

Monocacy National Battlefield

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Monocacy National Battlefield
4801 Urbana Pike
Frederick, Maryland 21704



THE BATTLE THAT SAVED WASHINGTON, D.C.

When judged by its consequences, rather than its size, the Battle of Monocacy ranks among the most important battles of the Civil War. On July 9, 1864, south of Frederick, Maryland, 15,000 Confederate forces under the command of Lieutenant General Jubal Early and 5,800 Union forces under Major General Lew Wallace clashed.



**CONFEDERATE
LIEUTENANT GENERAL
JUBAL EARLY**

Jubal Early's invasion in the summer of 1864 was the third and final time the south made an attempt to bring the war into the north. The opportunity arose when Lieutenant General Grant moved most of the troops defending the nation's capital to Petersburg, VA. Seizing the opportunity General Lee devised a bold and daring invasion with four objectives: First, to clear the lower Shenandoah Valley of Union Forces. Second, to divert Union forces away from Lee's army at Petersburg, VA. Third, to threaten Washington D.C., or possibly capture it in an attempt to deal a deathblow to the sagging Union support. Fourth, to potentially lessen President Abraham Lincoln's chances of re-election.

On June 13, Jubal Early began to move west from Petersburg. Union General David Hunter retreated into West Virginia after he was defeated at both Lynchburg and Lexington, VA. The path through the Shenandoah Valley to Washington was virtually undefended. After reorganizing his army at Staunton, VA and preparing them for a fast march, Early proceeded north, arriving at Harper's Ferry on the 4th of July.

Agents along the B&O railroad had been tracking Early's army and reporting to the railroad president John Garrett in Baltimore, MD. Garrett notified Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, in Washington, numerous times of the developing emergency. Grant responded from Petersburg, VA that Early was in front of him and there was no large force moving in the valley.

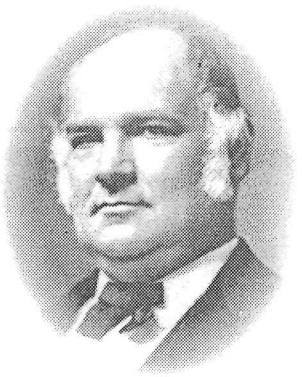
By July 3rd Garrett was frustrated by the slow and lack of response from the administration in Washington and Grant, he contacted Lew Wallace, the Commander of the 8th Army Corps and the Middle Military Department. Acting on his own accord, Wallace gathered all available forces together, approximately 2,800, mostly new recruits and 100-day men. They then proceeded west to Monocacy Junction to prepare for a possible engagement with Confederate forces.



**UNION
MAJOR GENERAL
LEW WALLACE**

Part of Wallace's force, under the command of General Erastus Tyler, was sent north to Jug Bridge along the National Pike. Their orders were to hold the approach across the Monocacy River. The remainder of the command would be concentrated at Monocacy Junction.

Late July 5th, after numerous Confederate deserters reported that Early was indeed on the move, Grant began to believe that something was amiss. Though not convinced of the severity of the situation, he ordered the 3rd Division of the 6th Army Corps under the command of Brigadier General James Ricketts north.



**JOHN GARRETT
PRESIDENT OF THE
B&O RAILROAD**

On July 7th and 8th, in the mountain passes and the outskirts of Frederick, Wallace's troops skirmished heavily with the advancing Confederate forces. Wallace had three objectives: First, to make the Confederates disclose their strength. Second, to make them disclose their objective (Washington, D.C. or Baltimore). Third, if going to Washington as suspected, to delay them long enough to enable reinforcements to reach the defenses of the nation's capital.

Wallace received welcome assistance when the veteran soldiers from Ricketts division arrived by train on July 8th. Upon learning of the impending situation Ricketts put himself and his troops at Wallace's disposal. The veterans were placed along the road to Washington where it was suspected that the hardest hit would come.

On Saturday morning, July 9th, Confederate General Stephen Ramseur's division encountered Union forces on the Georgetown Pike at Monocacy Junction. Realizing that a direct frontal assault across the Monocacy River at the Junction would be too costly, Early sent General John McCausland and his cavalry to find an alternate crossing in order to outflank the Union line.

At the Worthington-McKinney Ford, a mile downstream from Monocacy Junction, McCausland's troops crossed and encountered the veterans of Ricketts division who had repositioned to the left to meet the new assault. Clashing at a fence separating the Worthington and Thomas farms, the Confederate cavalry was driven back. The Confederates regrouped and around 2:30 PM attempted to flank around the left of the Union line. This time they were successful in pushing the Union soldiers from the Thomas house. However, Union forces counter attacked and drove the Confederates from the field of battle.



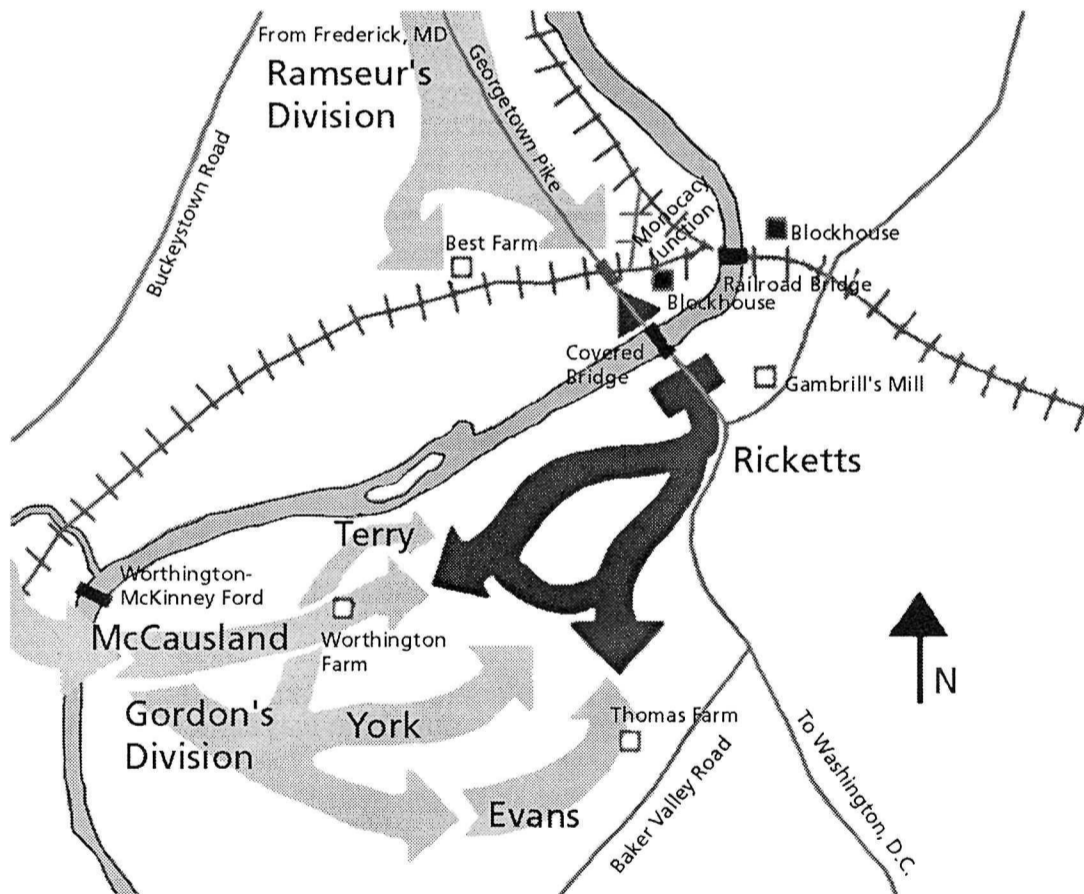
**UNION
BRIGADIER
GENERAL
JOHN RICKETTS**

As the Confederate second attack was taking place Major General John Gordon was ordered to cross his infantry division and form up. He initiated a three-pronged attack along the entire Union line with Brigadier Generals Terry, York and Evans. Some of the heaviest fighting of the day occurred at this part of the battle. At roughly 4:30 PM, Wallace's troops were pushed back and forced to retreat towards Baltimore. Wallace's troops withdrew leaving behind roughly 1,300 men killed, wounded and missing. Though beaten militarily, they had succeeded in holding their position all day against superior numbers. The Confederates spent the night on the field of battle before resuming their march to Washington. The battle cost the Confederates roughly 900 men killed, wounded and missing and a day in time lost.



**CONFEDERATE
MAJOR GENERAL
JOHN GORDON**

The Battle of Monocacy is not one of the largest or bloodiest battles of the Civil War. Yet, for what it accomplished, in saving the nation's capital, it ranks as one of the most important of the war.



VISITOR CENTER HOURS:

Memorial Day to Labor Day 8:00 AM-5:30 PM.
 Labor Day to Memorial Day 8:00 AM-4:30 PM.
 Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's.

There are exhibits, an electric map of the battle and an interactive computer program in the visitor center. There are a number of hiking trails available and a self guided auto tour. For additional information call 301-662-3515.

The National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, administers Monocacy National Battlefield.

DIRECTIONS:

From the north, east and west: Use I-70. Take Exit 54 (Market Street) and proceed south on Maryland State Route 355. The Gambrill Mill visitor center is located one-tenth of a mile south of the Monocacy River Bridge.

From the south: Use I-270. Take exit 26 (Urbana) and turn left onto Maryland State Route 80. Go around the traffic circle and take the third right. At the stop sign take a left on to Maryland State Route 355 (north). The Gambrill Mill Visitor Center is located 3.7 miles north.