the sight of the 'blue-coated hirelings" a mile away, so enraged the Secessionists they refused to go to the polls. In due time, of course, the convention was held, and slavery abolished by formal amendment of the constitution."[16]

The rest is history as they say, on November 1, 1864, Slavery ceased to exist in the State of Maryland, and although Wallace became more known for fighting the "Battle that Saved Washington" on the banks of the Monocacy, he also should be recognized for his role in making Maryland truly "The Free State".

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Davd Hall is an independent researcher on Military History and a frequent contributor the newsletter.

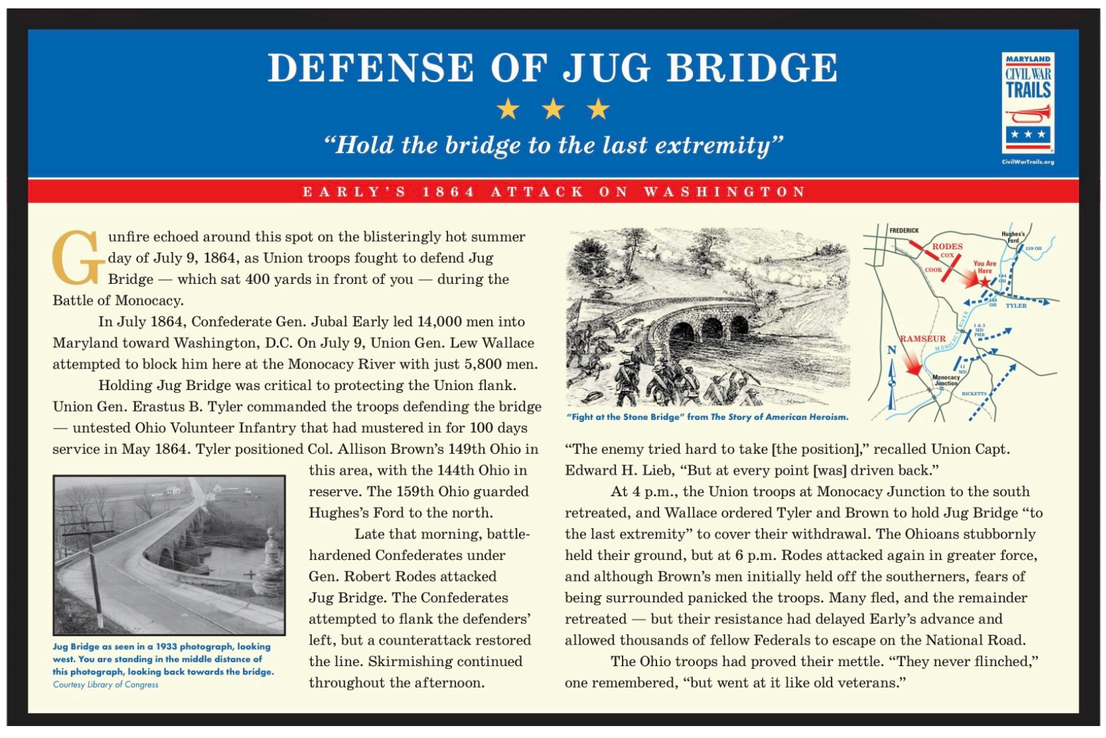
Summer of History, Preservation, and Partnership: The Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation – Summer 2026
by Lynn Bristol

Summer 2026 has been a busy and productive season for the Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation. From advancing battlefield interpretation to supporting educational programs and expanding public awareness of Monocacy's history, the Foundation continues to build on its commitment to preserve, protect, and enhance this important national treasure.

One of the season's most visible accomplishments is the **Defense of Jug Bridge interpretive wayside,** a project that brings renewed attention to an important but often overlooked chapter of the Battle of Monocacy. Located along East Patrick Street in Frederick, the wayside tells the story of the Union troops who fought to defend Jug Bridge on July 9, 1864, as Confederate forces under General Jubal Early advanced toward Washington, D.C.

The wayside is the result of a partnership among the Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation, Civil War Trails, and the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration. Work on the project began in August 2024, bringing together historical research based on board member, Joe Collins' book, "Battle for Jug Bridge", interpretive design, and public partnership.

The story told by the wayside is one of determination and sacrifice. Union troops under General Erastus B. Tyler, including Colonel Allison Brown's 149th Ohio, were ordered to hold the bridge while other Federal troops withdrew. Their resistance delayed the Confederate advance and helped thousands of Union soldiers escape along the National Road. The inscription, "Hold the bridge to the last extremity," captures the difficult responsibility entrusted to these Ohio soldiers.


DEFENSE OF JUG BRIDGE

★ ★ ★

"Hold the bridge to the last extremity"

MARYLAND CIVIL WAR TRAILS

EARLY'S 1864 ATTACK ON WASHINGTON

Gunfire echoed around this spot on the blisteringly hot summer day of July 9, 1864, as Union troops fought to defend Jug Bridge — which sat 400 yards in front of you — during the Battle of Monocacy.

In July 1864, Confederate Gen. Jubal Early led 14,000 men into Maryland toward Washington, D.C. On July 9, Union Gen. Lew Wallace attempted to block him here at the Monocacy River with just 5,800 men.

Holding Jug Bridge was critical to protecting the Union flank. Union Gen. Erastus B. Tyler commanded the troops defending the bridge — untested Ohio Volunteer Infantry that had mustered in for 100 days service in May 1864. Tyler positioned Col. Allison Brown's 149th Ohio in this area, with the 144th Ohio in reserve. The 159th Ohio guarded Hughes's Ford to the north.

Late that morning, battle-hardened Confederates under Gen. Robert Rodes attacked Jug Bridge. The Confederates attempted to flank the defenders' left, but a counterattack restored the line. Skirmishing continued throughout the afternoon.

"Fight at the Stone Bridge" from *The Story of American Heroism.*

FREDERICK
RODES
COOK
You Are Here
Hughes's Ford
159 OH
144 OH
149 OH
TYLER
RAMSEUR
I & S
Monocacy Junction
BUCKEYE
N

Jug Bridge as seen in a 1933 photograph, looking west. You are standing in the middle distance of this photograph, looking back towards the bridge.
Courtesy Library of Congress

"The enemy tried hard to take [the position]," recalled Union Capt. Edward H. Lieb, "But at every point [was] driven back."

At 4 p.m., the Union troops at Monocacy Junction to the south retreated, and Wallace ordered Tyler and Brown to hold Jug Bridge "to the last extremity" to cover their withdrawal. The Ohioans stubbornly held their ground, but at 6 p.m. Rodes attacked again in greater force, and although Brown's men initially held off the southerners, fears of being surrounded panicked the troops. Many fled, and the remainder retreated — but their resistance had delayed Early's advance and allowed thousands of fellow Federals to escape on the National Road.

The Ohio troops had proved their mettle. "They never flinched," one remembered, "but went at it like old veterans."

The Foundation also continued to advance its **Augmented Reality Blockhouse Project**, an ambitious educational initiative developed in partnership with Monocacy National Battlefield and the National Park Foundation's Innovation Grant Program with an award of $60,000. The project will use augmented reality technology to bring the events of July 9, 1864, to life, with particular attention to the fighting along the Monocacy River, the railroad crossings, and the B&O Railroad blockhouses at Monocacy Junction.

Through this experience, visitors will be able to visualize troop movements, hear firsthand accounts, and better understand the strategic importance of the railroad and its defenses during the battle. The Foundation launched a fundraising campaign with a goal of raising at least $30,000 to make this innovative interpretation possible. The project reflects the Foundation's interest in combining historical scholarship with new technology to reach visitors in meaningful ways. The installation of the AR Monocacy experience will be co-incident with the **200th Anniversary of the B&O Railroad** charter in 2027.

Public engagement remained another important part of the Foundation's summer activities. On July 11, the Foundation joined the 162nd commemoration of the Battle of Monocacy at the battlefield. Other events included National Ranger Day on July 31, and Troops Through Time on September 5. For each event, visitors gathered for a full day of historical interpretation, living history, and special presentations. Under the Foundation tent, board members had the opportunity to meet visitors, share information about the organization's mission, and explain how community support helps the park preserve and interpret its history.

The Foundation's commitment to education and historical storytelling also continued through its digital outreach. The **Foundation YouTube channel**, developed through the efforts of board member Brad Stone, has continued to introduce audiences to lesser-known stories connected to the name Monocacy. These presentations demonstrate how the Foundation is broadening its interpretation of Monocacy's history and reaching audiences who may never have visited the park.

The Foundation recognizes supporting the battlefield means supporting outreach to a wider community audience. I served on the **Frederick County Historic Preservation Plan Advisory Board** from June 2025 thru May 2026 contributing to the development of the County's historic preservation plan, which was passed by the County Council in August 2026. I am grateful to have played a part in shaping the future of historic preservation in Frederick County.

The summer season also provided opportunities to work alongside community organizations such as Celebrate Frederick's "In the Streets" event on September 12.

The work of preserving history is never finished. Each project creates another opportunity to connect the past with the present and ensure that future generations understand the people, events, and sacrifices that shaped the history of Monocacy National Battlefield.

We are grateful to our members, donors, partners, and friends whose continued support makes this work possible.

My best regards,
Lynn Bristol

Thank You to Our Editors

The expert editorial assistance of Charley Mitchell and Clinton Eppleman is greatly appreciated.

Lynn A. Bristol, PhD, JD