



The Newsletter of the Bull Run Civil War Round Table — Vol. XXXI, Issue 11, NOVEMBER 2024

HISTORIAN & AUTHOR GENE SCHMIEL SPEAKS ON “THE BATTLE OF NASHVILLE, DECEMBER 1864” AT THE NOVEMBER 21st, 2024 MEMBERSHIP MEETING

By Mark Trbovich

The Battle of Nashville, fought December 15-16, 1864, continued the destruction of the Confederate Army of Tennessee that had begun when it suffered devastating casualties at the Battle of Franklin. After that engagement, Confederate General John Bell Hood faced limited options. A withdrawal would further dishearten the army, and Hood rejected his former notion to bypass Nashville and head northward. The high toll at Franklin prevented him from seriously contemplating an assault at Nashville, another earlier scheme. Hood opted instead to bring his army to the city's outskirts, build defenses, and await an attack from the Federals, hoping to counterattack if the enemy left an opening. For the rest of the story we will have a BRCWRT member, a speaker at our Round Table many times, join us for the 160th Anniversary month general membership meeting.

Gene Schmiel holds a Ph. D. degree from The Ohio State University and was an Assistant Professor of History at St. Francis University (PA) before becoming a Foreign Service Officer with the Department of State, which included service as a US Ambassador. He resides in Gainesville, VA. A BWCWRT member, Gene has written 15 books about the Civil War. Gene's first,

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

THURSDAY, November 21, 2024 (date changed)

6 P.M. Social Hour

7 P.M. In-person at the Centreville Regional Library & Streamed on Facebook Live and Zoom

GUEST SPEAKER:

Gene Schmiel

TOPIC:

“The Battle of Nashville, December 1864”

“Citizen General: Jacob Dolson Cox and the Civil War Era,” was published in 2014 by Ohio University Press. He is currently working on the 11th book in his series “Civil War Personalities,” entitled “Baptism of Fire at First Bull Run.” The book underscores that many Civil War figures, from Irvin McDowell and William T. Sherman to Jefferson Davis, Stonewall Jackson, Ambrose Burnside, James Longstreet, George Custer, and dozens more first “stepped on the stage” of the war on July 21, 1861, at the Manassas battlefield.

Come join us early at our November 21st, 2024, Membership Meeting to have an opportunity to chat with Gene and your colleagues before the meeting begins. Doors open at 6:00 PM; hope to see you there.

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The **Bull Run Civil War Round Table** publishes the **Stone Wall**.

Newsletter Team: Sandra Cox, Janet Green-tree, Melissa Winn, Debbie and Mark Whitenton.

For meeting dates and other information, please visit the Web site: <http://bullruncwrt.org>

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and e-mail ads by **December 1st** to Don Richardson at: don.richardson@erols.com

UPCOMING MEETINGS

November 21 Gene Schmiel - "The Battle of Nashville, TN, December 1864"

December 12 Eric Buckland - "Mosby: When The Story Ended, The Legend Began"

January 9, 2025 Melissa Winn - "Dead Letter Office Photos: The Civil War's Interrupted Sentiments"

February 13 Scott Patchan - "Shenandoah Summer: The 1864 Valley Campaign"

March 13 Dawn Diehl & Linda Harrison - "The Healing: Conversations With Civil War Nurses"

April 10 Garrett Kost - "The Spirit Fled to God Who Gave It: Dr. Charles Leale & The Medical Treatment of Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theater"

May 8 Patrick Schroeder - "Myths About R.E. Lee's Surrender At Appomattox VA, April 1865"

June 12 John Hennessy - "The People's Army: The Life and Mind of the Army of the Potomac"

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THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Kim Brace

Photos by Janet Greentree

By the time you read this column, I will be on a plane to Tokyo for 12 days of photographing various places in Japan. As a result, I won't be around for the November General Membership meeting on Nov 21st (this delay from what would have been the November 14th meeting was to allow for voting cleanup to take place from the November 5th election). The meeting will be conducted by either our Vice President Mark Whitenton or Treasurer Joe Young.

Despite technical difficulties with our Zoom and Facebook Live feeds, we had a most informative October talk by Sarah Bierle in which she speculated on the various ways the battle of Cedar Creek could have turned out differently than it did. Coming just days after Round Table members toured the Cedar Creek battlefield, it was especially meaningful for many.

Because of the problems we've had during the last several meetings putting the meeting on Zoom for members who can't make it to the Library, I've asked long time member Dan Paterson to help run the



computer systems and relieve me of that responsibility while attempting at the same time to run the Membership meeting. I've met with Dan to hand-off the computer and projector and review the set-up we've attempted to do in the past. The November 21st meeting will be Dan's baptism by fire.

Joe Young and Sarah Bierle



The November meeting will also kick off our Round Table election season (and you thought we finished that at the beginning of the month). The offices of Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer will be up for election and the current incumbents Mark Whitenton, Deb Whitenton and Joe Young have all agreed to stand for re-election in their current positions. I, however, have decided the dual responsibilities of President and Zoom Coordinator are too much to do at the same time, and I believe our Zoom efforts have suffered. So I will not stand for re-election as the Round Tables' President. As a result, nominations will be open to the meeting's floor on November 21st. You can also contact Jeff Joyce, chairman of the Nominating Committee, if you are interested in running. His email is: jef-freyjoyce@sprintmail.com. The election

(cont on page 4)

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

will take place at our December 12th General Membership meeting.

TIS THE SEASON...

To support your Round Table. As we approach the end of the tax year, please remember that your donations to the BRCWRT are Tax Deductible! Please see the article to the right for a list of the programs you can support and the ways you can give.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL OFFICER ELECTIONS

Under our Bylaws, our President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer are elected for one-year terms commencing on January 1st and terminating at the end of December.

Nominations for these positions are now open and will be accepted up to our **November 21st** General Membership meeting, when all candidates will be announced. Any member in good standing is eligible to run for one of these offices or to nominate another member in good standing with his or her consent.

The election of BRCWRT officers will be conducted during our **December 12th** General Membership meeting.

If you are interested in throwing your hat in the ring or in nominating another member for one of these offices, you can express your interest by notifying Jeffrey Joyce at:

jeffreyjoyce@sprintmail.com

or by telephone (703-862-6417), prior to the closure of nominations.

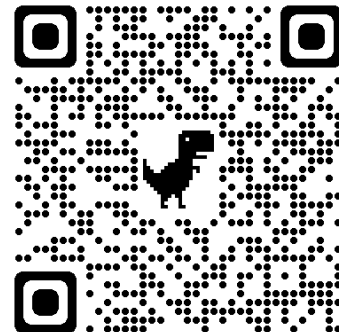
Respectfully,
Jeffrey Joyce
Nominating Committee Chair

SUPPORT BRCWRT ACTIVITIES

The Bull Run Civil War Round Table is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that relies on your donations to continue our excellent programs and initiatives throughout the year. There are many select programs to donate to, including: the BRCWRT Scholarship Fund, Preservation efforts, Civil War Trails sign preservation and maintenance, educational programs, and of course the General donation category (which the Round Table uses as a discretionary fund to offset various expenses, to help keep our membership dues at a reasonable rate). Please consider your Round Table for tax-deductible donations every year. We are a special organization and appreciate our members very much.

There are a number of ways to make a donation. On the BRCWRT website, click the link labelled "Renew/Donate" and select the link at the bottom of that page. Alternatively, you can give a check to our Treasurer at a membership meeting, or mail it to: BRCWRT Treasurer, PO Box 2147, Centreville VA 20122. Make checks payable to BRCWRT, and be sure to note whether it is for the Scholarship Fund, Preservation Fund, or the General Fund.

Finally, you can scan this QR code with the camera on your smartphone to make a donation.



**The Bull Run Civil War
Round Table Welcomes
New Member**

Tim Rook

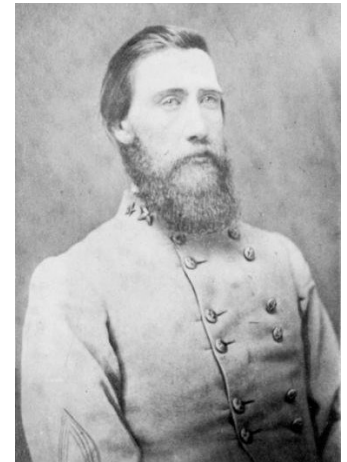
Tim Rook and his wife Teresa have six adult kids and soon to be 8 grand-kids. They've been residents of Manassas for more than 30 years and Virginia residents for more than 40 years. Tim writes:

"I think I always had a casual interest in the Civil War, the battles and battlefields and the soldiers that served. My interest ramped up in the mid 90's when, as a Girl Scout leader, I, along with my daughters and my troop volunteered with the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation in support of their annual October reenactment. That was an incredible experience to witness several thousand people filling the roles of Civil War soldiers. We did that for about 8 years.

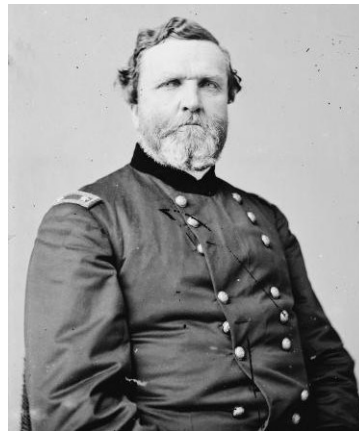
"The hook for me was discovering through genealogy that I had a Civil War ancestor. His name was Daniel Rex, my third great-grandfather, who had settled in Ohio in about 1857. Daniel was a 44 year old immigrant from England who volunteered in October 1861 and served until June 1865 as a private in the 6th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry. In 1862 the unit participated in actions up and down the Shenandoah Valley, and was involved at 2nd Manassas. They were at Gettysburg and Fredericksburg and many other actions. They were present at Appomattox for the surrender in 1865.

"Daniel survived the war and lived until 1897. Living in Virginia, I've been able to visit most of the battlefields his unit fought at, except Gettysburg and Appomattox Courthouse. I hope to do those in the near future."

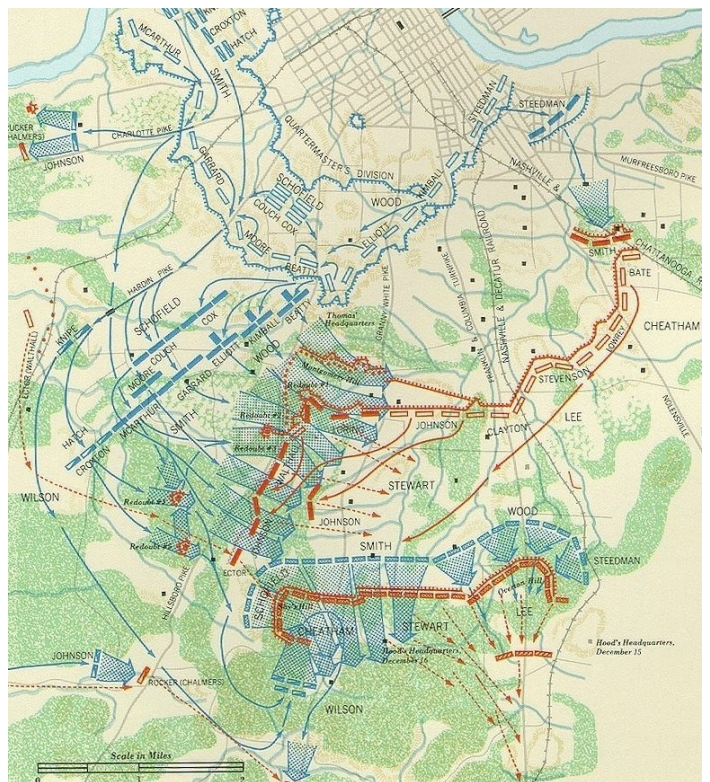
**THE BATTLE OF NASHVILLE
DEC 15-16, 1864**



LG John Bell Hood CSA
(LOC)



MG George H. Thomas
USA (LOC)



Battle Map (Battle of Nashville Trust)

Bull Run Civil War Round Table



Upcoming 2024-2025 Program of Events

Date	Event
November 21	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Gene Schmiel - "The Battle of Nashville, Tennessee, December 1864"
December 12, 2024	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Eric Buckland - "Mosby: When The Story Ended, The Legend Began"
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June 12, 2025	Monthly Meeting Speaker: John Hennessy - "The People's Army: The Life and Mind of the Army of the Potomac"
July 10, 2025	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Ronald Coddington - "Civil War Portrait Photography: Reflections of a Generation"
August 14, 2025	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Dana Shoaf - "Gutbusters: The Development of the Ambulance During the Civil War"
September 11, 2025	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Theodore Savas - "Handshakes, Gambling, & Gunpowder: How George W. Rains and Jefferson Davis Changed The Course of the Civil War"
October 9, 2025	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Patrick Falci - "30th Anniversary of the Making of the Gettysburg Movie"
November 13, 2025	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Jari Villanueva - "24 Notes That Tap Deep Emotions: The Story of America's Most Famous Bugle Call"
December 11, 2025	Monthly Meeting Speaker: Robert Dunkerly - "The Other Surrenders: Spring/Summer 1865"

Monthly Meetings in "Black" [Tours/Field Trips & Special RT Events in "Red"](#) [County or outside sponsored events in "Green"](#)

BATTLE OF BRISTOE STATION 2024 COMMEMORATION

By Blake Myers

(Photographs by Blake Myers unless otherwise indicated)

On October 12-13, 2024, Bristoe Station Battlefield Heritage Park conducted its annual Battle of Bristoe Station Commemoration Weekend. This year's commemoration marked the 181st anniversary of the October 14, 1863, Battle of Bristoe Station – a battle that resulted in approximately 1,700 casualties and was the culmination of GEN Robert E. Lee's last offensive campaign of the Civil War.



Supporting the Bristoe Station Commemoration as we do each year, on Saturday, October 12th, BRCWRT members Stephanie Vale, Blake Myers, Drew Pallo and Mark & Debbie Whitenton manned BRCWRT's Information Table at the Park's entrance. From this key vantage point, we were able to see and speak with many park visitors, conveying information on the battle, the commemoration activities and schedule, and on our CW Round Table.



Drew Pallo and Stephanie Vale On Duty at BRCWRT's Information Table

(cont on page 8)

BRISTOE STATION 2024 COMMEMORATION

In addition to enjoying the bright, sunny day, seeing old friends and meeting new ones, and welcoming and bringing on board new member Timothy Rook, our team also sold a good number of donated CW history books to fellow history lovers, with proceeds going to BRCWRT's Scholarship Fund.



Drew and Stephanie with BRCWRT's Information Display



Cannon Section - Ready, Fire! (courtesy Jeff Joyce)



Bristoe Station Luminary (courtesy Jeff Joyce)

This was a clear, bright and terrific day for commemorating the Battle of Bristoe Station, working with Kevin Pawlak and the Bristoe Station Battlefield Park staff, meeting new people, raising funds for our annual scholarship program, and spreading the word about CW history and the BRCWRT!

BRCWRT's FALL 2024 TOUR – THE BATTLE OF CEDAR CREEK

After Action Review

By Blake Myers

On Saturday, October 5, 2024, thirteen hardy BRCWRT members joined Tour Guides Blake Myers & Jim Lewis on a car caravan tour of the Battle of Cedar Creek, including sites associated with the October 19, 1864, battle. Early Saturday morning Round Table Members Alan Day, Tim Duskin, Yin Me & Christopher Hueskes, Sam Laudenslager, Dan Lundeen, Andrew Monahan, Don Richardson, James & Diane Saunders, John Scully, Mark Walker, and Chris Walton met Blake and Jim at the Centreville Regional Library, where we consolidated into four cars and began the tour to learn about and better understand the military and strategic context of the Battle of Cedar Creek and the battle itself, pitting MG Phil Sheridan's Army of the Shenandoah against LTG Jubal Early's Army of the Valley.



(Courtesy Don Richardson)

Sheridan's defeat of Early in this last major Civil War battle fought in the Shenandoah Valley marked the end of Confederate military power in the Valley, and its timing three weeks before the 1864 election helped ensure President Lincoln's reelection. The battle itself is commonly remembered for specific events, including Early's audacious, pre-dawn surprise attack, Sheridan's ride from Winchester, Early's "fatal halt", the Federal counterattack, and MG Stephen Dodson Ramseur's mortal wounding. Our tour covered these events and others, as well as the strategic and political considerations impacting both Early & Sheridan, the respective plans and movements of both armies, key decisions made by Early and Sheridan, and the key 'battles' within the battle.

Driving west on I-66 our first tour stop was the **Strasburg Visitor Center and Museum** at Hupp's Hill on U.S. Rt 11 (Valley Turnpike). Here we took advantage of the museum's artifacts, photographs and displays, and its 3-dimensional Battle of Cedar Creek terrain board to better visualize and understand the strategic setting and operational components of the Battle – setting the stage for our subsequent tour stops. *(For many tour participants this was their first visit to the Strasburg Museum, and they were very impressed. A must see for those interested in the history of Strasburg and the Battle of Cedar Creek.)*

(cont on page 10)

CEDAR CREEK TOUR

Using maps, the terrain board, and relevant period photographs, Blake provided an overview of the Shenandoah Valley and its strategic military value from both Confederate and Federal perspectives and the military situation in the Summer of 1864. Blake's overview included Early's march down the Valley from Lynchburg, crossing the Potomac River to Frederick MD, the Battle of Monocacy, and the skirmish at Fort Stevens - a march that led President Lincoln and LTG Grant to establish the Federal Military District and the Army of the Shenandoah, and to appoint MG Sheridan Commander of the District and the Army. Blake next discussed Generals Early's & Sheridan's military leadership styles and provided an overview of their respective armies and of the military situation in the Fall of 1864 as Sheridan initiated his campaign to defeat Early's Army and end the Confederate threat from the Valley. The subsequent Battles of Berryville and Third Winchester, followed by The Burning and the Battle of Tom's Brook, set the conditions for Sheridan establishing temporary camps and entrenchments south of Middletown, overwatching the fords across Cedar Creek. Then came Early's pre-dawn attack on October 19th, Sheridan's ride from Winchester and the Battle of Cedar Creek. Again, using maps and the terrain board, Blake provided an overview of Early's four-pronged attack plan and an overview of how the Battle unfolded, setting the stage for our subsequent tour stops.



Strasburg Museum's Battle of Cedar Creek
Terrain Board
(Courtesy Don Richardson)



Providing an Overview of the Shenandoah Valley, the Strategic and Military Situations in the Summer and Fall of 1864, and the Battle of Cedar Creek (Courtesy Don Richardson)

Departing the museum, our tour group headed to **Strasburg's Riverview Cemetery** for its impressive view of Massanutten Mountain and Signal Knob, and to discuss the key role they played in the development and execution of Early's attack plan.

On the afternoon of Oct 17th LTG Early, whose Army was at Fisher's Hill, directed MG John B. Gordon, BG Clement Evans, MAJ Robert W. Hunter and Jedediah Hotchkiss to the Confederate signal station at **Three Top Mountain (Signal Knob)** to determine the layout of Federal positions and any potential vulnerabilities. General Gordon and his team were able to make much of the ascent on horseback, but eventually were forced to dismount and proceed on foot. General Evans: *"It was so steep that I had to*

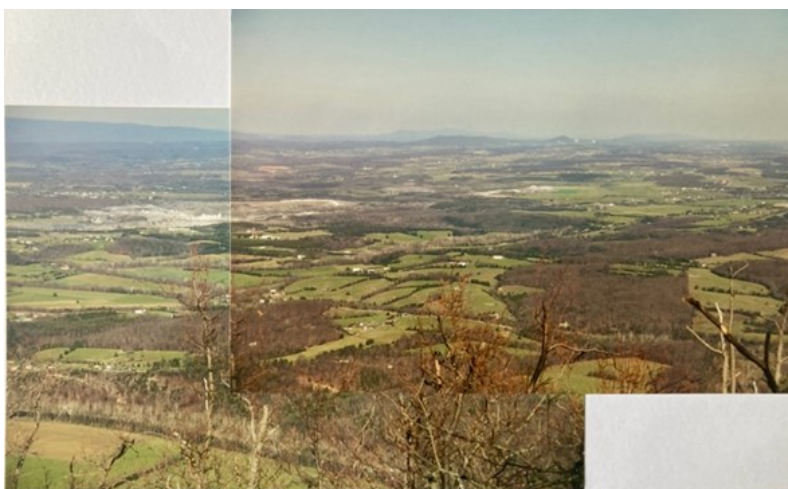
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CEDAR CREEK TOUR

travel on all fours pulling along by the rocks and bushes. The face of the mountain is covered with occasional bushes of mountain growth and stunted trees. In many places ... I had to clamber like a coon ... I arrived at the Signal Station or "look-out" where a tremendous pile of overhanging rock makes a precipice down from which you may jump half a mile with perfect ease, but not with much safety."



BRCWRT Tour Group at Riverview Cemetery with Signal Knob in the Background
(Courtesy Don Richardson)



The Spectacular View from Signal Knob
(Courtesy Blake Myers)

Using field glasses (see sketch, next page) Gordon, Evans and Hotchkiss were able to identify and precisely locate the Federal camps and defenses, including entrenchments and breastworks, parapets where heavy guns were mounted, every piece of artillery (they counted them), and the wagons, tents, and lines of supporting troops, as well as Sheridan's HQ among the sea of white tents covering the plain behind the Federal works at Belle Grove.

(cont on page 12)

CEDAR CREEK TOUR



Jedediah Hotchkiss and MG John Gordon Observing Federal Positions from Signal Knob, October 17, 1864 (Courtesy CWT)

It was apparent to all how lightly guarded the Federal left flank near the Shenandoah River was, and the entire north bank of the Shenandoah was picketed by only a handful of cavalrymen. BG Evans commented that if Early would attack the lightly guarded Federal left, "we can literally route them out." The discussion continued as Jed Hotchkiss mapped out the Federal positions. Gordon and his team returned to Fisher's Hill late that night, with Hotchkiss and Gordon discussing a tentative attack plan while enroute, subsequently briefing LTG Early on the Federal forces and dispositions and their recommendations. On October 18th at a 2:00 PM meeting with his Division Commanders, Early presented his attack plan – a four-pronged advance, incorporating most of Gordon's and Hotchkiss's recommendations, on the Federal positions with a diversionary attack at Cupp's Mill Ford at dawn on the following morning, October 19th.

Our tour group drove to **Bowman's Mill Ford** where Blake covered the movement of Early's Army from Fisher's Hill on the night of Oct 18th. Gordon's column, consisting of the Divisions of Gordon, Stephen Dodson Ramseur and John Pegram, departed at 8:00 PM to cover the 7 miles to McInturff's and Bowman's Fords – marching on foot (no horses, wagons or artillery) in strict silence and carrying no accoutrements (canteens, swords, rifle/musket slings, bayonet scabbards, etc.) that would make noise on the march, and following a very narrow path around the base of Massanutten Mountain - "... a pig's path, which but one man could pass at a time. Sometimes we would lose our foothold and fall down the mountainside and would have literally to pull ourselves up by the bushes, roots, or anything projecting from the mountainside ..."

At midnight, Kershaw's and Wharton's Divisions departed Fisher's Hill towards Strasburg, and Rosser's Cavalry Division began moving down the Back Road to Cupp's Mill Ford.

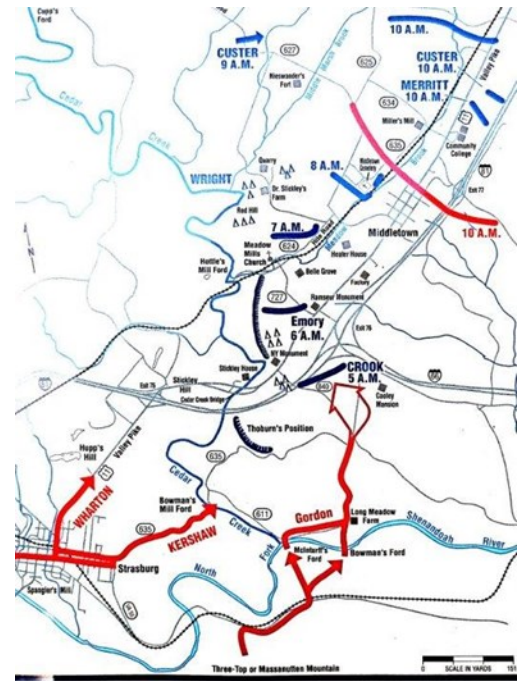
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CEDAR CREEK TOUR

By 3:30 AM Gordon’s column had arrived at the north end of Massanutten Mountain and moved across the bottomland to McInturff’s and Bowman’s Fords, Rosser had arrived at Cupp’s Mill Ford, Kershaw’s and Wharton’s Divisions, accompanied by Early, had reached Strasburg, and Carter’s artillery was on the Valley Pike below Fisher’s Hill and ready to move.



Early’s Attack Plan (Courtesy Blue & Gray Magazine)



The Battle of Cedar Creek
Troop movements from 5 A.M. To 10 A.M.
(Courtesy Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation)



Bowman’s Mill Ford Today (non-Civil War bridge)
(Courtesy Blake Myers)

Blake discussed the launch of the Confederate attack, beginning with Rosser’s diversionary attack at approximately 4:30 AM, while Gordon, Ramseur and Pegram began crossing at McInturff’s and Bowman’s Fords, respectively, and Kershaw’s crossing at Bowman’s Mill Ford shortly before 5:00 AM.

(cont on page 14)

CEDAR CREEK TOUR

Through follow-on tour stops at **Thoburn's Redoubt** and **Long Meadow**, Blake continued the attack discussion. After crossing Cedar Creek at Bowman's Mill Ford and continuing north across the Hite's farmland, at approximately 5:30 AM Kershaw's division delivered a thunderous volley and rushed the lightly manned trenches and camp of COL Joseph Thoburn's Division. One Regiment immediately dissolved in panic, while COL Thomas Wilde's Brigade, called under arms minutes before Kershaw's attack, fought briefly in position, then successfully delayed rearward for about 30 minutes until reaching the Valley Pike.

Meanwhile Gordon's Division had crossed the north fork of the Shenandoah River at **McInturff's Ford** and followed the farm road paralleling Cedar Creek and the Shenandoah River's North Fork to link up with Ramseur's & Pegram's Divisions, which had crossed the river's north fork at **Bowman's Ford**, at *Long Meadow* (COL Isaac Bowman's farmhouse).



Long Meadow - COL Isaac Bowman's Farmhouse

From Long Meadow, a hike of about one mile brought Gordon's force to within view of the *Cooley Mansion* where the three divisions wheeled left and attacked the vulnerable Federal left flank manned by COL Rutherford B. Hayes' Division. The attack, launched just after Kershaw's attack on Thoburn's Division, encountered little resistance from Hayes' lightly manned breastworks. Completely surprised, most of the soldiers in Hayes' Division fled rearward to the Valley Pike.

Hearing sounds of the attack on the Federal left flank, XIX Corps units began to de-camp and move to their left toward the sounds of combat. MG Emory began to reorganize his line to meet this threat, shifting units to his left to form a defensive line parallel to the Valley Pike. Counterattacks by COL Wilde's and BG Thomas' Brigades across the Valley Pike bought valuable time for XIX Corps units repositioning and for Thoburn's and Hayes' forces retreating across the Valley Pike.

Taking a break, our tour group enjoyed a nice and relaxing lunch break at Middletown's Italian Touch Deli. Following lunch, the tour continued with our next three tour stops focused on three key battles within the Battle; **Belle Grove, Red Hill and Cemetery Hill**.

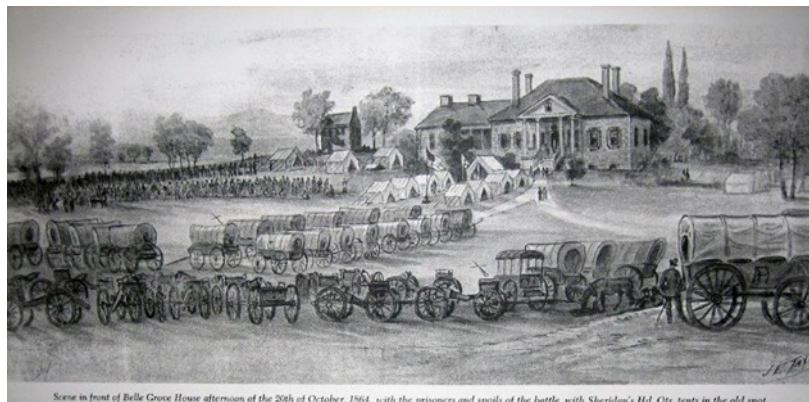
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CEDAR CREEK TOUR

Belle Grove was originally the home of Isaac Hite, Jr. and his wife Nelly Madison (sister of James Madison), and has a storied history, which Jim discussed. Belle Grove served as MG Sheridan's HQ before and after the Battle of Cedar Creek.



Belle Grove (L) and Tour Group (R) on Belle Grove's Steps
(Courtesy Don Richardson)



James Taylor's Drawing of Sheridan's HQ at Belle Grove

Getting back to the Battle, Blake discussed how the initial Confederate onslaught pressed the Federals back from the Valley Pike to positions centered around Belle Grove at approximately 6:30 AM. Disorganized and mixed units from Crook's & Emory's Corps hastily assembled a defensive line that would buy another half hour of time. Kershaw's and Gordon's attack on the Federal line at Belle Grove devolved into hand-to-hand fighting.

For a while the patchwork Federal line held, but the pressure became too great as Kershaw's and Gordon's Divisions pressed the attack and were joined by Ramseur's Division. At approximately 7:00 AM the Federal line shattered, forcing another Federal retreat, and as Emory's and Crook's battered troops fell back, they ran into Rickett's and Wheaton's VI Corps divisions preparing to cross Meadow Brook from the slopes of the Red Hill immediately to the northwest of Belle Grove.

(cont on page 16)

CEDAR CREEK TOUR

The limited stand at Belle Grove allowed most of the HQ units and trains located at Belle Grove to load up and withdraw down the Valley Pike toward Winchester. It also provided valuable time for VI Corps units to break camp and prepare for the attacking wave headed its way. MG Wright sent Ricketts', Wheaton's, and Getty's Divisions east over the Red Hill plateau to help hold Emory and Crook's line at Belle Grove. Running into Emory's broken forces retreating toward Red Hill, they retreated back up the slopes to Red Hill.



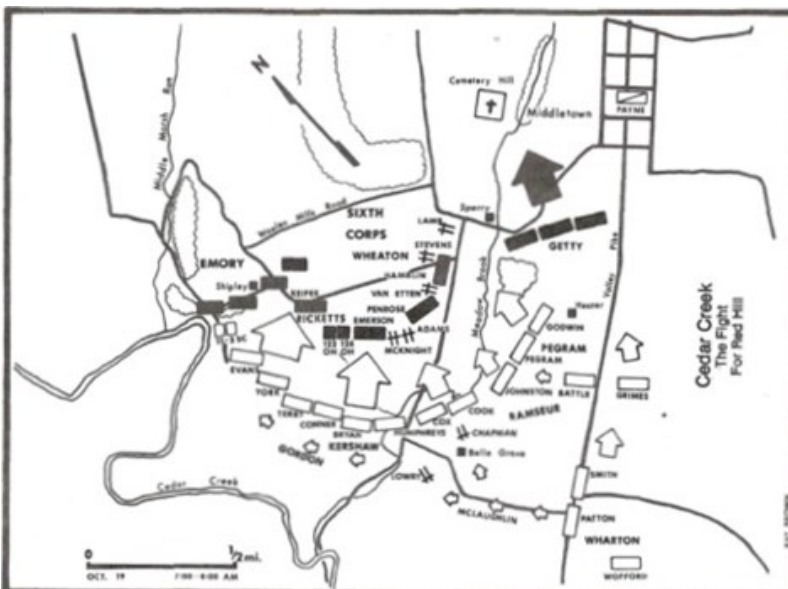
James Taylor's Sketch of Fighting at Belle Grove



View to Red Hill from Belle Grove
(Courtesy Don Richardson)

To hold the Valley Pike, the line of retreat to Winchester, MG Wright directed Rickett's and Wheaton's Divisions to establish a line on the northeast crest of Red Hill and directed Getty's Division to move to Wheaton's left & extend out toward Middletown to secure the Pike.

Two Federal corps had been driven from their camps and 18 Federal guns captured; however, a serious problem began in the ranks of Early's infantry – soldier fatigue, hunger and the need for clothing and supplies led to soldiers straggling and halting in the overrun Federal camps.



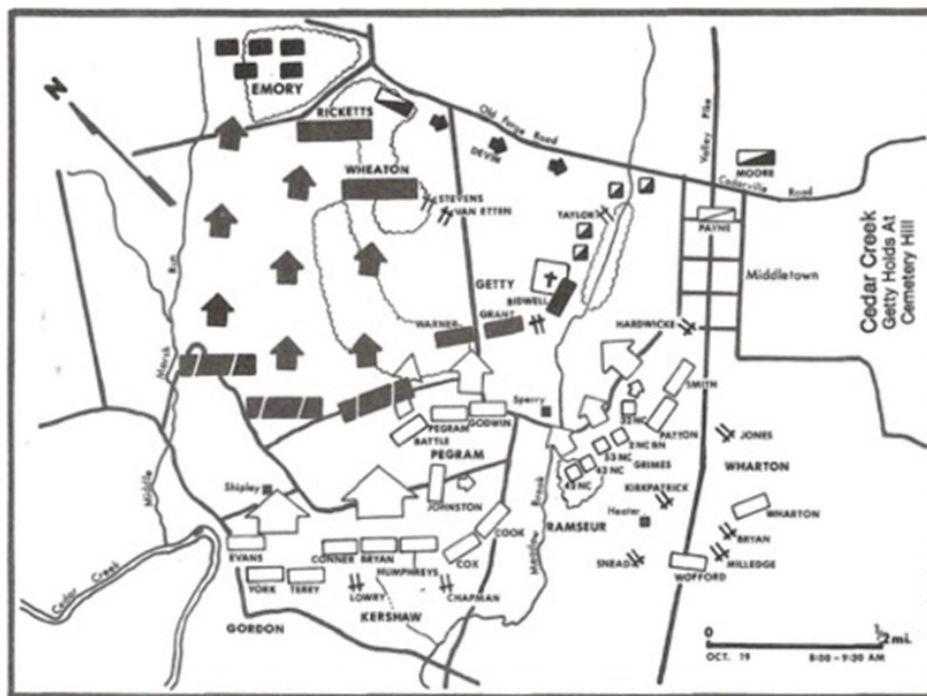
The Fight for Red Hill
(Theodore C. Mahr & Harold Howard,
The Battle of Cedar Creek, 1992)

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CEDAR CREEK TOUR

Attempting to maintain the attack's momentum, Gordon, Kershaw, Ramseur and Pegram continued the attack on to Red Hill; however, these units became increasingly intermixed and disorganized. Wharton's Division had finally crossed Cedar Creek and was moving down the Pike toward Middletown, with Carter's Artillery directly behind Wharton, and after approximately 30 minutes of fighting against the Confederate attack, Wheaton's Division withdrew, directly exposing Ricketts' left flank and leaving Getty exposed. The Federal line collapsed, with the XIX and VI Corps forces retreating up Middle Marsh valley, directly northwest of Red Hill, and they were not pursued by Gordon or Kershaw.

The XIX Corps remnants and Ricketts' and Wheaton's Divisions of VI Corps fell back toward Old Forge Road (modern day Chapel Road), and Getty's Division moved north to Middletown's Cemetery Hill, establishing a defensive line with his 3 Brigades: Bidwell's, Grant's (the Vermont Brigade) and Warner's.



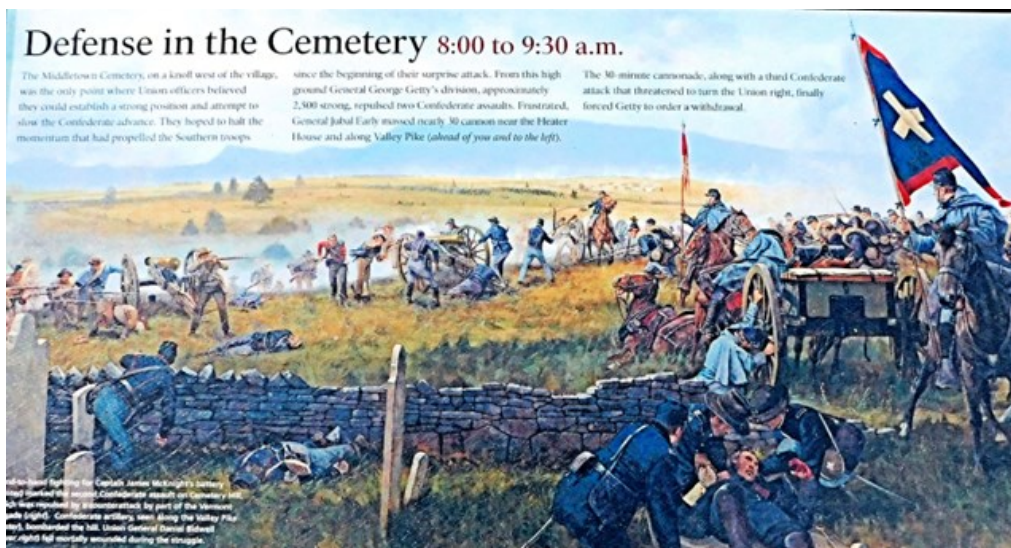
Getty Holds at Cemetery Hill

(Theodore C. Mahr & Harold Howard, *The Battle of Cedar Creek*, 1992)

For about an hour Getty's Division aggressively repelled successive assaults from elements of Pegram's and Ramseur's Divisions. As Pegram attacked up the western slope of Cemetery Hill through a dense ground fog, Warner and Grant unleashed a volley that staggered the Confederates, and they staggered back down the hillside. Grimes' Brigade (Ramseur's Division) attacked the eastern slope of Cemetery Hill but drifted apart in the early morning fog and attacked in small clusters rather than a cohesive line. Grimes tried two attacks, but Federal tenacity, Confederate exhaustion and a lack of numbers resulted in his retreat down the slope and back across Meadow Brook.

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CEDAR CREEK TOUR



Fighting in the Cemetery (Courtesy National Park Service)

The Confederate piecemeal attacks were successfully repulsed by Getty as LTG Early arrived at the southwest edge of Middletown with Wharton's Division and Carter's Artillery. As the fog began to dissipate, Early noticed the intact Federal line on Cemetery Hill and directed Wharton with two Brigades (Smith and Patton) to attack what he perceived to be the exposed left flank of Grant's Brigade. However, Wharton's attack was directly into Bidwell's Brigade positioned further up the slope across Meadow Brook. Wharton made two uncoordinated attacks, both repulsed with heavy casualties, and retreated back across Meadow Brook.

The fierce fighting on Cemetery Hill resulted in Early losing focus on the overall battle, and by 9:00 AM Early's attack had lost all momentum. Federal cavalry had moved to the threatened Federal left flank and was, in turn, threatening Early's right flank. In frustration Early pulled his infantry back and directed Carter to concentrate artillery fire on the hill to drive the Federals off. Carter's 30+ guns pulled off the Pike south of Middletown and begin firing on Getty's position. After approximately 30 minutes of artillery fire Battle's Brigade (Ramseur's Division) attacked Getty's right flank, resulting in Warner's Brigade retreating and Getty's subsequent withdrawal to a prominent ridgeline north of Middletown.

Early's overriding concern became reconstituting his scattered units - he ordered Ramseur and Pegram to Cemetery Hill and proceeded to reorganize his forces on and around the hill. At approximately 10:00 AM Ramseur arrived at Cemetery Hill, followed shortly thereafter by Gordon, Wharton and Carter. The reconstitution and reorganization of units began, as did the policing up of stragglers in the Federal camps. As the reorganization progressed Early directed his divisions to re-establish the Army's line northeast of Middletown along Old Forge Road (today's Chapel Road). Early was able to reestablish his line by 11:30 AM. The line, running approximately 2 miles from west to east, consisted of Gordon's Division on the left flank (east of Middle Marsh Run), Kershaw's Division on Gordon's right flank, Ramseur's Division on

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CEDAR CREEK TOUR

Kershaw's right flank (west of Meadow Brook), Pegram's Division straddling the Valley Pike from Meadow Brook thru Middletown, and Wharton's Division east of Middletown, opposite the Federal cavalry.

Meanwhile, upon returning from his strategy conference in Washington and after his 15-mile ride from Winchester, Sheridan arrived north of Middletown in the vicinity of today's Kline's Mill Road and Rienzi Knoll Lane at about 10:30 AM. After a quick conference with Cavalry Commander BG Torbert and BG Getty, Sheridan trotted along the front of Getty's Division on the ridgeline where they had withdrawn after their stand at Cemetery Hill. Initially Sheridan's appearance generated stunned silence, then cheers as Sheridan shouted, "*Men, by God, we'll whip them yet! We'll sleep in our old camps tonight!*"



A Depiction of Sheridan's Ride Along Getty's Line
(Courtesy Jim Lewis)

Sheridan then rode back along the Valley Pike seeking Generals Crook and Wright. Finding them, he dismounted and asked, "*What are you doing way back here?*" Wright replied, "*Well, we've done the best we could.*" MG Emory rode up and reported to Sheridan that he had one of his divisions "formed and in good order to cover the retreat to Winchester." Sheridan retorted "*Retreat hell, we'll be back in our old camps tonight.*" Sheridan directed Wright and Emory to continue reestablishing a cohesive Federal line along the ridgeline by extending Getty's line.

Sheridan then rode off to confer with cavalry commanders Merritt and Custer and develop a plan. The plan developed used Custer's and Merritt's Cavalry Divisions to press Early's forces on both flanks, and the main attack to be led by Emory's XIX Corps and Wright's VI Corps, with Crook's Army of West Virginia in reserve. The Federal forces began positioning and organizing accordingly along the designated ridgeline, and Custer began moving his division to the Federal right flank.

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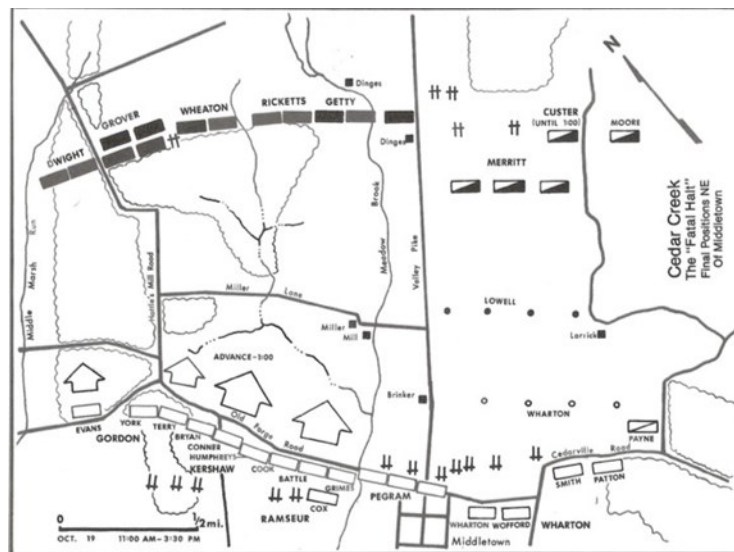
CEDAR CREEK TOUR

At approximately 12:30 PM LTG Early ordered a Confederate advance. At our **Fatal Halt** tour stop, Blake covered this part of the battle.



Fatal Halt Tour Stop & Miller House in the Background
(Courtesy Blake Myers)

Gordon's, Kershaw's and Ramseur's Divisions begin to move forward from their positions along Old Forge Road at about 1:00 PM, while Early held Pegram's and Wharton's Divisions in their positions on the right flank.



The 'Fatal Halt'

(Theodore C. Mahr & Harold Howard, *The Battle of Cedar Creek*, 1992)

Gordon, Kershaw and Ramseur advanced with caution, pushing a strong skirmish line out to their front. After advancing about a mile Confederate skirmishers ran into Federal pickets south of the Federal ridgeline. After a brief firefight, the skirmishers sent back word that a strong Federal line was in Early's front. Gordon halted the

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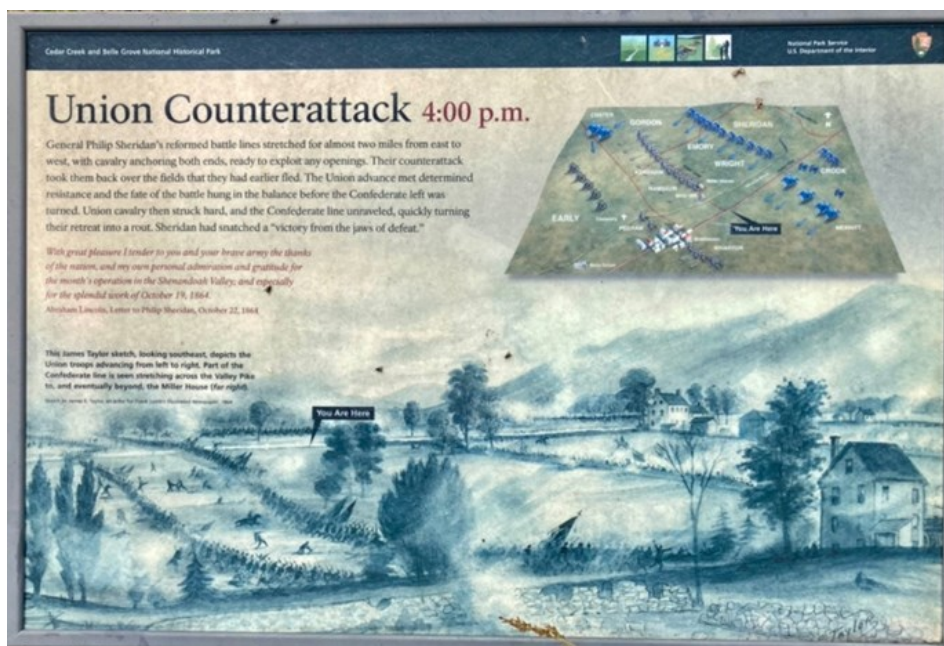
CEDAR CREEK TOUR

advance about a half-mile northeast of the Old Forge Road along Miller's Lane (today's Cougill Road) running northwest from the Valley Pike past David J. Miller's farm and mill.

Gordon reported the presence of the Federal line to Early, expecting the entire Army to resume the advance and drive the Federals from the field. Instead, Early called off the advance and issued orders to establish a defensive line. From about 1:30 PM until 4:00 PM Early's army remained in this position north of Middletown, applying no pressure against the Federal forces - the '*Fatal Halt*'.

Besides giving up the initiative, the ground chosen by Early was poor ground for a defensive position - the left flank (Gordon's Division) was anchored on nothing and no cavalry was screening and protecting that flank, and the Federal Cavalry threat on the right flank was being defended against by Pegram's and Wharton's Divisions north of Middletown, but they were not linked into Ramseur's right flank. Gordon was furious, and the negative impact on Confederate morale was immediate and lasting - having been successful all morning, why stop now? - and soldiers started moving to the rear to plunder the abandoned Federal camps.

Our next tour stop covered the **Federal Counterattack**. By 3:30 PM Confederate skirmishers had been pushed in, and Sheridan's attack began about 4:00 PM.

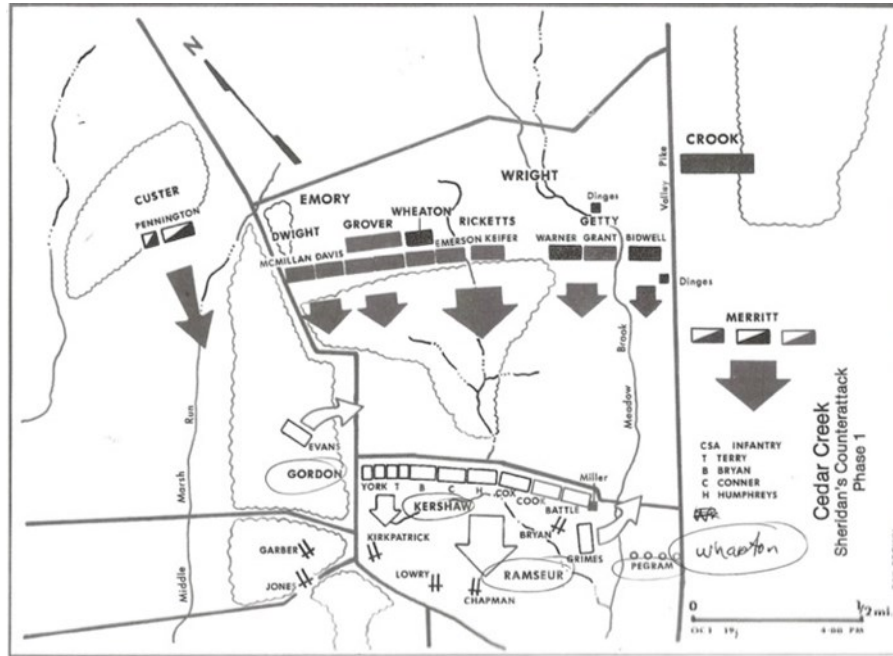


Federal Counterattack Wayside Marker (Courtesy Blake Myers)

Confederate resistance north of Middletown and along Miller Lane was fierce for about an hour. During a fierce fight in the orchard behind the Miller house, BG Stephen Ramseur was mortally wounded - he was eventually evacuated to Belle Grove, where he was visited by his West Point classmate, George Custer, and where he later died.

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CEDAR CREEK TOUR



Federal Counterattack

(Theodore C. Mahr & Harold Howard, *The Battle of Cedar Creek*, 1992)

Gordon's thinly manned left flank was broken by Custer's Cavalry charge, and Custer's Cavalry moved rapidly for Early's rear. Panic began to spread along the Confederate line with units retreating left to right, which quickly turned into a rearward stampede. COL Thoburn was shot & killed while following the counterattack through Middletown. The Confederate artillery and some infantry forces made brief delays at the old XIX Corps earthworks along Cedar Creek, at Stickleby's Farm and Mill and at Hupp's Hill, but Early had lost control as his forces dissolved in the soldiers' efforts to avoid capture.

The Confederate disaster was compounded when the small bridge in Strasburg crossing Town Run collapsed, causing a jam which prevented any rolling stock from moving south. Many of the Federal guns and wagons captured in the morning's battle, plus nearly all those belonging to Early's Army, were abandoned.



Modern Bridge Over Town Run in Strasburg
(Courtesy Blake Myers)

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CEDAR CREEK TOUR

Early's shattered forces that had escaped gathered at Fisher's Hill and before dawn the next morning, Oct 20, withdrew further south – to New Market.

Our final tour stop was at Middletown's **Historic Wayside Inn**, where Jim covered the history of COL Charles Russell Lowell of Massachusetts, and his mortal wounding at Cedar Creek on the Federal left flank during the counterattack (see sketch, below).



James Taylor's Sketch of COL Lowell Being Shot by a Sharpshooter in the Brinker House on the Valley Pike

Jim also discussed the historical marker at the Wayside Inn that commemorates Lowell's mortal wounding, and its placement across the Valley Pike from a house that stands on the site of the house where Lowell was cared for after his wounding, and where he subsequently died.



Lowell Historical Marker
(Courtesy Blake Myers)



Historical Marker and the Site Where Lowell Died
(Courtesy Blake Myers)

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CEDAR CREEK TOUR

Jim and Blake also covered the results of the battle and its impacts. In terms of battle casualties and losses, Early's Army of the Valley suffered 1,860 casualties (killed & wounded) and 1,500 prisoners, and lost more than 300 ambulances and wagons, 200 horses and mules, hundreds of small arms and rounds of ammunition, and 48 artillery pieces with limbers and caissons, 18 of which were Federal guns captured during the early morning battle. Sheridan's Army of the Shenandoah suffered 6,000 total casualties (2,500 killed & 3,500 wounded). Many southerners believed "*The Yankees Got Whipped, and We Got Scared.*" From a political perspective, the pending November election was no longer in doubt – Lincoln would be re-elected.



The Wayside Inn / Larrick's Tavern (Courtesy Blake Myers)

LTG Early attempted to reform, reorganize and maintain discipline in his Army, even trying to bait Sheridan into attacking him near New Market, but eventually General Lee recalled the remainder of Early's forces to eastern Virginia. Early's defeat at Cedar Creek effectively ended Confederate military power in the Valley.

After the battle MG Sheridan reestablished his HQ at Belle Grove, and subsequently moved his forces to Newtown (today's Stephens City) and established defensive positions, remaining in this defensive posture until December. When General Grant learned of Lee's recall of the bulk of Early's Army, he recalled Sheridan's forces, initially the VI Corps and later the XIX Corps, to Petersburg. Sheridan rejoined Grant in March 1865.

All in all, a terrific day for this Tour, and a terrific group of BRCWRT members who enjoyed this day-long tour and the comraderie!



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