



A Quarterly Newsletter of the Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation

the *dispatch*

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Artifact Addition to Battlefield Collection By Matt Borders

Monocacy National Battlefield (MNB) recently obtained a new acquisition for its museum collection, the round ID Disk of Samuel M. Weigel, a private in the 138th Pennsylvania Infantry regiment which fought at the battle. (See accompanying photographs.) This disk was secured with Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation funds from a long established and well-known seller on eBay. The seller of the ID disk provided all disk research documents he had assembled prior to posting the artifact for auction. These documents matched or corroborated the research that was done by the National Park Service staff prior to bidding on the disk. Samuel Weigel's ID disk arrived on October 20 and was formally transferred to the National Park Service on October 22. It is interesting to note that the last MNB acquisition was also a soldier's ID badge from the 138th Pennsylvania Infantry but this earlier badge was a Union shield design and not the more common round disk. Both ID items will be going on display soon and will be featured in the new Visitor Center museum space once renovations are complete.

The original owner of the ID disk, Samuel Weigel, was born on August 9, 1839. He had just past his 23rd birthday when he mustered with other men from Adams County, Pennsylvania into Company G of the 138th Pennsylvania on August 26, 1862. The 138th Pennsylvania Infantry spent its early months of service on guard detail, the various companies scattered to different locations. Samuel's company G was sent to Fort Dix, a small earthwork fortification mounting six guns that commanded the Washington Viaduct over the Patapsco River. In June of 1863, the 138th Pennsylvania was ordered to Harpers Ferry at the opening of the Gettysburg Campaign. When the Union depot at Harpers Ferry was abandoned on July 1, the regiment was detailed to guard the arms and munitions that were sent to Washington DC. Rejoining their brigade on July 7, the 138th Pennsylvania took part in the pursuit of the Army

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The front and reverse of the Samuel Weigel ID disk.

Photo credit: Matt Borders

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of Northern Virginia as it retreated from Gettysburg and the subsequent campaigns at Bristoe Station and Mine Run.

The opening of 1864 saw big changes for the 138th Pennsylvania. That winter they received new Springfield muskets and were assigned to the VI Corps of the Army of the Potomac when the old III Corps was dissolved. The 138th Pennsylvania Infantry served throughout the bloody Overland Campaign in the spring of 1864 and the opening of the Siege of Petersburg. On July 6, 1864, the VI Corps was ordered out of the siege lines and sent north via steamship. The VI Corps' 3rd Division, which included the 138th Pennsylvania, led the way. Transported to Baltimore on the “Jersey Blue”, the 138th Pennsylvania disembarked after a trip of 36 hours. They were immediately loaded onto train cars and sent via the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad to Monocacy Junction, arriving there around 4:00 p.m. on July 8.

During the Battle of Monocacy, the 138th Pennsylvania fought on the Thomas Farm near the right flank of Brigadier General James Rickett's line. Though successful in beating back the initial Confederate infantry attacks, the Federal line was forced back across Thomas Farm to the old road trace around 4:00 p.m.. There the line held for another hour. During this struggle, half of Rickett's command was protected by the embankment of the Georgetown Pike (Araby Church Road) but the other half, however, including the 138th Pennsylvania, had only a fence line and the rolling terrain as cover. It was likely during this intense fighting or during the retreat, which began around 5:00 p.m., that Samuel Weigel was wounded. Described in his regimental history merely as being “severely wounded,” there are no other details currently available regarding his wound or recuperation. Samuel Weigel is shown as mustering out of service on June 30, 1865, a week after the rest of the 138th Pennsylvania mustered out. After the war, Weigel married Martha Ann Harmon and had four children, two boys, two girls. At the time of his death in 1922, Samuel Weigel was 82 years old, living in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania and had six grandchildren.

Matt Borders is a Seasonal Park Ranger at Monocacy National Battlefield.

Memories of a Monocacy Veteran

By Jennifer Liles

In October of 1932, an 86-year-old veteran of the Union Army revisited a site that was of much importance to his life over 60 years prior. “Colonel” Judson Spofford visited Frederick and resided with his friend, Judge Glenn H. Worthington, for a tour of the Monocacy battlefield and a retelling of the events that had happened all those decades prior. Spofford, originally from Vermont, had since settled and raised a family in Boise, Idaho. He was on a tour of New York and Washington and made his last stop Frederick. Early in the Civil War, at the age of 18, Spofford enlisted in Company K of the volunteer 10th Vermont Infantry Regiment which would engage in some of the heaviest fighting in the Battle of Monocacy in July of 1864.

During the summer of 1864, Union General Lew Wallace was in Baltimore commanding lightly trained Union soldiers who were inexperienced in combat (“100 Days Men” as they were commonly known) when he learned of Confederate General Jubal Early's invasion of Maryland which posed a threat to Baltimore and Washington. Wallace sent word to Washington requesting more troops to meet the threat from Early. Among the troops sent to join Wallace was Judson Spofford's 10th Vermont, commanded by Colonel W. W. Henry. As the Vermonters arrived in Frederick, General Wallace ordered Henry to “assume a point of vantage and march his regiment in formation so as to create the impression with Early then approaching the city from the west that a large army was ready to meet him.” This tactic gave the impression that tens of thousands of Union soldiers were waiting on the field; the location was later called “Deception Peak.” As the Confederates approached on July 8, Henry and his men were forced to fall back and march through Frederick, where Spofford said the residents had left barrels of water and tin cups for the soldiers. They marched down the Baltimore Pike to the Jug Bridge then over to Frederick Junction and fell into battle formation on the eastern bank of the Monocacy River. The next day, Wallace selected 75 men, Spofford being one of them, to “prevent Early from crossing the wooden bridge over the Monocacy.” The men fought throughout the day to defend their position and the bridge until Early concluded “that the bridge could not be taken unless with great loss of life.” Wallace burned the Baltimore Pike bridge and the men fell back to the railroad bridge over the Monocacy River. Eventually the Union soldiers were forced to cross the bridge on the crossties and stringers while under Confederate fire.

After the battle, Spofford and a few of his friends decided that they wanted to see Washington and asked for a pass, but they were denied. The soldiers decided to go to Washington without permission and were arrested. As they were marched under arrest towards headquarters, they passed the house where General Ricketts (their commander) was sitting on a porch. The group cheered for Ricketts and Ricketts responded asking to know the charge against them. Spofford and his comrades were all wearing the blue cross badge of the Third Division of the Sixth Army Corps. Ricketts, noticing the badge, asked the arresting guards if they knew what the badge stood for and then commented that “had it not been for these men who fought at the Monocacy a few days ago, your position as provost guard would now be by a Confederate.” Years later, wearing the same badge, Spofford attended a national Grand Army of the Republic encampment in Buffalo and was asked by another attendee if he had fought at Monocacy. The man who asked him was General Lew Wallace, who declared “wherever I see a soldier with a blue cross, if he was at the battle of Monocacy, I take off my hat to him, for I never saw better soldiers throughout the war.”

The October 1932 visit to Frederick and Monocacy was the third trip for Spofford since the battle. According to a Frederick newspaper coverage of the visit, Spofford “toured the battlefield and also the point west of Frederick which he denominated ‘Deception Peak’.” Judson Spofford died at the VA hospital in Boise, Idaho on September 11, 1937 and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Jennifer Liles is a member of the Board of Directors of the Monocacy National Battlefield Foundation, a professional genealogist, and a consulting public historian.

Lew Wallace at Shiloh

By Gail Stephens

April 6, 1862, was a fateful day in the life of Lew Wallace. He would spend the rest of his life defending himself from various allegations about his performance that day. Wallace did not arrive with his division at the Battle of Shiloh until after dark and thus was not where Grant wanted him to be when he wanted him. Therefore, he became seen as a coward, a glory-seeker, just plain slow. These perceptions would haunt him for years to come.

April 6 dawned bright and beautiful. One of Wallace's soldiers commented that it was a "rare and beautiful morning" in which "every living thing seemed to be happy." Breakfast was at 6:00 a.m. and shortly after the men gathered, they heard the rattle of musketry from the Union camps at Pittsburg Landing and then a tremendous cannonade, which acted "like an electric shock" on everyone. Wallace, concluding the Confederates had attacked, immediately ordered two of his brigades to concentrate at an intersection from which they could easily reach either the road along the river, the River Road, or the road Wallace had improved, the Shunpike. He left the Third Brigade in place until noon. They were closest to the Mobile and Ohio Railroad and could hold Confederates units sent north via rail from Corinth to attack Wallace. When no attack came, they joined Wallace's other two brigades on the march.

Grant was at his headquarters in Savannah, Tennessee, when he heard the firing. He immediately boarded the *Tigress*, his steamboat, and headed upriver. He stopped first at Crump's Landing and ordered a disappointed Wallace to hold himself in readiness "to move in any direction" and continued upriver to Pittsburg Landing. Wallace was forced to wait, something he did not do well. He joined his two brigades, where the troops noted that Wallace was openly impatient to move. He told one of his brigade commanders they would move toward the battle at noon, even without orders.

Grant, at Pittsburg Landing, assessed the situation and concluded he needed Wallace. Crucially, Grant gave the order verbally to an aide who rode to the river and dictated it to Grant's staff quartermaster. There was certainly room for error in that chain of events. The quartermaster took the message to Crump's Landing by steamboat and, accompanied by one of Wallace's aides, delivered the message to Wallace about 11:30 a.m.. Wallace gave his men a half hour to eat, since he did not know what was ahead for them, and they stepped out at noon.

The question at the heart of the controversy over Lew Wallace's actions on April 6, 1862, is the wording of Grant's second order to him. We don't have the order because Wallace gave it to a staff member who stuck it in his sword belt and lost it on the march. Wallace, his staff and brigade commanders always maintained he was ordered to the right of the Union army. The Shunpike, the road Wallace had improved, led to the Union right. Grant said he ordered Wallace to march to Pittsburg Landing, dictating movement on the River Road, which had been flooded by the river and was unimproved. Two men and two different versions of the order would lead to life-long controversy for Wallace.

Wallace struck out for the Union right along the Shunpike. Wallace could not know that the army of which he was so proud was already being pushed back toward the Landing. His division moved at speed along the improved Shunpike and was about two-thirds of the way to the battlefield, with the noise of battle growing louder by the minute, when another messenger from Grant caught up with them, bringing the stunning news that the Union army had been pushed back and was fighting close to the river. Wallace was thus marching into the Confederate rear. He would now have to turn his division around and head back the way he came, hoping to find a connection with the River Road.

(It should be noted here that just after the Battle of Monocacy, Grant invited Wallace to visit him at City Point in recognition of his crucial stand at Monocacy. At dinner one night, Grant told Wallace that if he had known in 1862 what he knew of Wallace's fighting qualities after Monocacy, he would have ordered Wallace to continue along the Shunpike and hit the Confederates in the rear.)

Wallace felt the weight of huge responsibility; the Battle of Shiloh depended on his ability to reach the field as quickly as possible. He set to turning his division around and ordered his cavalry ahead to scout a path to Pittsburg Landing. They found a local who knew a route to the River Road, so they did not have to return all the way to Crump's Landing. As they moved closer to the Tennessee River, which was in flood, the route became more difficult. A company of cavalry on the River Road noted that Wallace's men "floundered and wallowed in the mud and water in which they frequently sank to their hips...."

As Wallace's men closed in on Pittsburg Landing, where Grant held his final battle line, they were deafened by the overwhelming artillery fire and engulfed by waves of Union stragglers. One member of the division noted they passed "squad after squad of our soldiers coming from the battlefield, whipped." Not a reassuring sight. It was dark when Wallace's lead regiment began moving onto the battlefield. They were careful, fearing they might encounter Confederates, but instead they were greeted by Union troops who cheered upon learning Wallace had arrived.

No one from Grant had come to meet them, so Wallace immediately deployed his men in line of battle and ordered that no campfires be lit. He rode out to find Grant, who did not rebuke him for his late arrival, but simply ordered him to stay where he was. There was little rest on the battlefield that night for it began to rain hard and the living were tormented by the cries of the wounded.

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“Lew Wallace: Prelude to Shiloh”
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Wallace and his men had marched long and hard that day. In 2005, the author with a group of historians from Shiloh National Military Park made the same trek, using a map drawn in 1902. The route, using modern GPS, totaled 16.75 miles and it took 7 hours and 45 minutes, walking as fast as possible and with only one shallow stream to cross, to complete the march. It was a lesson about the rapidity of Wallace’s march in much more difficult conditions. Wallace had left Stoney Lonesome about noon and arrived at the battlefield around 7:00 p.m..

Nevertheless, Grant and his staff began to criticize Wallace publicly after the battle. One of the immediate reasons was that the Battle of Shiloh was seen as a disaster, largely because it was the first great bloody battle of the war. One woman wrote that when they heard the estimates of Union casualties at Shiloh, “our hearts seemed to stand still with horror.” Grant was blamed and he turned his ire on Wallace. Grant commented that he could not understand why any order other than to come to Pittsburg Landing was necessary, clearly not believing that a message he had not written, which had been conveyed through at least two people, might not have said what he wanted it to say.

In 1885, Grant received new evidence in the form of a note Wallace wrote before the battle to the commander of a division at Pittsburg Landing. Wallace told the commander that if he was attacked at Crump’s Landing he wished to be reinforced over the Shunpike. Grant realized that Wallace was not lost, but on the road he had chosen to take to the battlefield, so he added a note to his memoirs at the end of Chapter 24, the last change he made before he died on July 23, 1885. Grant wrote that, in absence of clear orders to use another road, Wallace would have used the Shunpike, and recalled that his order was verbal and to an aide, “so that I am not competent to say just what order the General (Wallace) actually received.” It was exoneration from the Union’s hero.

Gail Stephens is an historian and author of Shadow of Shiloh: Major General Lew Wallace in the Civil War and numerous other articles and monographs.

A Wounded Confederate Soldier’s Journey

By Ken Plantz

The Battle of Monocacy was over and the Confederate forces did not waste any time in their quest to confront what they hoped to be an inexperienced and vulnerable enemy guarding Washington City. So what happened to their wounded after the July 9 battle? Those not seriously wounded likely continued on with their units. General Jubal Early left three of his surgeons behind to care for those wounded, captured, and held in Union Hospitals. This is the story of one wounded Confederate’s journey after the battle.

18-year-old James Wade Barnett of the 14th Virginia Cavalry, fighting with McCausland’s Brigade on the Worthington Farm in the earlier part of the day, was struck down when a Union Minie ball entered his left thigh and lodged itself in his right buttock. His journey afterwards was typical for the Confederates wounded at Monocacy. His first stop was the U.S. General Hospital in Frederick City. The hospital was located on the grounds now occupied by the Maryland School for the Deaf and the historic Hessian Barracks. Barnett was one of over 1600 Union and Confederate casualties who came to be treated at the hospital after the battle.

His wound was dressed and on 25 July he was transferred to the U.S. General Hospital West’s Buildings in Baltimore where Confederate wounded were cared for as prisoners. It was there that the Minie ball was finally removed. The West’s Buildings consisted of a row of six large warehouses, erected by William West, a well-known wealthy citizen of Baltimore. They were situated on Union Dock at the foot of the Jones Falls along an extensive wharf at which steamboats and other vessels moored. Today the popular Pier Six Baltimore Center for the Performing Arts occupies the site of the hospital.

Once sufficiently recovered, Barnett was transferred as a prisoner of war to his next stop at Fort McHenry on 30 August. After spending nearly a month at the fort, he was relocated for the fourth time on 27 September to the dreaded prison camp at Point Lookout in Southern Maryland. Ironically the liberation of prisoners at Point Lookout had been one objective of Early’s 1864 invasion of Maryland.

Fortunately for him his stay at Point Lookout was very brief. Due to both Union and Confederate pressure to resume prisoner paroles and exchanges, on 30 September Barnett was paroled and given a forty-day furlough to further his recovery. Federal records show that on 18 November he was part of a prisoner exchange making him eligible to return to action with his regiment.

By the time of the 1870 Federal Census, James Wade Barnett was married and living in Christiansburg, Virginia with his wife Laura and one year old daughter Kate. His occupation was listed as “Drummer for Store” which in the 1800s was the title given a salesman. The goods, which were for sale, were kept in a fabric case that the “drummer” would beat to announce his arrival. Thus the origin of today’s expression “drumming up business.”

Ken Plantz is a volunteer at Monocacy National Battlefield.