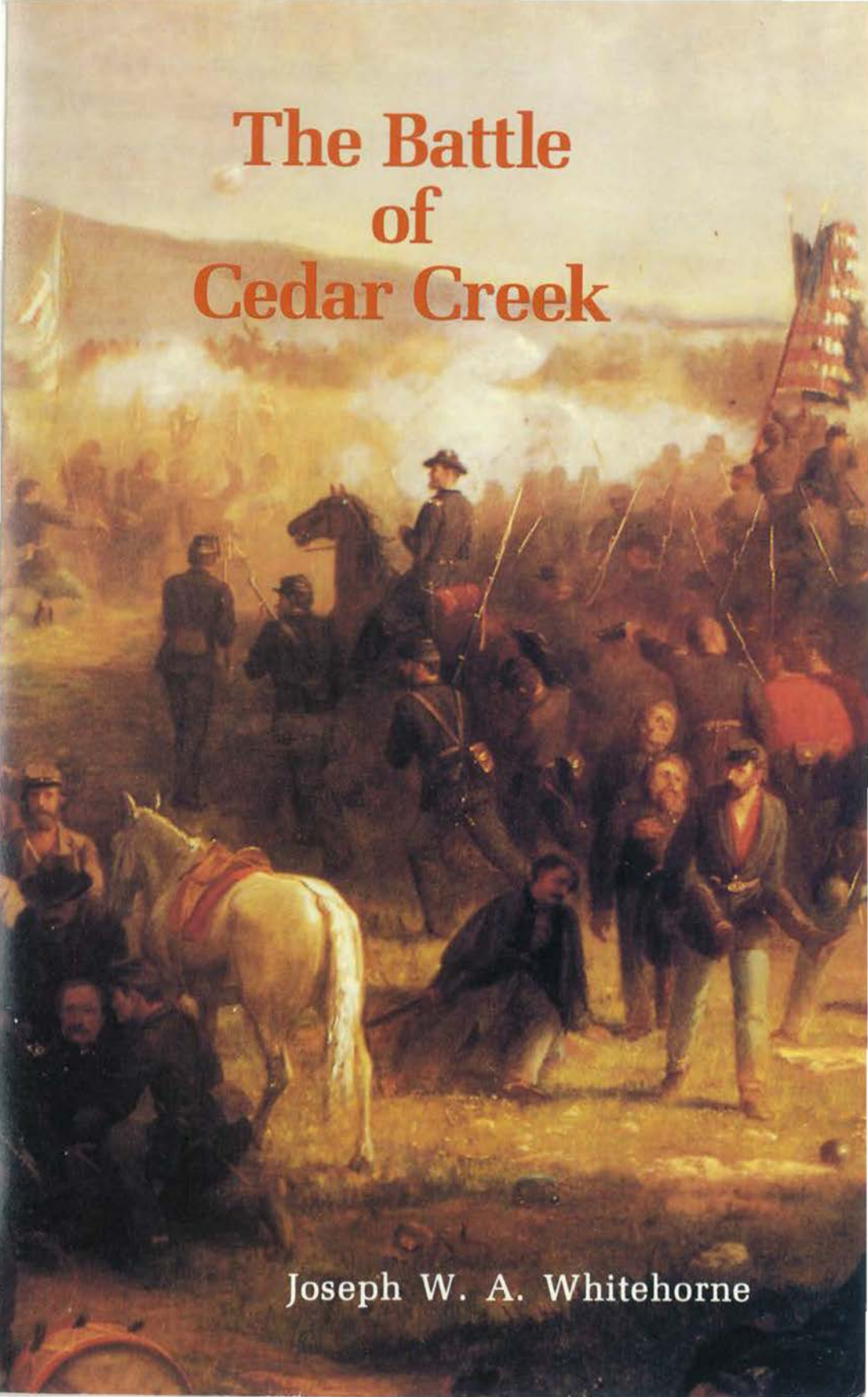
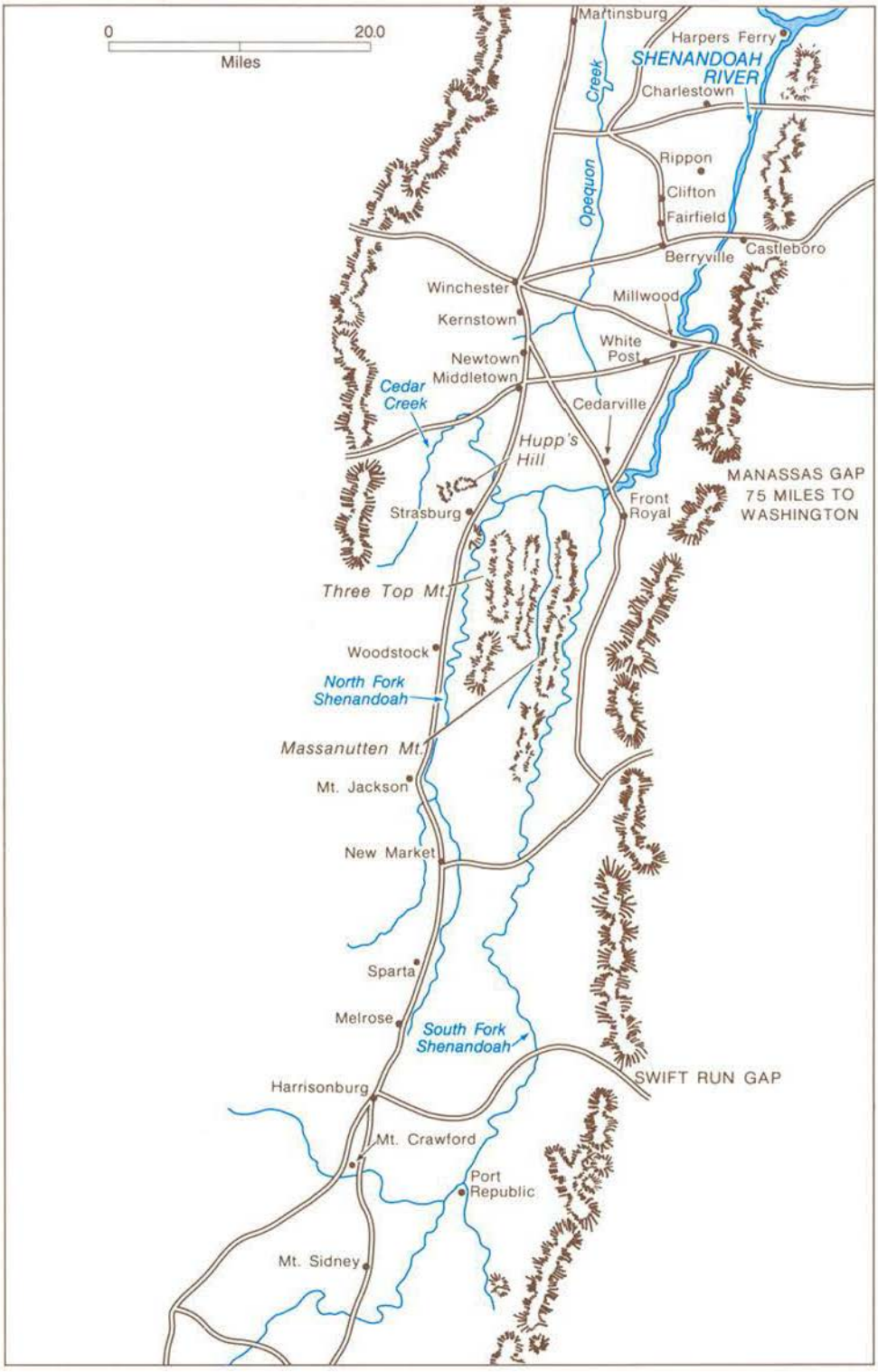
The Battle of Cedar Creek



Joseph W. A. Whitehorne


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Miles
Martinsburg
Harpers Ferry
SHENANDOAH RIVER
Charlestown
Creek
Opequon
Rippon
Clifton
Fairfield
Berryville
Castleboro
Winchester
Millwood
Kernstown
White Post
Newtown
Middletown
Cedar Creek
Cedarville
Hupp's Hill
MANASSAS GAP
75 MILES TO
WASHINGTON
Front Royal
Strasburg
Three Top Mt.
Woodstock
North Fork Shenandoah
Massanutten Mt.
Mt. Jackson
New Market
Sparta
Melrose
South Fork Shenandoah
SWIFT RUN GAP
Harrisonburg
Mt. Crawford
Port Republic
Mt. Sidney

Self-Guided Tour

THE BATTLE OF CEDAR CREEK

Joseph W. A. Whitehorne

Center of Military History
United States Army
Washington, D.C., 1992

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Whitehorne, Joseph W.A., 1943–
The Battle of Cedar Creek : self-guided tour / Joseph W.A. Whitehorne.
p. cm.–(CMH pub ; 70-25)
"Updated and expanded reprint of a study originally published by the Wayside Museum of American History and Arts, Strasburg, Virginia"–Foreword.
Includes bibliographical references.
1. Cedar Creek, Battle of, 1864. 2. Shenandoah River Valley (Va. and W. Va.)–Description and travel–Guidebooks. I. Center of Military History. II. Title. III. Series.
E477.33.W48 1991
917.55'90443–dc20 90-25046
CIP

First Printing–CMH Pub 70-25

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C., 20402

Foreword

The staff ride has gained popularity in the U.S. Army in recent years as a tool for leader development. By retracing the course of a battle on the actual ground, military leaders and students deepen their knowledge of military operations and gain a better understanding of the vagaries and costs of war that form an important part of military planning.

Staff rides are a particularly appropriate teaching device in a period of prolonged peace when an increasing number of soldiers lack firsthand knowledge of battle. As General Carl E. Vuono, the chief of staff, recently put it, staff rides allow participants "not only to understand the realities of war, but also to improve their professional expertise and the readiness of their units." For these reasons, those of us concerned with military history education are redoubling our efforts to make available suitable materials to support and enrich staff rides.

The Battle of Cedar Creek has long been favored for staff rides. Although scarcely in a class with Antietam and Gettysburg or other greater Civil War clashes, it nevertheless continues to fascinate military analysts because its contained scope readily allows students to grasp important lessons in leadership, tactical planning, and the role of courage and military professionalism under fire. Cedar Creek is also accessible to many major military bases, and I strongly recommend soldiers, either in teacher-directed parties or privately after suitable background reading, to "do" Cedar Creek.

To support such initiatives, the Center is publishing this account of the battle, an updated and expanded reprint of a study originally published by the Wayside Museum of American History and Arts, Strasburg, Virginia. Although rewarding to any armchair scholar, this slim volume should add greatly to the education and enjoyment of any battlefield visitor.

Washington, D.C.
15 April 1991

HAROLD W. NELSON
Brigadier General, USA
Chief of Military History

Introduction

The last great battle of the Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia took place on 19 October 1864 along Cedar Creek between the towns of Strasburg and Middletown. It marked the end of Confederate power in the Valley, and its timing three weeks before the national elections unquestionably influenced the magnitude of President Lincoln's reelection. Despite this significance, the battle has been buried in the legend of Philip H. Sheridan's famous ride from Winchester and the controversy over *Jubal Early's* lost victory. The land over which the battle raged is still nearly the same as it was in 1864, yet few people visiting it are even aware that a battle took place. This work is intended to introduce the Battle of Cedar Creek to those not yet aware and help those already interested to better understand the history which took place over this quiet farmland.

Since the battlefield area still is largely in private hands, the tour has been designed to be taken by automobile, following public roads. It covers 12 locations important to understanding the essential aspects of the battle, plus 3 optional stops covering specific details. Although an exact chronological sequence is not possible, because of terrain and the complexity of the original events, the stops have been selected to help the visitor see the battle developing. The tour begins at Hupp's Hill on US 11, one mile north of Strasburg and one mile south of the I-81 interchange, and ends at the Lord Fairfax Community College north of Middletown. The complete tour, including optional stops, takes approximately 3-4 hours and covers about 20 miles.

Taking the tour is done at your own risk. Visitors should remain alert to the safety hazards posed by traffic and livestock. Field glasses would be useful at several stops, and the area provides many topics for photographers.

The following "Overview" of the battle should be read before taking the tour. Stops are keyed to the battlefield action described in the "Overview," and it is crucial to have read it before starting the tour. "CR" indicates County Road; "A" indicates optional stop. Names of Confederate personnel appear in italic type; Union personnel appear in regular type. Stop 1A may be visited at the end rather than the beginning of the tour to provide a more accurate tracing of the battle's sequence. Doing so involves additional time and a less convenient route, however.

Washington, D.C.
15 April 1991

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The Valley Campaign

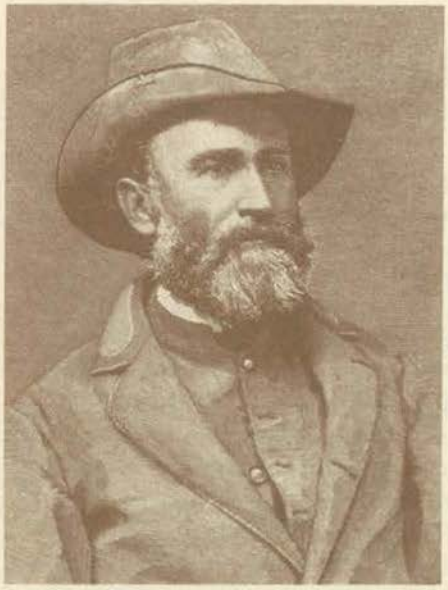
By 1864, Federal control of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia was viewed as necessary to a Union victory because of the Valley's configuration and its economic potential to the Confederate war effort. The Valley's alignment from southwest to northeast made it an excellent Confederate avenue of approach, threatening Federal resources in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and of course, Washington, D.C., itself. The excellent road system, including the hard-surface Valley Pike (US 11), allowed rapid movement into vulnerable Federal areas. The Valley had seen little warfare since General *Stonewall Jackson's* brilliant 1862 campaign had secured it as a supply base for the Confederates. The area had continued to produce a large portion of the food required by *Lee's* army in eastern Virginia as well as that needed in other parts of the Confederacy. Unfettered access to the Valley put the produce of nearby parts of Maryland and Pennsylvania within Confederate reach as well.

General Ulysses S. Grant therefore included the Valley as a part of his strategic planning for Federal forces in the spring of 1864. Operations there would protect the strategic flank of the Army of the Potomac as it operated against *Lee* in eastern Virginia while also making better use of the Federal troops scattered about the area. Success would end the Valley as a threat and would deny its resources to the hard-pressed *Lee*.

Grant's careful plans were thwarted by a Confederate victory at New Market on 15 May and the defeat of a second Federal force at Lynchburg on 18 June. Those reverses created the opportunity for General *Jubal Early*, who had rushed his corps to meet the Federal threat at Lynchburg, to go on the offensive. *Early's* famous raid on Washington climaxed with his withdrawal back into Virginia on 14 July. His spectacular enterprise had diverted the XIX (19th) Corps from joining Grant against *Lee* at Petersburg. A second corps, the VI (6th) had been pulled out of the Petersburg lines and rushed north to protect the Capital. These Federal units pursued *Early* as far as Snicker's Gap and then broke contact preparatory to rejoining Grant in eastern Virginia.

But the Federal forces remaining in the Valley were unable to contain *Early*. He defeated General George R. Crook at Kernstown in late July and went on a rampage against Federal logistics facilities in Martinsburg, W.Va., and along the Potomac River. On 30 August, Confederate cavalry destroyed part of Chambersburg, Pa., in retaliation for damage done by Federal troops in Lexington, Va., the previous June.

Early's dominance of the lower Valley was the last straw for Grant. In early August, he directed the consolidation of Federal forces in the Maryland, West Virginia, and northern Virginia areas into a new Middle Military Division and placed General Philip H. Sheridan in command. The VI and XIX Corps were returned to the Valley as part of this force. Units previously assigned to the area were consolidated into an VIII (8th) Corps. The local cavalry division was joined by two horse



Lieutenant General Jubal A. Early (1816-1894) commanded the Confederate army at Cedar Creek. He graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1837 and practiced law before entering Confederate service as a colonel, 24th Virginia Infantry, in April 1861. A division commander by 1862 and corps commander by 1864, Early was a superb, aggressive division commander. In corps command, however, he tended to commit assets piecemeal and never showed much understanding of the uses of cavalry. (Battles and Leaders, *Wood Print Collection*)

divisions from the Army of the Potomac to create a cavalry corps for this powerful new force. Sheridan was instructed by Grant to end Confederate military power in the Valley and to destroy the Valley as an economic asset: "It is desirable that nothing should be left to invite the enemy to return. Take all provisions, forage and stock . . . such as cannot be consumed, destroy . . . If the war is to last another year, we want the Shenandoah Valley to remain a barren waste."

Early and Sheridan sparred with each other for nearly a month. Sheridan was under orders to have no more disasters such as those experienced earlier in the year. At the same time, he labored under the assumption that *Early* enjoyed greater strength than he actually had. Ironically, *Early* was hampered by *Lee's* underestimation of Sheridan's strength, which resulted in *Lee's* recalling General *Joseph B. Kershaw's* Division to Richmond on 16 September after a month of no decision in the Valley. Sheridan immediately made his move and dealt *Early* a severe blow at the Third Battle of Winchester on 19 September. *Early* had become overconfident in the face of Sheridan's apparent lack of aggressiveness, and he deployed his divisions beyond easy supporting distance of each other. Caught off balance, they were hurt by the Federal infantry and finally broken by the hard-hitting Federal cavalry. Sheridan was a believer in the use of horse *en masse* to maximize its shock and mobility. *Early* quickly developed a respect verging on phobia for this powerful Federal arm.

Early's army was chased back to strong positions on Fisher's Hill, just south of Strasburg. Here the mountains close in to narrow the Valley to less than five miles. Unfortunately, *Early* did not have the manpower to hold the entire distance in strength. He extended his line westward with a thin band of dismounted cavalry. Sheridan noticed this and on 22 September sent the VIII Corps on a circuitous march which brought it in perpendicular to the Confederate flank while the rest of the Federal force made a strong demonstration on *Early's* front. The VIII Corps, again assisted



Major General Philip H. Sheridan (1831–1888), commander of the Federal forces at Cedar Creek, began the war as a first lieutenant in the infantry. Appointed Colonel, Second Michigan Cavalry, in May 1862, his brilliant performance led to command of a brigade and promotion within a month. In September 1862 he was given command of an infantry division. The performance of his tightly controlled and aggressive unit led to Sheridan's promotion to major general in December 1862. (Harper's Weekly, *Wood Print Collection*)

by the Federal cavalry, rolled up the Confederate flank. *Early* and his men were forced to retreat as far south as Harrisonburg, with Federal cavalry in pursuit most of the way.

At this point Sheridan, assuming that after two smashing defeats *Early's* army was no longer a factor, turned his energies to Grant's second directive—the destruction of the Shenandoah Valley. The orgy of destruction called "the burning" extended as far south as Staunton. The Federals then began a leisurely withdrawal northward down the Valley, and *Early* followed closely, reinforced again with *Kershaw's* Division and also with General *Thomas L. Rosser's* cavalry, the Laurel Brigade, sent from Richmond. On 9 October *Rosser* was beaten badly by Federal cavalry at Tom's Brook and forced to withdraw in great disarray. *Early*, never an admirer of cavalry, observed that "the laurel is a running vine." The Federals came to rest in positions on the north bank of Cedar Creek on 10 October.

Generals Grant and Sheridan had by then become engaged in a polite controversy over Sheridan's next move. Grant advocated Sheridan attacking south up the Valley to Lynchburg and then moving east to join the Army of the Potomac, destroying all railroads, canals, and so on as he went. Sheridan felt this proposal was logistically impossible. Instead, he urged going on the defensive in a position in the lower Valley sufficiently southward to protect Federal assets along the Potomac, then sending his surplus troops to Petersburg by way of Washington. As a result of these differences of opinion, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton called a conference in Washington. Sheridan, meanwhile, had already sent the surplus VI Corps overland by way of Ashby's Gap to begin the drawdown.

Unexpected Confederate activity caused Sheridan to change his plans, however. The Confederate force had arrived at Hupp's Hill, midway between Cedar Creek and Strasburg, on the morning of 13 October. *Early* immediately deployed in battle



Brigadier General George A. Custer (1839–1876), commanded the Third Cavalry Division at Cedar Creek (A. R. Waud, Wood Print Collection).

formation, and his artillery opened fire on Federals camped around Belle Grove Plantation. The First Division of Crook's VIII Corps crossed Cedar Creek and attacked toward the Confederate guns, becoming engaged in a sharp fight with *Kershaw's* Division. The Federals sustained over 200 casualties and a brigadier was mortally wounded, while the Confederates lost 75 men and had one brigadier severely wounded. (These badly mauled Federal troops would be the first to bear the brunt of *Early's* attack at the Battle of Cedar Creek.) Confederate cavalry also was in evidence on Sheridan's extreme western flank during this engagement. The revelation of *Early's* close presence in strength led the careful Sheridan to recall the VI Corps just as it was reaching Ashby's Gap. *Early* pulled back to Fisher's Hill but continued to make aggressive reconnaissances forward to Hupp's Hill to observe Federal activity and to probe for weaknesses.

Chronology

1864

Feb *Breckinridge* takes command of Confederate Western Department of Virginia

Mar Grant develops Federal strategy to exert pressure & mass at all points

Apr *Breckinridge* assembles 9,000 troops to confront Federal threat in Valley

30 Federals under Sigel advance south from Martinsburg

May

1 Federals occupy Winchester

11 Federals camp at Cedar Creek

15 *Breckinridge* defeats Sigel at **Battle of New Market**

16 Sigel retreats to Cedar Creek

17 *Breckinridge's* force entrained for *Lee's* army

19 Sigel relieved, given local command at Harper's Ferry

21 Hunter takes command of Federals at Cedar Creek

26 Hunter begins advance southward

June

2 Federals reach Harrisonburg

5 Hunter defeats *Jones* at **Battle of Piedmont**

6 Hunter occupies Staunton

7 *Breckinridge* & two brigades ordered to Lynchburg from Richmond

11 Hunter sacks Lexington

13 *Early's* Corps ordered to Valley

17 Corps begins arriving in Lynchburg; *Breckinridge* places himself under *Early's* command

18 Hunter defeated at **Battle of Lynchburg**

27 *Early* reorganizes & moves down Valley

July

2 *Early's* forces reach Winchester

3-4 *Early* bypasses Harper's Ferry garrison; crosses Potomac at Shepherdstown

5 Grant sends Ricketts' Division, VI Corps to Washington

8 *Early* reaches Frederick, MD

9 *Early* defeats Wallace at **Battle of Monocacy**

11 *Early* reaches Silver Spring, MD; VI Corps occupies Washington defenses; First Division, XIX Corps, en route to Petersburg from New Orleans, diverted to Washington

12 Skirmishing at Fort Stevens, DC; *Early* makes night withdrawal

14 *Early* crosses Potomac at White's Ferry, VA

19 VI Corps under Wright engages *Early* at Snicker's Gap; Federals joined by Crook of Hunter's command

20 Federal cavalry under Averell defeats *Ramseur* at Winchester

20-23 VI Corps returns to Washington

22 Federals enter Winchester

23-24 *Early* defeats Crook at **Battle of Kernstown**, advances & wrecks Martinsburg railyards

30 Confederate cavalry burns Chambersburg, PA

Aug

7 Federal Middle Military Division created under Sheridan to coordinate against *Early;* composed of VI Corps (Wright), VIII Corps (Crook), XIX Corps (Emory), Cavalry Corps (Averell, later Torbert)

15 *Early* reinforced with *Kershaw's* Infantry, *Fitzhugh Lee's* Cavalry Divisions

10 Tentative maneuvering until . . .

Sept

16 *Kershaw's* Division starts to return to *Lee's* army

17 Grant visits Sheridan at Charlestown, WV, tells him to "Go in!"

19 Sheridan defeats *Early* at **Third Battle of Winchester, or Opequon**; *Early* retreats to Fisher's Hill

20 Sheridan follows to Strasburg

21 *Breckinridge* ordered to southwest VA

22 *Early* defeated at **Battle of Fisher's Hill** & pursued to Harrisonburg; Sheridan begins "Burning" as far south as Staunton

24 *Kershaw's* Division rejoins *Early*, having gotten as far east as Gordonsville

Oct

6 Federals begin withdrawing north, followed by *Early*

9 Confederate cavalry defeated at **Battle of Tom's Brook**

10 Federals camp at Cedar Creek

12 VI Corps released to Grant's army, gets to Ashby's Gap & is recalled

13 *Early* closes to Fisher's Hill; heavy skirmish forward to Hupp's Hill

14 VI Corps closes into Cedar Creek camp

16 Sheridan departs for conference in Washington; *Early's* false message intercepted, Cavalry Corps sent back to Cedar Creek; cavalry skirmish west of camp

17 *Gordon's* Division makes second combat reconnaissance to Hupp's Hill; Sheridan departs Washington



Prelude to Battle

Sheridan's forces had established themselves on both sides of the Valley Pike north of Cedar Creek. Their eastern flank was about 1300 yards from Cedar Creek's confluence with the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. The area east of the Pike was occupied by the VIII Corps. Its First Division was posted considerably forward on a hill almost due east of Hupp's Hill, overlooking the Bowman's Mill Ford across Cedar Creek on the high ground now traced by CR 635. The division entrenched itself on these heights along with three batteries of artillery. Batteries B of the Fifth U.S. and D of the First Pennsylvania, with six guns each, were 400 yards apart on a tongue of land overlooking Bowman's Mill Ford. Battery L, First Ohio Artillery was farther northwest with four guns in a position overlooking the Cedar Creek Bridge and the Pike, now bounded by US 11 and I-81. The Second Division of the VIII Corps, located about 1300 yards to the north in open camp approximately where the Interstate goes over CR 840, was beginning to prepare earthworks south and eastward of its campsite, but they would not be ready in time for the coming battle.

The XIX Corps was entrenched on the west side of the Valley Pike. Its eastern flank was anchored on the Pike overlooking Cedar Creek Bridge beginning where the 128th New York monument now stands. This position was occupied by the corps' Second Division and was further supported by a large portion of the corps artillery. An artillery strong point was set up on the corps' west flank in the First Division area on the high ground immediately southeast of where the Meadow Mills railway trestle now is. This position dominated Cedar Creek and Meadow Brook, a stream flowing parallel to the Pike from north of Middletown and emptying into Cedar Creek. The corps' camps occupied an open, rolling area north of its positions extending almost to Belle Grove Plantation.

The VI Corps went into bivouac west of Meadow Brook when it returned on the 14th. The Third Division overlooked the stream and was oriented southward toward Cedar Creek. The First Division occupied Red Hill farther west while the Second Division was in camp north and east of Red Hill and the modern quarry. The corps' trains (support services units) were on the area between Red Hill and Meadow Brook roughly on a line with Belle Grove and parallel to modern CR 624. The corps was not entrenched at all. By 16 October General Wesley Merritt's Cavalry Division was in bivouac about a mile northwest of Red Hill near Nieswander's Fort, while General George A. Custer's Cavalry Division patrolled possible Cedar Creek crossings on the west side of the Valley in the vicinity of Hite's Chapel, two or more miles beyond.

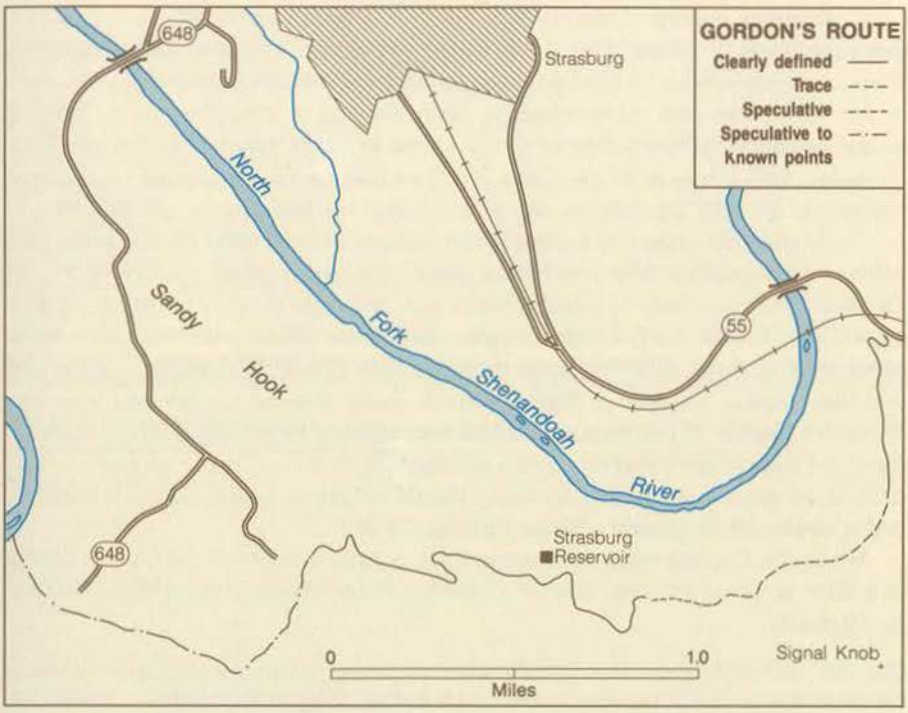
The Federals were secure in these positions, feeling that *Early* was too outnumbered to do anything other than harass them. However, evidence that the Confederate commander may have been considering something major continued to accumulate. On 16 October, Sheridan left for Washington and the conference with Stanton, taking the Cavalry Corps with him as far as Front Royal. He intended to send it on a raid to destroy railroads around Charlottesville. But at Front Royal he



Major General John B. Gordon (1832-1904) held temporary command of the left flank corps at Cedar Creek in addition to commanding his division. A Georgia lawyer and businessman, Gordan had no military experience until entering Confederate service as captain of a local infantry company. He served as regimental commander at Antietam (1862), brigade and division commander in 1863, and corps commander by the end of 1864. Aggressive and dynamic, he earned his troops' devotion with his willingness to take personal and tactical risks resulting in success. (Battles and Leaders, *Wood Print Collection)*

received information from the acting army commander, General Horatio G. Wright, that a Confederate wigwag message had been intercepted indicating the arrival of reinforcements for *Early*, led by General *James Longstreet*. Sheridan suspected a ruse. But true or not, he reasoned that the sending of the message in itself behooved return of the Cavalry Corps to the Cedar Creek camp. The message was actually false, sent by *Early* in the hopes that it would cause Sheridan to pull farther north. Instead it had the opposite effect. The cavalry returned to be placed entirely on the west side of the Valley by Wright, who was most concerned about a likely attack there. This left one cavalry brigade at Buckton's Ford about two miles east of the VIII Corps and another even farther east near Front Royal. In keeping with Sheridan's concept, the cavalry was concentrated to be used *en masse*. Divisions and corps were expected to provide their own local security and to send out distant pickets. This had not been the custom in Crook's corps, and the requirement for distant security posts was largely ignored. As a result, it was particularly vulnerable to attack.

By 17 October, *Early* had reached the point where he had to attack or retreat. The devastation of the Valley made it impossible for him to remain on Fisher's Hill and to sustain his army. His reconnaissances had shown that an attack down the Pike or on the west side of the Valley would have little chance of success. This left the rougher east side which looked so unpromising that the Federals seemed to rely on the terrain alone as their best defense. General *John B. Gordon* and *Early's* topographer, Captain *Jed Hotchkiss*, climbed to a signal station on the top of Three Top, or Massanutten, Mountain to examine the Federal positions. From there, they had a panoramic view of Sheridan's whole camp. In this pre-camouflage era every position, every gun was clearly visible from the Confederate aerie. *Gordon* said he could even see the color of the piping on the soldiers' jackets and the sores on horses' backs. Thus equipped with detailed information on the Federal dispositions, *Gordon* and *Hotchkiss* concocted a plan of attack against Sheridan's weak eastern flank.



Early approved the plan, despite its high risk, as still being promising and feasible with the veteran troops and leaders he had on hand. At its simplest, it was a night attack with four converging columns. *Gordon* and *Hotchkiss* had found a small trail passable to infantry south of the North Fork of the Shenandoah at the base of Three-Top Mountain. At their urging, *Early* decided to send *Gordon's,* General *Stephen D. Ramseur's* and General *John Pegram's* Divisions, all under *Gordon's* command, along this trail to Bowman's and McInturff's Fords across the Shenandoah. Once across, a hike of a mile would get them about a thousand yards to the east of the Second Division, VIII Corps flank. General *Gabriel C. Wharton's* and *Kershaw's* Divisions were to move up to Hupp's Hill and wait until *Gordon's* attack made it feasible to cross Cedar Creek. *Rosser* was to attack the Federal cavalry in the vicinity of Cupp's Ford on the west side of the Valley. A small brigade of cavalry under General *William H. F. Payne,* already patrolling the area to be traversed by *Gordon's* men, was to go with *Gordon.* Its mission was to raid Belle Grove, known to be Sheridan's headquarters, and to capture the Federal commander. (*Early* obviously was unaware of Sheridan's absence in Washington.) A larger cavalry force under General *Lunsford L. Lomax* was to push up the Front Royal-Winchester Road (US 340) to somewhere in the vicinity of Newtown (Stephen's City) and then to interdict Federal trains and any withdrawal. The Confederate artillery, led by Colonel *Thomas H. Carter,* was to stand by on the Pike between Fisher's Hill and Strasburg until the battle opened, then move forward. It was feared that otherwise the sound of its wheels on the macadamized highway would give the whole attack away.

Confederate engineers immediately began to improve and mark the route *Gordon's* force was to follow. One modification to the plan of attack was made when General *Pegram* returned from a reconnaissance and reported more entrenchments in the VIII Corps area. Consequently, *Early* decided to send *Kershaw's* Division to the Bowman's Mill crossing of Cedar Creek to attack the positions of the First Division, VIII Corps head on. Since *Kershaw* had no time to reconnoiter, *Early* planned to go with the column and give *Kershaw* instructions on the ground.

Early gave his orders at a commander's conference at 1400 on the 18th. The officers synchronized their watches in order to meet the attack hour of 0500, 19 October 1864, as closely as possible. Although risky, the scheme of maneuver was a good one. It gave *Early's* outnumbered attackers the opportunity to achieve local superiority of mass, allowing them to defeat their enemy in detail in conjunction with the surprise intrinsic to their approach. *Early* succinctly explained the need for such a gamble: "I can only say we had been fighting large odds during the whole war, and I knew there was no chance of lessening them. . . . General *Lee* . . . expressed an earnest desire that a victory should be gained in the Valley if possible and it could not be gained without fighting for it."

While the Confederates made their final preparations, the Federals continued in a false sense of security. One of Custer's cavalry officers remembered the day nostalgically:

> The 18th of October in the Shenandoah Valley was such a day as few have seen who have not spent an autumn in Virginia; crisp and bright and still in the morning; mellow and golden and still at noon; crimson and glorious and still at the sun setting; just blue enough in the distance to soften without obscuring the outline of the mountains, just hazy enough to render the atmosphere visible without limiting the range of sight. As evening closed above the Valley, the soft pleadings of some homesick soldier's flute floated out through the quiet camp, while around a blazing campfire an impromptu glee club of Ohio boys lightened the hour and their own hearts by singing the songs of home.



Order of Battle

Union Army: Army of the Shenandoah
Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan/Maj. Gen. Horatio G. Wright

VI (6th) Army Corps
Brig. Gen. James B. Ricketts

1st Division—Brig. Gen. Frank Wheaton
1st Brigade—Col. William H. Penrose
4th New Jersey Infantry
10th New Jersey Infantry
15th New Jersey Infantry
2d Brigade—Col. Ranald S. MacKenzie
2d Connecticut Heavy Artillery
65th New York Infantry
121st New York Infantry
95th Pennsylvania Infantry
96th Pennsylvania Infantry
3d Brigade—not engaged
2d Division—Brig. Gen. George W. Getty
1st Brigade—Col. James M. Warner
62d New York Infantry
93d Pennsylvania Infantry
98th Pennsylvania Infantry
102d Pennsylvania Infantry
139th Pennsylvania Infantry
2d Brigade—Brig. Gen. Lewis A. Grant
2d Vermont Infantry
3d Vermont Infantry
4th Vermont Infantry
6th Vermont Infantry
11th Vermont Heavy Artillery
3d Brigade—Brig. Gen. Daniel D. Bidwell
1st Maine Infantry
43d New York Infantry
49th New York Infantry
77th New York Infantry
122d New York Infantry
61st Pennsylvania Infantry
3d Division—Col. J. Warren Keifer
1st Brigade—Col. William Emerson
14th New Jersey Infantry
106th New York Infantry
151st New York Infantry
184th New York Infantry
87th Pennsylvania Infantry
10th Vermont Infantry
2d Brigade—Col. William H. Ball
6th Maryland Infantry
9th New York Heavy Artillery
110th Ohio Infantry
122d Ohio Infantry
126th Ohio Infantry
67th Pennsylvania Infantry
138th Pennsylvania Infantry
Artillery Brigade, VI Corps—Col. Charles Thompkins
5th Maine Artillery
1st New York Artillery
Batteries C & G, 1st Rhode Island Artillery
Battery M, 5th U.S. Artillery

VIII (8th) Army Corps (Army of West Virginia)
Brig. Gen. George Crook

1st Division—Col. Joseph Thoburn
1st Brigade—Lt. Col. Thomas F. Wildes
34th Massachusetts Infantry
5th New York Heavy Artillery
116th Ohio Infantry
123d Ohio Infantry
2d Brigade—not engaged
3d Brigade—Col. Thomas M. Harris
23d Illinois Infantry
54th Pennsylvania Infantry
10th West Virginia Infantry
11th West Virginia Infantry
15th West Virginia Infantry
2d Division—Col. Rutherford B. Hayes
1st Brigade—Col. Hiram F. Duval
23d Ohio Infantry
36th Ohio Infantry
5th West Virginia Infantry
13th West Virginia Infantry
2d Brigade—Lt. Col. Benjamin F. Coates
34th Ohio Infantry
91st Ohio Infantry
9th West Virginia Infantry
114th West Virginia Infantry
Artillery Brigade, VIII Corps—Capt. Henry A. DuPont
Battery L, 1st Ohio Artillery
Battery D, 1st Pennsylvania Artillery
Battery B, 5th U.S. Artillery
Provisional Division—Col. J. Howard Kitching
6th New York Heavy Artillery
Miscellaneous Elements

Various manpower practices plus battle losses make it extremely difficult to calculate strength

accurately by unit designation alone. Volunteer infantry regiments were composed of ten companies, each authorized a maximum of 101 officers and men. With staff included, a full regiment would have numbered about 1,025 officers and men. Regular U.S. Army infantry regiments were organized into three battalions of three companies each and Federal heavy artillery regiments converted to infantry had three four-company battalions. As a result, they were slightly larger than the volunteer regiments.

Four or five regiments were assigned to a brigade. Normally three, sometimes four, brigades composed a division. Two or three divisions were the normal allocations to a corps. By 1864 the average Federal brigade contained about 2,000 men while its Confederate counterpart was down to about 1,800 men. Regiments sometimes had as few as 200 men, and companies with 30 or fewer men were not uncommon.

XIX (19th) Army Corps
Brig. Gen. William H. Emory

1st Division—Brig. Gen. James W. McMillan
1st Brigade—Col. Edwin P. Davis
29th Maine Infantry
30th Massachusetts Infantry
90th New York Infantry
114th New York Infantry
116th New York Infantry
153d New York Infantry
2d Brigade—Col. Stephen Thomas
12th Connecticut Infantry
160th New York Infantry
47th Pennsylvania Infantry
8th Vermont Infantry
3d Brigade—not engaged
Division Artillery
5th New York Artillery
2d Division—Brig. Gen. Cuvier Grover
1st Brigade—Brig. Gen. Henry W. Birge
9th Connecticut Infantry
12th Maine Infantry
14th Maine Infantry
26th Massachusetts Infantry
114th New Hampshire Infantry
75th New York Infantry
2d Brigade—Col. Edward L. Molineux
13th Connecticut Infantry
3d Massachusetts Cavalry (dismounted)
11th Indiana Infantry
22d Iowa Infantry
131st New York Infantry
159th New York Infantry
3d Brigade—Col. Daniel Macauley
38th Massachusetts Infantry
128th New York Infantry
156th New York Infantry
175th New York Infantry
176th New York Infantry
4th Brigade—Col. David Shunk
8th Indiana Infantry
18th Indiana Infantry
24th Iowa Infantry
28th Iowa Infantry
Division Artillery—Maj. Albert W. Bradbury
1st Battery, Maine Light Artillery
Battery D, 1st Rhode Island Light Artillery
17th Battery, Indiana Light Artillery

Union Army:	Infantry	Artillery	Guns
VI Corps	8,506	600	24
VIII Corps	4,000	200	16
XIX Corps	8,748	414	20
Kitching	1,000	–	–
	22,254	1,214	60
Cavalry	7,500	642	30
		1,856	90
Artillery	1,856		
Total Effectives	31,610		

Cavalry Corps
Maj. Gen. Alfred T. A. Torbert

1st Division—Brig. Gen. Wesley Merritt
1st Brigade—Col. James H. Kidd
1st Michigan Cavalry
5th Michigan Cavalry
6th Michigan Cavalry
7th Michigan Cavalry
6th New York Battery
2d Brigade—Brig. Gen. Thomas C. Devin
4th New York Cavalry (Headquarters Guard)
6th New York Cavalry
9th New York Cavalry
19th New York Cavalry
Batteries K & L, 5th U.S. Artillery
Reserve Brigade—Lt. Col. Casper Crowninshield
2d Massachusetts Cavalry
6th Pennsylvania Cavalry (Army Headquarters)
1st U.S. Cavalry
2d U.S. Cavalry
5th U.S. Cavalry
Division Artillery
6th Battery, New York Light Artillery
Batteries C & E, 4th U.S. Artillery
2d Division—Col. William H. Powell
1st Brigade—Col. Alpheus S. Moore

22d Pennsylvania Cavalry
2d Brigade—Col. Henry Capehart
1st New York Cavalry
1st West Virginia Cavalry
2d West Virginia Cavalry
3d West Virginia Cavalry
Division Artillery
Battery L, 5th U.S. Artillery
3d Division—Brig. Gen. George A. Custer
1st Brigade—Col. Alexander C. M. Pennington, Jr.
1st Connecticut Cavalry
3d New Jersey Cavalry
2d New York Cavalry
5th New York Cavalry
2d Ohio Cavalry
18th Pennsylvania Cavalry
2d Brigade—Col. William Wells
3d Indiana Cavalry
1st New Hampshire Cavalry
8th New York Cavalry
22d New York Cavalry
1st Vermont Cavalry
Horse Artillery
Batteries B & L, 2d U.S. Artillery
Batteries C, F & K, 2d U.S. Artillery

Confederate Army
Lt. Gen. Jubal A. Early

Ramseur's Division
Maj. Gen. Stephen D. Ramseur
Battle's Brigade—Brig. Gen. Cullen A.
Battle & Lt. Col. E. LaFayette Hobson
3d Alabama
5th Alabama
6th Alabama
12th Alabama
61st Alabama
Grimes' Brigade—Brig. Gen. Bryan Grimes
32d North Carolina
53d North Carolina
2d North Carolina Battalion
43d North Carlina
45th North Carolina
Cook's Brigade—Brig. Gen. Philip Cook
4th Georgia
12th Georgia
21st Georgia
44th Georgia
Cox's Brigade—Brig. Gen. William R. Cox
1st North Carolina
2d North Carolina
3d North Carolina
4th North Carolina
14th North Carolina
30th North Carolina
Kershaw's Division
Maj. Gen. Joseph B. Kershaw
Kershaw's Brigade—Brig. Gen. James Conner
2d South Carolina
3d South Carolina
7th South Carolina
8th South Carolina
15th South Carolina
20th South Carolina
30th South Carolina Battalion
Humphreys' Brigade—Brig. Gen. Benjamin G. Humphreys
13th Mississippi
17th Mississippi
18th Mississippi
21st Mississippi
Wofford's Brigade—Col. Henry P. Sanders
16th Georgia
18th Georgia
24th Georgia
3d Georgia Battalion
Cobb's (Georgia) Legion
Phillip's (Georgia) Legion
Bryan's Brigade—Col. James P. Simms
10th Georgia
50th Georgia
51st Georgia
53d Georgia
Pegram's (Early's) Division
Brig. Gen. John Pegram
Pegram's Brigade—Col. John S. Hoffman
13th Virginia
31st Virginia
49th Virginia
52d Virginia
58th Virginia
Johnston's Brigade—Brig. Gen. Robert D. Johnston
5th North Carolina
12th North Carolina
20th North Carolina
23d North Carolina
1st North Carolina Battalion Sharpshooters
Godwin's Brigade—Lt. Col. William T. Davis
6th North Carolina
21st North Carolina
54th North Carolina
57th North Carolina
Gordon's Division
Maj. Gen. John B. Gordon
Evan's Brigade—Col. Edmund N. Atkinson
13th Georgia
26th Georgia
31st Georgia

38th Georgia
60th Georgia
61st Georgia
12th Georgia Battalion
Hays' Brigade—Col. William Monaghan
5th Louisiana
6th Louisiana
7th Louisiana
8th Louisiana
9th Louisiana
Stafford's Brigade—Col. Eugene Waggaman
1st Louisiana
2d Louisiana
10th Louisiana
14th Louisiana
15th Louisiana
Terry's Brigade—Brig. Gen. William Terry
Remnants 2d, 4th, 5th, 10th, 21st, 23d, 25th, 27th, 33d, 37th, 42d, 44th, 48th, 50th Virginia Regiments

Wharton's Division
Brig. Gen. Gabriel C. Wharton
Wharton's Brigade—Capt. R. H. Logan
45th Virginia
50th Virginia
51st Virginia
30th Virginia Battalion Sharpshooters
Echol's Brigade—Capt. Edmund S. Read
22d Virginia
23d Virginia
26th Virginia Battalion
Smith's Brigade—Col. Thomas Smith
36th Virginia
60th Virginia
45th Virginia Battalion
Thomas's Legion

Cavalry

Lomax's Division
Maj. Gen. Lunsford L. Lomax
Imboden's Brigade—Col. George H. Smith
18th Virginia
23d Virginia
62d Virginia Mtd. Inf.
Johnson's Brigade—Brig. Gen. Bradley T. Johnson
8th Virginia
21st Virginia
22d Virginia
34th Virginia Battalion
36th Virginia Battalion
McCausland's Brigade—Brig. Gen. John McCausland
14th Virginia
16th Virginia
17th Virginia
25th Virginia Battalion
37th Virginia Battalion
Jackson's Brigade—Brig. Gen. Henry B. Davidson
2d Maryland
19th Virginia
20th Virginia
46th Virginia Battalion
47th Virginia Battalion
Rosser's (Fitz Lee's) Division
Maj. Gen. Thomas L. Rosser
Wickham's Brigade—Brig. Gen. William C. Wickham
1st Virginia
2d Virginia
3d Virginia
4th Virginia
Payne's Brigade—Brig. Gen. William H. F. Payne
5th Virginia
6th Virginia
15th Virginia
Rosser's Brigade—Col. R. H. Dulany
7th Virginia
11th Virginia
12th Virginia
35th Virginia Battalion

Artillery
Col. Thomas H. Carter

Braxton's Brigade—Lt. Col. Carter M. Braxton
Virginia Battery (Carpenter's)
Virginia Battery (Hardwicke's)
Virginia Battery (Cooper's)
Cutshaw's Battalion—Maj. William Cutshaw
Virginia Battery (Carrington's)
Virginia Battery (Tanner's)
Virginia Battery (Garber's)
King's Battalion—Lt. Col. J. Floyd King
Virginia Battery (Bryan's)
Virginia Battery (Chapman's)
Virginia Battery (Lowry's)
Carter's Battalion—Lt. Col. Thomas H. Carter
Alabama Battery (Reese's)
Virginia Battery (W. P. Carter's)
Virginia Battery (Pendleton's)
Virginia Battery (Fry's)
Nelson's Battalion—Lt. Col. William Nelson
Georgia Battery (Milledge's)
Virginia Battery (Kirkpatrick's)
Virginia Battery (Massie's)
Horse Artillery
Maryland Battery (Griffin's)
Virginia Battery (Jackson's)
Virginia Battery (Lurty's)
Virginia Battery (McClanahan's)
Virginia Battery (Johnston's)

Virginia Battery (Shoemaker's)
Virginia Battery (Thompson's)

Confederate Army:	Infantry	Artillery	Guns
Per field inspection reports 10/31/1864:			
Ramseur	2,442	–	–
Pegram	2,013	–	–
Gordon	2,227	–	–
Kershaw	3,071	–	–
Wharton	1,421	–	–
	11,174	1,101	40+

Cedar Creek Losses	3,500	–	–
	14,674	–	–
Cavalry	5,327	–	–
Lomax ... 3,121		–	–
Rosser ... 2,206		–	–
Artillery	1,101	–	–
Total Effectives	21,102*	–	–

*No official report is available; Confederate strength has been estimated as low as 12,780 infantry and artillery plus 2,900 cavalry for a total of 15,680.



The Battle

The next day's encounter, known to history as the Battle of Cedar Creek, was characterized by complex maneuvers and fighting over the same areas at several different times. Combatants on both sides experienced a high level of confusion. Although this lack of order within the battle can make it difficult to follow the sequence of events in an orderly manner, the fight may be viewed most simply in four phases: I. The Confederate approach and surprise attack in the early morning; II. A stiffening Federal defense; III. A lull during which each side reorganized; IV. The Federal counterattack in the late afternoon which routed the Confederate forces and returned the Federals to their morning positions.

PHASE I

The beautiful weather prevailed during the night, allowing *Early's* forces to get into position with the help of a bright moon just past full. The chances of surprise were enhanced further with a heavy ground fog which developed about 0400 after the units had gotten to their attack positions. *Gordon's* column, with the longest way to go, left as soon as it got dark, about 2000. The men left behind anything that rattled or clanked, such as their canteens, so as to assure silence on the march. The column halted and closed up a few times; the longest pause being at 0100 where the railroad crossed the Shenandoah east of Strasburg. At about that time, *Wharton* and *Kershaw* began moving. *Early* accompanied *Kershaw* to Cedar Creek, pointed out the campfires of the Federal positions, and explained how he wanted the attack made. *Wharton* continued down the Valley Pike to Hupp's Hill. All of the infantry units were in position by 0330. *Rosser* left about that hour to reach his position just before daybreak. Some of his men skirmished briefly with Custer's vedettes (sentinels) at about 0400, causing a few men in the VI Corps to wake up and roll over in their blankets, nothing more.

Kershaw's men waded across Cedar Creek unopposed at 0430, formed in a line of brigades, and eased so close to the Federals that they could hear the early risers talking to each other in their tents. *Gordon's* corps crossed at the same time, exchanging a few shots with some surprised pickets, but causing no alarm. The head of his column then began moving up a lane to its attack positions. The size of the force meant that *Pegram's* people, the last to get across, were still coming up at about 0510 when *Gordon* began to advance.

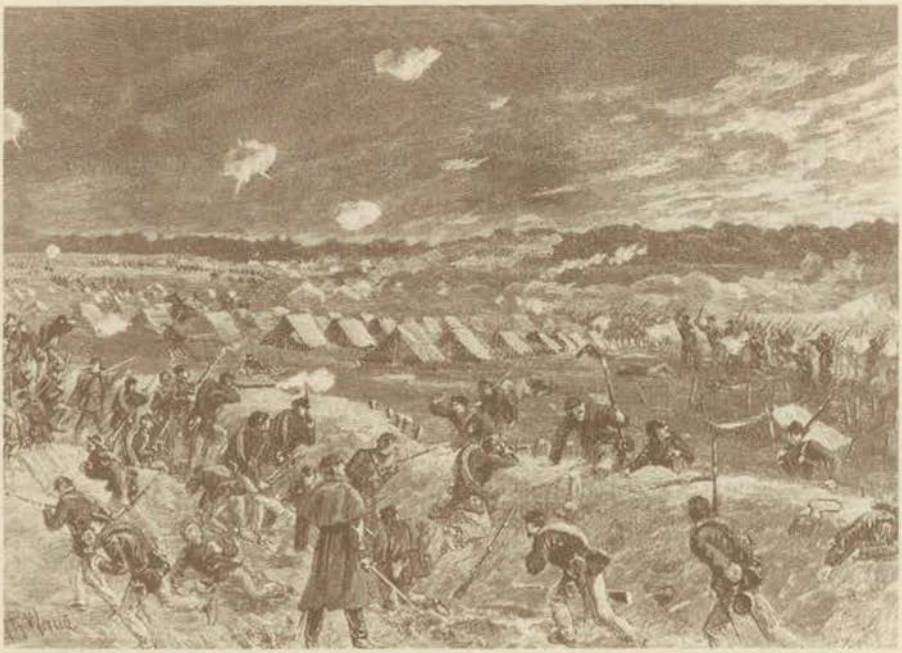
The attack opened at 0500 when *Kershaw's* Division rose up, delivered a thundering volley, and rushed the trenches of Colonel Joseph Thoburn's First Division, VIII Corps. One brigade dissolved in minutes as dazed, half-dressed men ran for safety. One Southerner said the scene gave a new meaning to the word panic. The First Brigade of the division, called under arms by its alert brigadier, Colonel Thomas Wildes, minutes before the assault, fought briefly in its position. Then two of its three regiments successfully delayed rearward, fighting for nearly half an hour until they reached the Pike. A few minutes after *Kershaw's* attack, *Gordon's* corps



"Suddenly a mass of rebels confronted the flags, and with hoarse shouts demanded their surrender. Defiant shouts went back. "Never!" "Never!" A rebel soldier then levelled his musket and shot Corporal Petre, who held the colors. He cried out: "Boys, leave me; take care of yourselves and the flag!" But in that vortex of hell men did not forget the colors; and as Petre fell and crawled away to die, they were instantly seized and borne aloft by Corporal Perham, and were as quickly demanded again." (George H. Carpenter, 8th Vermont)

smashed into Colonel Rutherford B. Hayes' Second Division, VIII Corps which desperately resisted for a few minutes. Then, while a small group remained and delayed courageously, many of its men fled to the rear. As soon as *Wharton* heard *Kershaw's* attack, he closed up to the Cedar Creek bridge. However, he could go no farther until the XIX Corps units guarding it could be dislodged. *Early* joined him at about 0515, coming over from *Kershaw's* position. The Confederate artillery raced forward to Hupp's Hill, going into battery against the XIX Corps by about 0520. The final blows to the VIII Corps were delivered by seven of their own guns which were captured during *Kershaw's* first rush. Heroic efforts on the part of the Federal gunners saved the other nine.

By this time, about 0535, the XIX Corps Commander, General William H. Emory, and his subordinates were aware that they had been flanked by *Gordon.* VIII Corps fugitives began to come across the Pike and the sounds of combat could be heard drawing nearer rapidly. General Emory began to reorient his line to meet *Gordon's* threat. In doing this, he had to remove the covering units he had in the Cedar Creek bridge area, thus allowing *Wharton* to come over and support the battle. One brigade of the Second Division had been standing to arms preparatory to going on a reconnaissance. It and other elements of the Second Division attempted to shift to their left and north to form a line parallel to the Pike to meet *Gordon.* The First Division stayed in position but thinned its line to allow two brigades to move in the direction of the fight. When Wildes' battered First Brigade of the First Division, VIII Corps emerged from the maelstrom, he reported the situation to Emory and to General Wright, the acting army commander, who had rushed to the scene. General Emory ordered Wildes to attack into the fray again in order to buy time for the shifting corps units. The brave little unit turned back and fought stubbornly for a few more minutes before being pushed back again. General Wright had gone



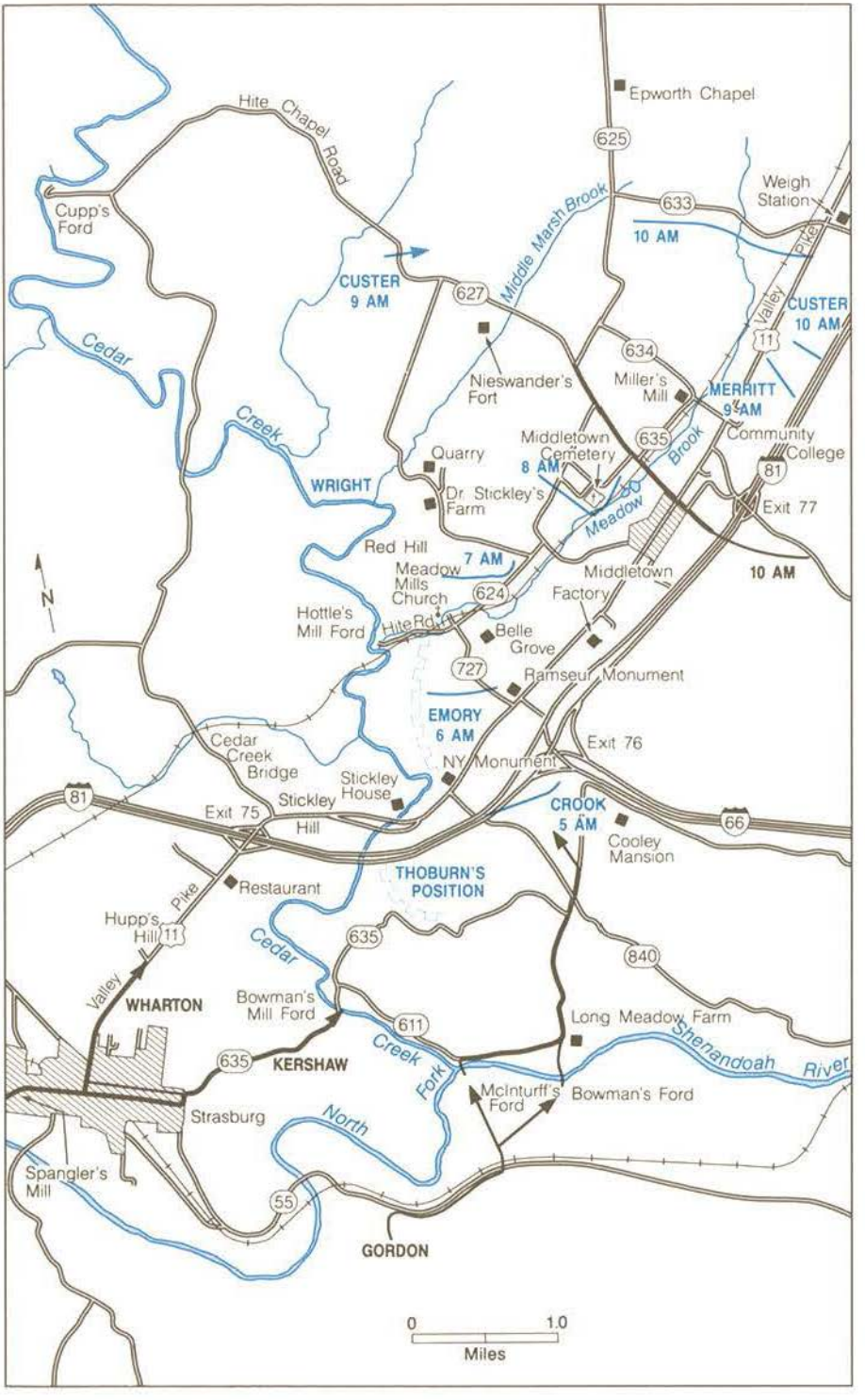
"Over the works, cross over," came the Confederate command. (A. R. Waud, Wood Print Collection)

in with them and received a painful wound in the chin which matted his beard with gore for the rest of the action.

In the meantime, Colonel Stephen Thomas's brigade from the First Division, XIX Corps, made a similar sacrifice play several hundred yards farther up the Pike. There, about 200 yards east of the road it engaged in a brutal brawl for about half an hour before it, too, had to pull back. By this time, most of the XIX Corps, Second Division had withdrawn through the thin line formed by its sister unit. The Confederate onslaught pressed the Federals back to positions centered around Belle Grove, where mixed VIII and XIX Corps elements bought another half hour. Their stand allowed most of the headquarters units and trains to load up and withdraw. Even more importantly, their efforts gave the three-division VI Corps time to get organized for the attacking wave headed its way.

PHASE II

General James B. Ricketts' VI Corps units were able to break camp and to get into line of battle before they became seriously engaged. The Third Division, under General Joseph W. Keifer, established a line oriented toward Cedar Creek. Its easternmost brigade actually advanced farther southeastward to the right flank positions of the XIX Corps. However, the flow of the XIX Corps troops withdrawing made it impossible to hold a line and the brigade withdrew to its original position just west of Meadow Brook. The XIX Corps elements, mostly First Division, reorganized on Red Hill and extended the Third Division lines westward in conjunction with Merritt's cavalry which had come forward to help. It was well they did, as by about


Epworth Chapel
Hite Chapel Road
625
Weigh Station
Cupp's Ford
633
10 AM
Middle Marsh Brook
CUSTER 9 AM
627
Valley Pike
CUSTER 10 AM
11
Cedar
Creek
634
Nieswander's Fort
Miller's Mill
MERRITT 9 AM
635
Middletown Cemetery
Community College
Quarry
8 AM
Brook
WRIGHT
Dr. Stickley's Farm
Meadow
81
Exit 77
Red Hill
7 AM
Middletown
10 AM
Meadow Mills Church
624
Factory
N
Hottle's Mill Ford
Hite Rd
Belle Grove
727
Ramseur Monument
EMORY 6 AM
Exit 76
Cedar Creek Bridge
NY Monument
Stickley House
81
Exit 75
Stickley Hill
CROOK 5 AM
66
Cooley Mansion
Restaurant
THOBURN'S POSITION
Hupp's Hill
Pike
11
635
840
Cedar
Valley
WHARTON
Bowman's Mill Ford
611
Long Meadow Farm
Shenandoah River
635
KERSHAW
Fork
McInturff's Ford
Bowman's Ford
Strasburg
North
Spangler's Mill
55
GORDON
0
1.0
Miles

0715 this whole line was engaged in fierce fighting with *Kershaw's* Division. Contact was lost with the rest of the corps but the Third Division retained its integrity in a swirling struggle which gradually forced it back.

The First Division of the VI Corps, led by General Frank Wheaton, had a similar experience just north of its sister unit. It moved first to a position on high ground just east of Meadow Brook looking toward Belle Grove. But it soon was forced back by *Gordon's* assaulting force to a line on the high ground west of the brook. By this time, between 0730–0800, the fog began to burn off and the Federal soldiers at last began to see their attackers. The First Division slowly withdrew from this high ground position to link with the Third Division about a mile to the northwest. From this position the two units reorganized and established a tenuous link with the Second Division of the corps which in the meantime had waged a magnificent fight closer to the Pike.

The Second Division had been in the northernmost bivouac site when the fighting in the VIII and XIX Corps areas was heard. The division commader, General George W. Getty, marched his units toward the sound of battle intending to link his right with the left of the First Division. He then planned to pivot on the First Division onto the plain between Meadow Brook and the Pike, north of Belle Grove. He was in the act of doing so when the First Division was forced to withdraw, leaving him unsupported on the plain. Undismayed, he delayed briefly on a rise on the southern edge of Middletown, and then about 0800 he pulled his force onto a hill west of Middletown where the town cemetery is located. There, for about an hour, the Second Division, VI Corps aggressively repelled successive assaults from each of four Confederate divisions. The defense was so ferocious that *Early* assumed he was fighting the whole VI Corps.

The fierce fighting had the effect of causing *Early* to lose focus on the overall engagement while he concentrated on one problem, and the Confederate attack thus lost momentum all along the line. Finally, in frustration, *Early* directed all of his artillery to concentrate on the Second Division, VI Corps in an atempt to blow it off its position. After about thirty minutes of this, Lewis Grant, by then the acting commander, felt it best to retire to the main Federal line being formed about a mile farther north. He pulled back to a line on the northern edge of Middletown, defined by CR 627, rested for about 20 minutes, and then, unopposed, moved back a mile to a more defensible position just south of CR 633. It should be noted that by the time of the Second Division's stand, most of the Federal cavalry had been moved to the east side of the Federal line. It had linked with the Second Division and was threatening *Early's* flank. Recalling what cavalry had done to him in two earlier fights may have influenced *Early's* decision to put most of his strength on this flank.

PHASE III

The Confederate forces now occupied the line just north of Middletown recently vacated by the Second Division, VI Corps, and *Early* called a halt to reorganize, much to the chagrin of many of his commanders. The armies were now facing each other front to front in lines perpendicular to the Pike a little over a mile apart.

At about 1030, General Sheridan, returning from his conference in Washington,



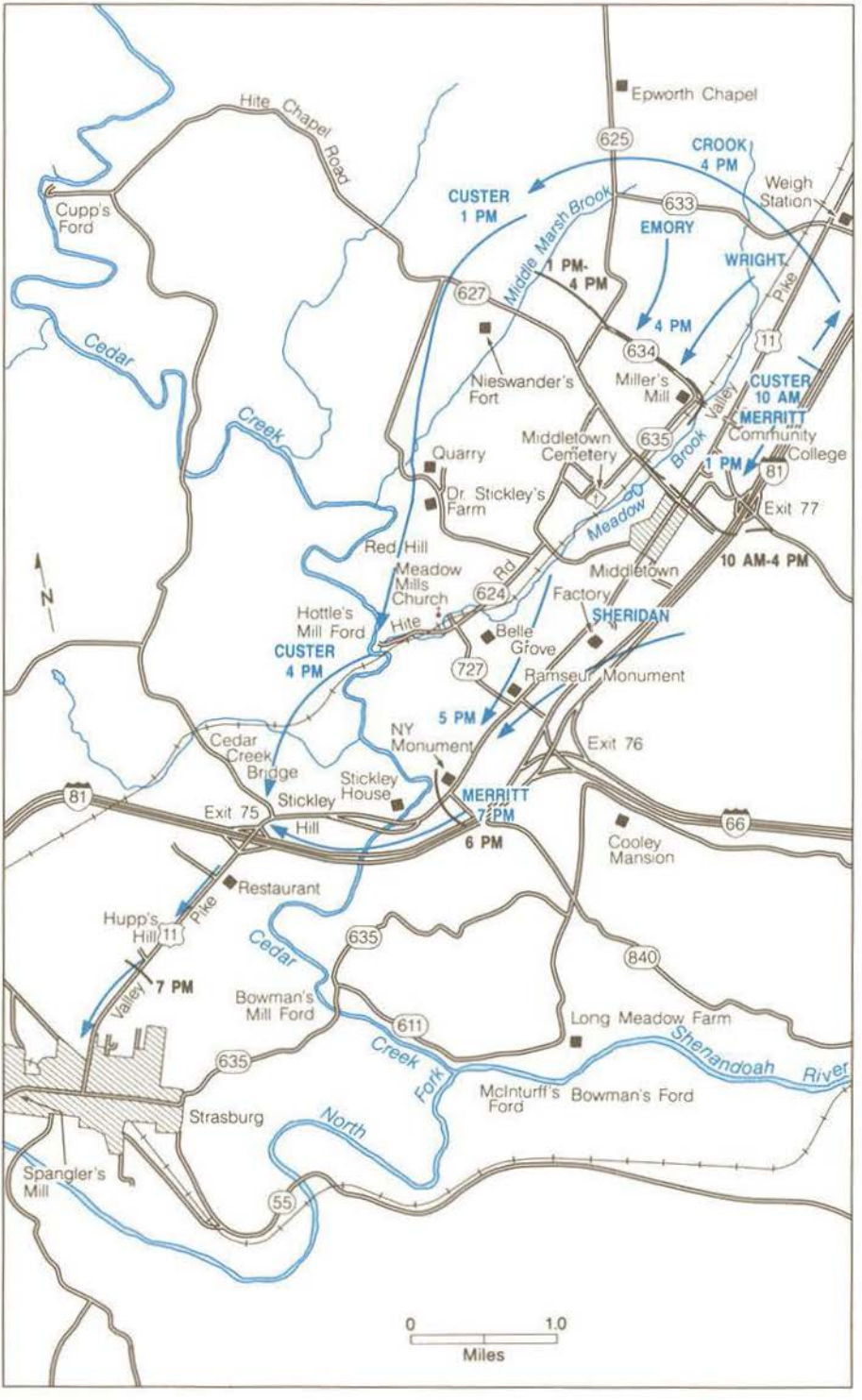
"A squadron of the enemy's cavalry came at headlong speed down the pike." (D. A. Dickert quote, painting by James E. Taylor, Western Reserve Historical Society)

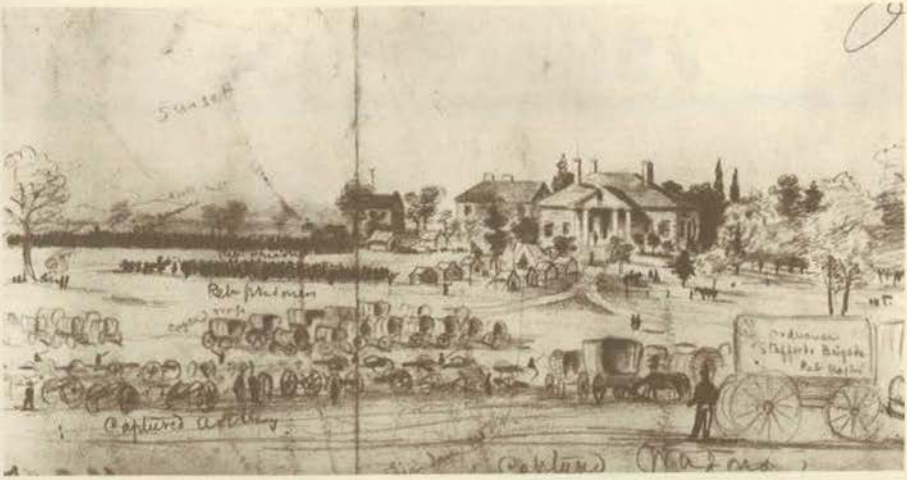
arrived on the scene after a ride from Winchester which has become legend. His presence inspired his battered forces tremendously. One soldier said it was like an "electric shock." Sheridan completed the rebuilding of the line already begun by General Wright in time to repulse a halfhearted Confederate probe launched at 1300 which brought *Gordon's, Kershaw's* and *Ramseur's* units up to a line parallel with CR 634.

PHASE IV

Sheridan placed a cavalry division on each flank with the VI Corps and XIX Corps on line. VIII Corps elements were in reserve. His plan for counterattack called for the cavalry to press both of *Early's* flanks while the XIX Corps pivoted southeastward on the VI Corps. By 1530 the Confederate skirmishers had been pushed in, and the main attack began around 1600. Confederate resistance north of Middletown was fierce for about an hour. Then *Gordon's* thinner lines to the west were broken, and Custer's Federal cavalry on that flank moved for *Early's* rear. This created panic along the whole Confederate line, which quickly turned into a rearward stampede. The Confederate artillery with a few infantry made brief delays at the old XIX Corps positions and at Stickley's and Hupp's Hill, but *Early* had lost control as his forces dissolved in an effort to escape the Federal pursuit.

The disaster was compounded when a small bridge near Spangler's Mill on US 11 south of Strasburg broke. This caused a jam which prevented any rolling stock from moving farther south. Thus, most of the guns and wagons captured in the morn-


Epworth Chapel
Hite Chapel Road
625
CROOK
4 PM
Weigh Station
CUSTER
1 PM
633
EMORY
Middle Marsh Brook
WRIGHT
1 PM-
4 PM
Pike
627
4 PM
11
Cupp's Ford
Cedar
Creek
Nieswander's Fort
634
Miller's Mill
CUSTER
10 AM
MERRITT
Middletown Cemetery
635
Valley
Brook
Community College
Quarry
1 PM
81
Dr. Stickley's Farm
Meadow
Exit 77
Red Hill
Meadow Mills Church
Rd
624
Middletown
10 AM-4 PM
Factory
SHERIDAN
N
Hottle's Mill Ford
Hite
Belle Grove
CUSTER
4 PM
727
Ramseur Monument
5 PM
NY Monument
Exit 76
Cedar Creek Bridge
Stickley House
81
Exit 75
Stickley Hill
MERRITT
7 PM
6 PM
66
Cooley Mansion
Restaurant
Hupp's Hill
11
Pike
Cedar
635
840
Valley
7 PM
Bowman's Mill Ford
611
Long Meadow Farm
Shenandoah River
635
Creek
Fork
McInturff's Bowman's Ford
Strasburg
North
Spangler's Mill
55
0
1.0
Miles



"In front of the mansion [were] 45 captured guns . . . 1,000 graybacks under guard" (Taylor quote, sketch in the collection of the New York Historical Society)

ing, plus nearly all those belonging to *Early's* forces, had to be abandoned to the rampaging Federal cavalry. *Early's* shattered force gathered at Fisher's Hill and withdrew southward before dawn the next day. Confederate military power in the Valley was ended forever.



Battle of Cedar Creek

Oct 18

1400 *Early* gives orders to commanders

2000 *Gordon's, Pegram's & Ramseur's* Division begin march to Shenandoah fords

Oct 19

0100 *Gordon's* Corps resumes march after closing up where RR crosses Shenandoah; *Kershaw & Wharton* begin approach, artillery follows

0330 All arrive at fords

0400 Cavalry skirmish at Cupp's Ford on western flank

0430 *Kershaw* crosses Cedar Creek; *Gordon's* Corps crosses Shenandoah, some firing

0500 *Kershaw* attacks; *Wharton* moves to Cedar Creek bridge, attacks pickets when he hears *Kershaw*

0515 Confederate artillery goes into battery at Hupp's Hill

0520 *Gordon* attacks VIII Corps flank; XIX Corps troops get into trenches

0535 VIII Corps shattered; XIX Corps discovers enemy on its flank

0540 *Wharton* crosses Cedar Creek bridge

0600 *Early* joins *Gordon*

0630 XIX Corps, with VIII Corps elements, establishes line w. & parallel to Pike

0730 3d Div., VI Corps & XIX Corps elements hold line on Red Hill, w. of Meadow Brook; 1st Div., VI Corps resists along Hite Road; 2d Div., VI Corps resists on ridge sw. of Middletown; Merritt's Cavalry Div. deploys n. of Red Hill; Custer's Cavalry Div. moves to e. flank on n. edge of Middletown

0800 1st & 3d Divs., VI Corps retire to positions just s. of Back Road to Winchester; 2d Div., VI Corps defends at town cemetery; XIX Corps units rally along Old Forge Road (CR 635) w. of VI Corps elements, then move farther n.

0900 2d Div., VI Corps retires to Old Forge Road adjacent to Meadow Brook

0930 2d Div., VI Corps continues rearward

1000 Merritt's Cavalry Div. moves e. of Pike & extends battle line e.; Federal retreat ended; Cofederate units halt along Old Forge Road, reorganize

1030 Sheridan arrives

1100 *Ramseur's, Kershaw's & Gordon's* Divs. move forward to Miller's Mill Road

1230 Federal battle line fully reestblished by Sheridan

1300 Confederate probes launched on VI & XIX Corps positions

1500 Merritt begins advance

1530 Confederate skirmish line driven in

1600 General Federal attack

1700 Pursuit of *Early's* forces

2000 1st Div., XIX Corps occupies Hupp's Hill

Oct

20 *Early* retires to New Market

26 Federal cavalry repulsed at **Milford**

Nov

10 *Early* moves to Woodstock

11 Skirmish at **Middletown**

12 Cavalry skirmish at **Cedarville**, Confederate defeat

13 *Early* withdraws to New Market; first snowy day

22	Skirmish at **Rude's Hill**, Federals repulsed
Dec	
6	VI Corps sent to Army of the Potomac
6-16	*Early's* reduced forces go into winter camps vicinity Staunton & Waynesboro; *Gordon's* Corps recalled to Richmond
1865	
1/6	1st Div., XIX Corps sent to Savannah, GA
2/27	Sheridan heads s. from Winchester
3/2	Remnants of *Early's* force annihilated at **Waynesboro** by Custer

Summary

Early had succeeded in tying down a large Federal force for several months, thus helping *Lee*. However, at a moment of great opportunity he pulled back fatally. He had developed a risky plan which was flawlessly executed, thus neutralizing the advantages held by his enemy. But instead of remaining with the logical consequences of his high risk, he became conservative just as they were beginning to bear fruit. One critic said such a thing is common when a general's moral courage is less than his strategic genius. *Early's* satisfaction with half a loaf and his fixation on the Second Division, VI Corps perhaps indicate the limits of his grasp.

The lessons in leadership, command, cohesion, combined arms use, and the performance of men under stress shown by this battle have a lasting value to all serious students of military history. Although technology has overtaken the tactics used, the courage and professionalism of the combatants remains inspiring. The contribution of the Second Division, VI Corps, one unit, stands as an example of the effect a single resolutely led force can have on a battle's outcome. The same may be said of an individual, as seen by the effect of Sheridan's aggressive optimism on his whole army.

On the other hand, the battle illustrates once again the consequences of poor security and staff coordination. The Federal deaths, in the words of one Union officer, "were a high price to pay for the failure to keep one's eyes open." The cool leadership in the face of disaster on the part of the senior Federal commanders retrieved the situation and should stand as an inspiration to any leader in a dark hour.

Cedar Creek is a battle with many insights, foremost of which for an embattled leader may be never to despair regardless of the situation. *Jubal Early* summarized the fight with the observation: "The Yankess got whipped and we got scared."

Suggested Readings

Two excellent books on the Battle of Cedar Creek have appeared since this brochure was first published in 1987. Additionally, the battle has been given extensive coverage in works dealing with the history of the Shenandoah Valley and with *Early's* and Sheridan's 1864 operations in it. The controversial nature of the battle has produced a great number of articles and published letters dealing with various issues and interpretations. Unit histories and personal diaries invariably devote a few pages of rich detail about personal experiences at the battle.

Lewis, Thomas A., *The Guns of Cedar Creek*, New York: Harper & Row, 1988. This very readable account of the battle is strong on the biographies of key leaders while providing necessary tactical detail.

Wert, Jeffry D., *From Winchester to Cedar Creek: The Shenandoah Campaign of 1864*, Carlisle, Pennsylvania: South Mountain Press, 1987. This is a thoroughly researched study of the entire campaign under Sheridan, equally well supported with its graphics.

U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion, A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1893. Series One, Volume XLIII, Parts 1 and 2 contain the documents and reports concerning Cedar Creek.



Self-Guided Tour

Hupp's Hill 1

Traveling south on I-81, take exit 75 ("Strasburg"), turn left (south) on US 11, go 1 mile and turn right (west) into "Wayside Wonderland." Circle the rail fence at the entrance and park at the side of the gravel road. The trenches begin 40 yards farther down the hill (US 11), at VA highway marker A-19. Follow the trenchline west approximately 150 yards to the 3 crescent-shaped artillery positions.

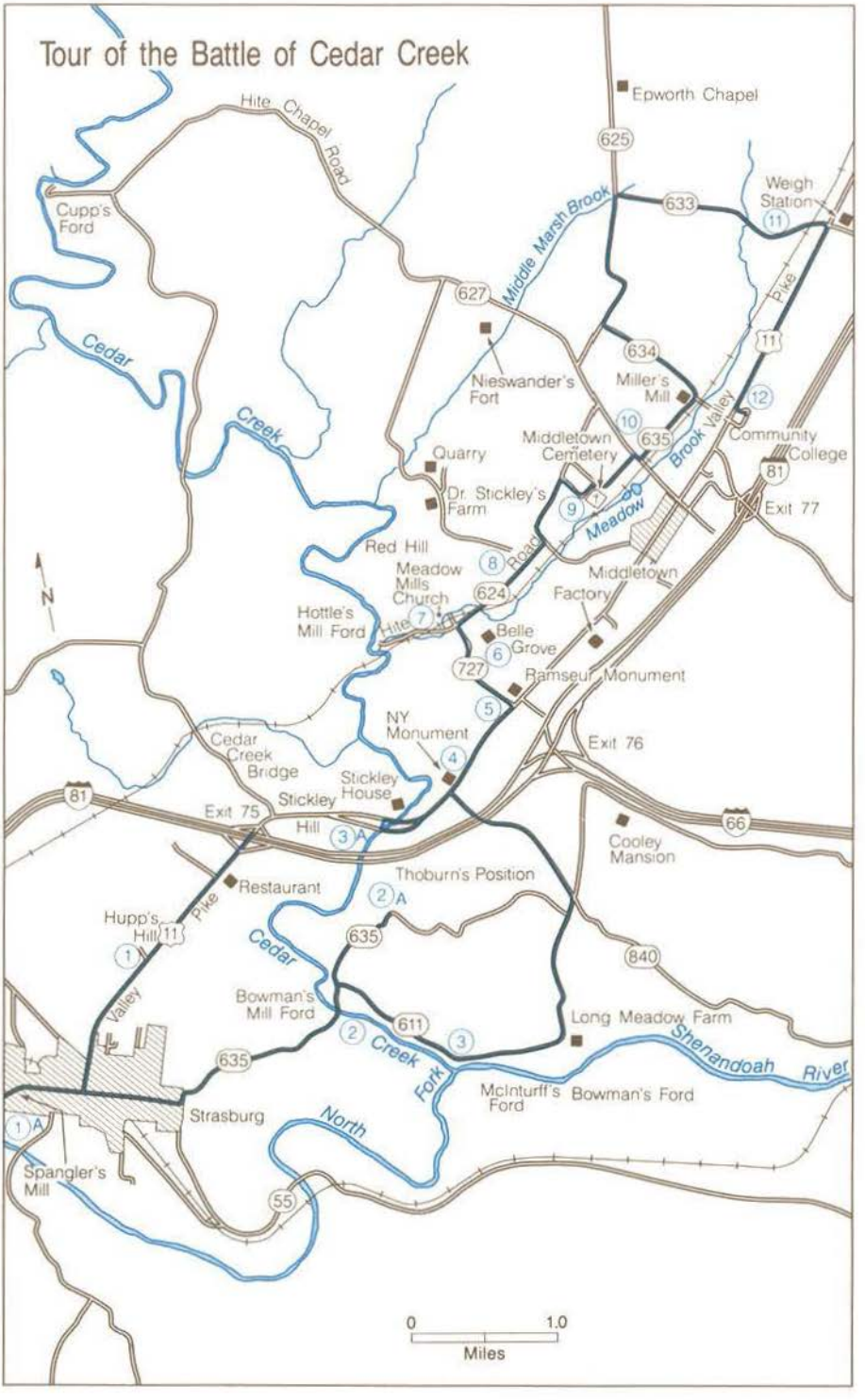
Hupp's Hill played a significant role throughout the Cedar Creek operation. *Jubal Early's* entire force showed itself here on 13 October in an effort to draw the Federals into battle from their positions north of Cedar Creek. Union positions across Cedar Creek were fired on by Confederate artillery. The Federal First Division, VIII Corps attacked across Cedar Creek and a sharp fight ensued. The Federal brigade commander was killed and his forces lost over 200 men. *Conner's* Brigade of *Kershaw's* Confederate Division lost nearly 180 men and Brigadier General *James Conner* was seriously wounded. This engagement took place mostly between Cedar Creek and the Signal Knob Restaurant on US 11.

Early withdrew to Fisher's Hill the night of 13 October but each day thereafter he sent out a brigade to Hupp's Hill to observe Federal activities. General *John B. Gordon* came to Hupp's Hill on 17 October in order to begin planning for an attack. He ruled out an attack down the Pike because of the evident frontal strength of the Federal positions.

By 0430 on the morning of 19 October, *Wharton's* Division had moved up to Hupp's Hill from Fisher's Hill to be in a position to support the main attack farther east. When *Wharton* heard *Kershaw's* attack open, he moved forward to Stickley Hill and then to Cedar Creek. At about the same time, the Confederate artillery under Colonel *Tom Carter* rushed from Fisher's Hill to Hupp's Hill and began firing on Federal positions by about 0515. It moved to positions north of Cedar Creek after 0600.

The I-81 interchange is close to the crest of Stickley Hill where Confederate rear guards vainly tried to establish a second of three defensive lines on the evening of 19 October. Later, George Custer positioned himself on Stickley Hill to direct the movement of his regiments against the retreating Confederates. He was joined there during the pursuit by Colonel Thomas C. Devin of Merritt's Cavalry Division. Captured Confederate materiel was collected on Stickley Hill first before being taken to Belle Grove.

During the Confederate retreat, *Bryan's* Virginia Battery tried to establish a defensive position on Hupp's Hill. It was aided by a motley group of infantrymen gathered by Major *Henry Kyd Douglas*, one of *Jubal Early's* aides. They tried to establish a blockade of fence rails


Tour of the Battle of Cedar Creek
Epworth Chapel
625
Hite Chapel Road
Cupp's Ford
Middle Marsh Brook
633
Weigh Station
11
Pike
627
Cedar Creek
Nieswander's Fort
634
Miller's Mill
12
Middletown Cemetery
10
635
Brook Valley
Community College
81
Quarry
Dr. Stickley's Farm
9
Meadow
Exit 77
Red Hill
8
Road
Meadow Mills Church
624
Middletown Factory
N
Hottle's Mill Ford
7
Hite
Belle Grove
6
727
Ramseur Monument
5
NY Monument
4
Cedar Creek Bridge
Exit 76
Stickley House
81
Exit 75
Stickley Hill
3A
66
Cooley Mansion
Thoburn's Position
2A
Restaurant
Hupp's Hill
11
Pike
1
635
Cedar
840
Bowman's Mill Ford
611
Long Meadow Farm
Valley
2
Creek
3
Shenandoah River
635
Fork
McInturff's Bowman's Ford
Strasburg
North
1A
Spangler's Mill
55
0
1.0
Miles

and debris across the Pike (US 11) but soon were overwhelmed by the Federal cavalry.

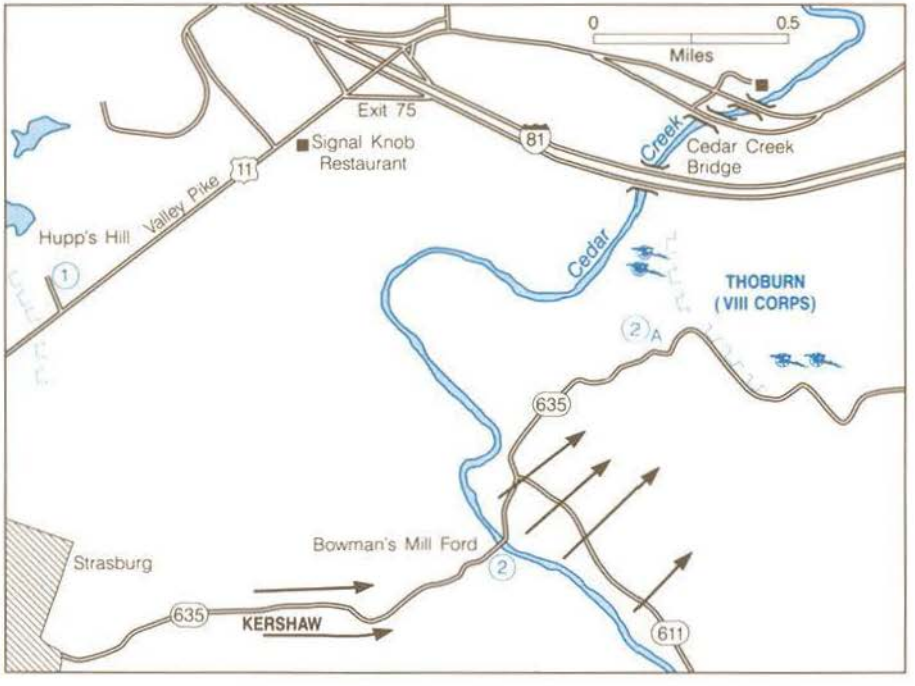
Late on the night of 19 October, Hupp's Hill was occupied by Federal units from the First Division, XIX Corps. It was relieved the next day by the Second Division, VI Corps. It was this unit which dug the earthworks visible today. They were laid out and their construction supervised by Major Hazard Stevens, the corps adjutant general. This division remained here until 10 November 1864 when Sheridan pulled his entire army back to Winchester.

If you wish to travel directly to Stop 2, turn to the directions at Stop 2.

Bridge at Spangler's Mill 1A

Turn right onto US 11 and proceed 1.8 miles south through Strasburg. Just past the VA highway marker on your right, turn left into the parking area next to the abandoned Old Mill Restaurant.

You are parked by what was known as Spangler's Mill during the Civil War. The mill is one of the few to have survived Federal destruction in the Valley because it was used to grind requisitioned grains for the Union forces. Barely discernible just to the north is the bridge across a small stream where *Early* experienced the day's final disaster. It is indicated by Virginia highway marker A21 located across US 11 from the parking lot.





Custer's cavalry pursues the Confederates through Strasburg. (A. R. Waud, in the Library of Congress)

As *D. Augustus Dickert* recalled,

> In the small space of one or two hundred yards stood deserted ambulances, wagons, and packs of artillery mules and horses, tangled and still hitched, rearing and kicking like mad, using all their strength to unloosen themselves from the matted mass of vehicles, animals and men caught up in the panic.

Had you been here early on the morning of 19 October, you would have seen *Early* accompanying *Kershaw's* Division on the way to Bowman's Mill Ford east of Strasburg. *Wharton's* Division followed immediately. It would have passed this point around 0200 and shortly after 0500 the Confederate artillery raced down the Pike from Fisher's Hill towards Hupp's Hill. During the battle Confederate medical collecting stations were established along the Pike south of the bridge.

At the end of the day, the blocking of the small bridge led to the complete loss of nearly all wheeled vehicles brought north of this point by the Confederates or captured by them during the battle. There are several versions of how the bridge got blocked. Some say half the bridge planks had been taken up in order to control access via a single lane, and that a wagon went over the open edge. Others say that a wagon fell through the bridge's floor boards. The majority, however, relay that two wagons got jammed while trying to squeeze across simultaneously. This led to a tie-up behind them which was impossible to unravel because of attacks by Federal cavalry. At least one Union cavalryman is alleged to have pulled one of the wagons on the bridge broadside to assure that the bridge could not be cleared.

To Stop 2: **Turn right onto US 11 and proceed north .7 mile to the junction with VA 55 East at the traffic light in Strasburg. Continue straight onto VA 55 East, go .5 mile and turn left onto Charles Street (the last street before VA 55 East curves to the right). Go one block and turn right onto E. Washington Street, following the sign for CR 635. Go 1.2 miles until you reach Cedar Creek.**

Bowman's Mill Ford



From Stop 1: **Turn right onto US 11 and proceed south 1 mile to the junction with VA 55 East at the traffic light in Strasburg. Turn left onto VA 55 East; go .5 mile and turn left onto Charles Street (the last street before VA 55 East curves to the right). Go one block and turn right onto E. Washington Street, following the sign for CR 635. Go 1.2 miles until you reach Cedar Creek.**

Bowman's Mill Ford, also known as Robert's Ford, is where *Early* gave *Kershaw* final instructions before *Kershaw's* Division crossed Cedar Creek to attack the First Division, VIII Corps Federals. *Early* describes the scene:

> We got in sight of the enemy's fires at half-past three o'clock. The moon was now shining and we could see the camps. The division was halted under cover to await the arrival of the proper time, and I pointed out to Kershaw, and the commander of his leading brigade, the enemy's position and described the nature of the ground, and directed them how the attack was to be made and followed up. Kershaw was directed to cross his division over the creek as quietly as possible, and to form it into column of brigades, as he did so, and advance extending to the right or left as might be necessary. . . . At half-past four he was ordered forward.

Captain *Augustus Dickert* of the Third South Carolina Volunteers crossed the creek with *Kershaw's* Division:

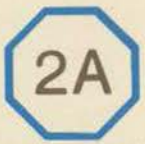
> The river crossed, the brigade continued in columns of fours, moving rapidly forward that all would be in readiness by the time Gordon's guns opened. At the beginning of dawn we heard [them]. Nearer and nearer came the roll of battle as each succeeding brigade was put in action. We were moving forward in double-quick to reach the enemy's line by the time the brigade on our right became engaged. . . . Half dressed troops opened a galling fire on us [and] with one impulse [we] sprang forward.

An early morning fog enhanced the surprise element of *Early's* attack. Sergeant *Milton Humphrey, Bryan's* Virginia Battery, recalls the Federal response:

> Shortly before daylight, a heavy mist or fog rose from the ground and under cover of the mist we advanced our lines nearer and nearer until at one spot we could hear the Federals talking to each other in their tents as they woke from sleep. A few blue coats were stirring about and rebuilding the camp fires when there was a sudden crash of musketry all along the front. . . . Panic was no name for it. As the soldiers said, every Confederate looked seven feet tall in the mist and their advent was too sudden to create a panic. There was a rush for the rear as fast as men could roll out of their tents.

Bowman's Ford is just south of the farm, where the tree line reaches the river. CR 611 turns north at this point, following the approach of *Gordon's* corps.

Thoburn's Position

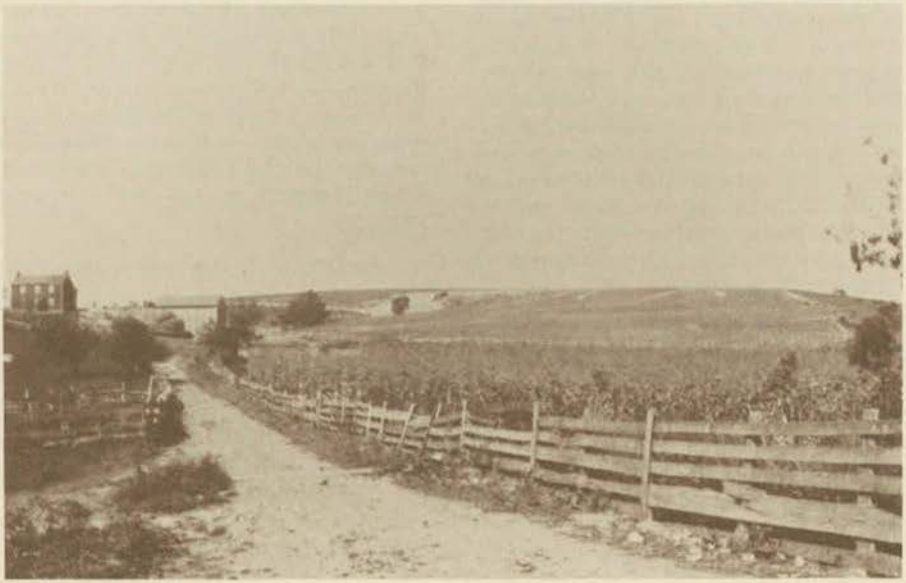


Cross Cedar Creek and go up the hill on CR 635 for .9 mile, where at the crest of a hill, the road makes a 90 degree turn right (east). For the next .3 mile, CR 635 traces the positions of Colonel Joseph Thoburn's First Division, VIII Corps. There is room to park at the side of the road at the 90 degree turn or shortly thereafter in a gate entrance on the left.

Colonel Thomas Wildes, sensing that something was amiss in the heavy fog, tried to stir up Thoburn's Division. Wildes had his own First Brigade under arms at the time of *Kershaw's* assault. It was the unit responsible for the "galling fire" mentioned by Captain *Augustus Dickert* (Stop 2). Wildes' unit soon was forced out of its position when the flight of the Second Brigade caused his 34th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment to lose its organization. Wildes' other two regiments, the 116th and 123d Ohio Infantry, retained their cohesion and fought their way back to the XIX Corps positions along the Pike (US 11) where they were in for further hard fighting.

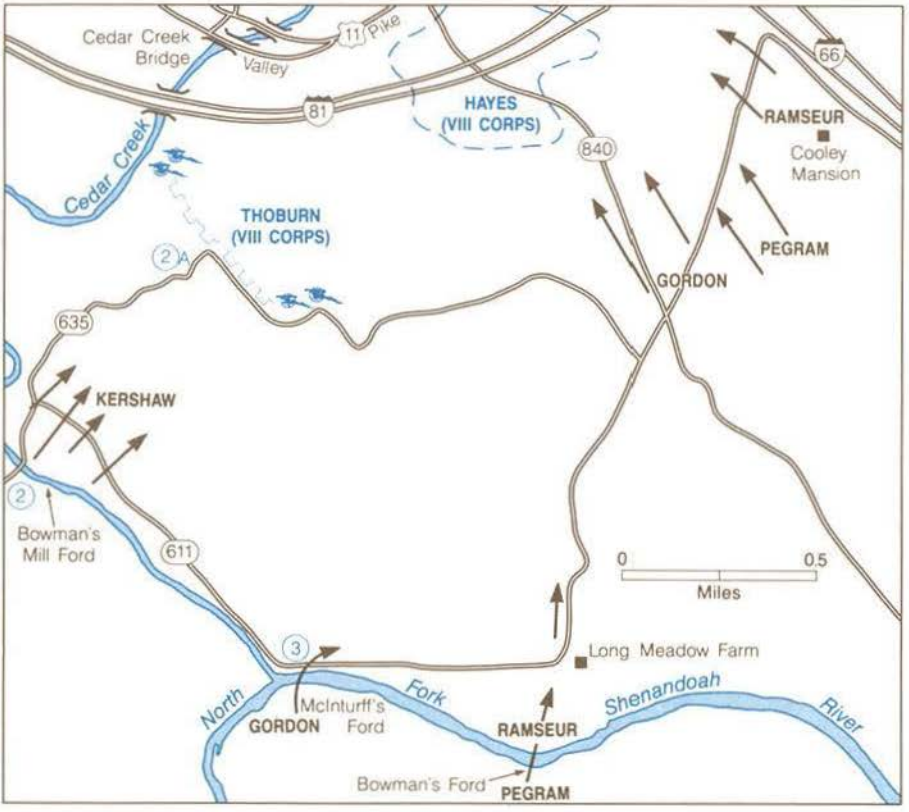
To Stop 3: **From the 90 degree turn, return .7 mile on CR 635 to the junction with CR 611, and turn left onto 611. Go 1.1 miles to a line of boulders on the right-hand side of the road. Park by the boulders.**

VIII Corps position from Kershaw's ford. (photo from the U.S. Army Military History Institute)



Shenandoah Fords

3



From Stop 2: **Cross Cedar Creek; go .1 mile to the junction with CR 611, and make a right turn onto 611. Go 1.1 miles to a line of boulders on the right-hand side of the road. Park by the boulders.**

This is McInturff's Ford where *Gordon's* Division crossed the river. *Ramseur's* Division crossed at Bowman's Ford, .6 mile farther east, followed by *Pegram's* Division. The night was chilly, and many Southern soldiers complained of their muscles tightening in the cool night air whenever they paused to rest or to close up the lines. The entire approach could have been bungled were it not for General *Gordon's* attention to detail. The trail had been blazed and improved as much as possible by *Early's* engineers. Guides were positioned at most junctions except at one place where a log was placed to block a fork in the trail. As luck would have it, a local farmer had innocently moved the log. *Gordon* sensed that night that the log had been moved; he halted the column, verified the change

with the nearby farmer, and got the troops on the right path. Thus, the man who conceived the grand strategy of the attack had assured its initial success by his equally sure attention to detail.

Continue on CR 611 (eastward); in .6 mile you will pass Long Meadow Farm on the right.

Bowman's Ford is just to the south of the farm, where the tree line reaches the river. CR 611 turns north at this point, following the approach route of *Gordon's* corps.

Proceeding .8 mile farther, where CR 635 takes off to the left, you are about 800 feet east of *Gordon's* southern flank as it faced west-northwest to go into the attack. The northern flank, *Ramseur's* Division, was .9 mile farther up 611 where it changes direction because of I-66. *Gordon* saw the Greek-revival Cooley House when he was making his plans from atop Massanutten Mountain. He knew that when the head of the column reached the house it had only to halt and face left (west) to be in position.

Turn left (west) onto Cr 840 at the stop sign .1 mile beyond the 635 junction.

Buckton Ford is 2.1 miles to the right (eastward) down this road. That was where the bulk of Colonel Alpheus S. Moore's U.S. Cavalry Brigade was stationed. Going westward, you are following *Gordon's* axis of advance. In about half a mile, the road drops into a small stream valley. As you reach the bottom, a power company cut to your left front reveals a ridge 300 yards away. Hayes' Second Division, VIII Corps was preparing trenches along this line. They were unoccupied at the time of attack except for some men from the Fifth New York Heavy Artillery Regiment who were digging them. The road then rises and goes under I-81. At this point the Interstate traces the center line of Hayes' Second Division, VIII Corps camp. The hillside on both sides of the Interstate saw heavy fighting between about 0530 and 0600. As recalled by *John B. Gordon,*

> In the still starlit night the only sounds heard were the gentle rustle of leaves by the October wind, the low murmur of the Shenandoah flowing swiftly along its rocky bed and slashing against the limestone cliffs that bordered it, the churning of the water by the feet of horses on which sat Sheridan's faithful pickets and the subdued tones or half-whispers of my men.

If you wish to travel directly to Stop 4, turn to the directions at Stop 4.

3A Stickley House

Turn left at the junction of CR 840 and US 11 and go south .5 mile, crossing the modern bridge across Cedar Creek. Turn left and park in the parking area opposite the entrance to Stickley House (a private residence not open to the public). Walk back along US 11 approximately 200 yards. Be careful of oncoming traffic.

From here you can see the original Valley Pike which passed between the red Stickley House and the ruins of the mill next to Cedar Creek. The Civil War era bridge site is a quarter mile farther west.

The Stickley House was used as a hospital after the battle, its kitchen a surgery. Behind the house there is a grave of a Georgia soldier, *John Helm,* who died as a result of wounds received at Cedar Creek. The Stickley Mill was destroyed in October 1864 as part of the Federal "burning."

You are parked in part of the area protected by pickets from the 128th New York infantry. When *Wharton's* Confederates came up to the creek, about 20 New Yorkers who had remained at their posts awaiting orders were captured.

To Stop 4: **Reverse your route, exiting from the parking area and turning left onto Northbound US 11. Go 50 yards beyond the junction with CR 840, and turn left onto a gravel road adjacent to the New York monument.**

Just after you cross Cedar Creek, note the modern brick house on the high ground to your right (east). This is where Captain Henry DuPont positioned Gibbs' Battery, First Ohio Artillery to protect the bridge. Joseph W. Keifer recalled,

When the fifteen hours of carnage had ceased, and the sun had gone down, spreading the gloom of a chilly October night over the wide extended field, there remained a scene more horrid than usual. The dead and dying of the two armies were commingled. Many of the wounded had dragged themselves to the streams in search of the first want of a wounded man – water. Many mangled and loose horses were straggling over the field to add to the confusion. Wagons, gun-carriages, and caissons were strewn in disorder in the rear of the last stand of the Confederate Army. Abandoned ambulances, sometimes filled with dead and dying Confederates, were to be seen in large numbers, and loose teams dragged overturned vehicles over the hills and through the ravines. Dead and dying men were found in the darkness almost everywhere. Cries of agony from the suffering victims were heard in all directions, and the moans of wounded animals added much to the horrors of the night.

"Mercy abandons the arena of battle," but when the conflict is ended mercy again asserts itself. The disabled of both armies were cared for alike. Far into the night, with some all the long night, the heroes in the day's strife ministered to friend and foe alike, where but the night before our army had peacefully slumbered, little dreaming of the death struggle of the coming day.

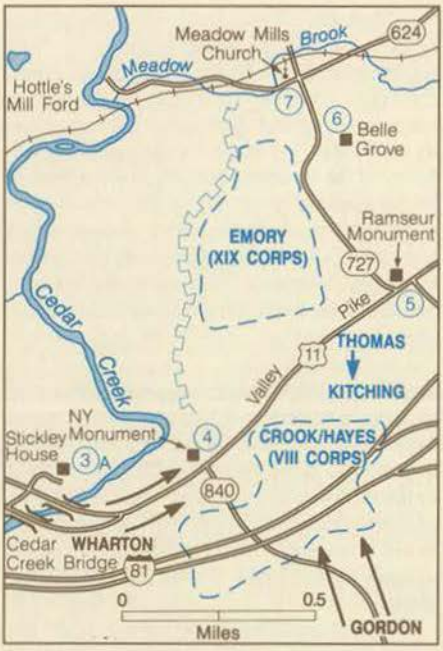
New York Monument 4

At the junction of CR 840 with US 11, turn right (north), go 50 yards, and then turn left onto a gravel road adjacent to the New York monument.

The monument at this site honors the Federal 128th New York Infantry Regiment, Third Brigade, Second Division, XIX Corps, from Dutchess and Columbia counties. The regiment lost 105 killed and wounded out of 310 men engaged.

The monument also marks the southern limit of the XIX Corps trenches. If you are facing the monument, the corps trench line extends .9 mile northwest to Meadow Brook. The original Cedar Creek bridge site is a quarter mile to your left (southwest).

The XIX Corps fought in its area for about an hour. At the sounds of *Kershaw's* attack, the corps units prepared for battle, but the situation was so confusing that no guidance was available at first. Some fire was coming from *Wharton's*



infantry as well as the artillery on Hupp's Hill, and with the ground fog, General Emory was uncertain at first as to the direction of the main threat. Some XIX Corps units went into the trenches, while others, after about 15 minutes without orders, had just stacked arms to prepare breakfast. At that point, the appearance of VIII Corps stragglers and Wildes' battered brigade made it evident that the Confederates were on the corps' flank.

Turn with your back to the monument and you will see the ridge formerly occupied by Hayes' camp, now passed through by I-81. Wildes' Brigade attacked back across US 11 on Emory's orders so as to buy time for the XIX Corps. Emory also began to thin his lines facing Cedar Creek in order to establish a line parallel to and just west of the Pike (US 11). The Second Brigade of the First Division, XIX Corps, commanded by Colonel Stephen Thomas, was moved from near Meadow Mills all the way across the original corps rear. It crossed the Pike in the vicinity of highway marker A-56 (Battle of Cedar Creek), proceeding to a point 350 yards east of the Pike where it engaged in a vicious half-hour fight with *Gordon's* men. Three regiments from the First Brigade, XIX Corps led by Colonel Edwin P. Davis moved to a position midway between Belle Grove and the Pike.

"We will do it, or perish in the attempt!" (History of the Eighth Regiment Vermont Volunteers)



Ramseur Monument 5

Turn left (north) onto US 11, go .6 mile and turn left onto CR 727. The *Ramseur* Monument is on your right, facing US 11. CR 727 is narrow and heavily traveled. It is recommended that you drive to Belle Grove, park there and walk .5 mile back to US 11 and the *Ramseur* Monument. If walking is not practicable, drive .1 mile beyond the Monument and pull off the road as much as possible under the tree.

Looking to the right (northward) about 50 yards beyond the monument down 727, you can see where Thomas's Brigade emerged from its positions east of the Pike to the high ground in the field midway between Belle Grove and US 11. There it made a stand against *Gordon's* forces for about 20 minutes to protect some withdrawing wagon trains. The brigade then moved in front and west of Belle Grove for another brief stand on the high ground southwest of Meadow Mills Church (Stop 7). It then crossed Meadow Brook and fought another delaying action half a mile west in the VI Corps camps.

After its futile charge back into Hayes' camp, Wildes' Brigade crossed this area, going to a position near Belle Grove. There, it joined other VIII and XIX Corps remnants. Led by Gen. George Crook and Col. Rutherford B. Hayes, they held for half an hour, the time needed for headquarters staff and wagons to load and get away from Belle Grove.

Down 727 about 200 yards farther you will notice on your left (south) a slight ground swell outlined by a long row of cedar trees and brush. This was the position, 2500 feet south of Belle Grove and 1200 feet from the Pike, occupied by Davis's Brigade, First Division, XIX Corps. It had moved from the northern portion of the XIX Corps trenches midway down the rear of the corps to back up Thomas's Brigade. One of the regiments in this brigade, the 114th New York Infantry, sustained 115 casualties out of 250 men engaged. The tree line in the distance to the south delineates the XIX Corps trenchline from left to right (New York monument to Meadow Brook).

Move down the road to a small stone house on the right and barns on the left. Pause in the driveway on the left.

Kershaw's Division drove across the fields between here and the Pike. Its right followed the lane (727), and the Division pushed past here, forcing the XIX Corps elements across Meadow Brook into the VI Corps positions. While *Gordon's* Division focused on the resistance at Belle Grove, *Kershaw* continued westward, engaging the Third Division, VI Corps on the high ground fronting Cedar Creek.

Belle Grove Plantation 6

Continue on CR 727 to Belle Grove, park in the lot, and go first to the map board by the old main gate.

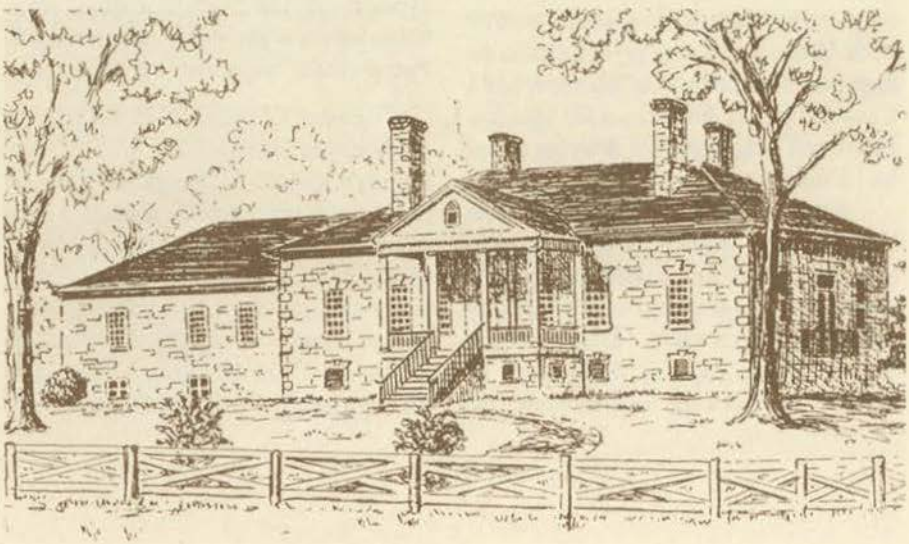
The mansion was Sheridan's headquarters before and after the battle. It was the scene of heavy fighting around 0630, and in the evening served as the collecting point for captured materiel. Forty-five guns and hundreds of wagons were drawn up in rows between the mansion and US 11. About 1,300 Confederate prisoners camped under guard in the vicinity of the small stone house.

After the map board, go to the rear of the mansion and walk down the lane between the house and barns. Go past the kitchen garden, through the gate, and past the two barns, proceeding for about 100 yards to the far end of the trailer house.

Looking ahead (west) you will see the raw earth of a hill in the middle distance. Known as Red Hill in the 19th Century, it was the bivouac site of Wheaton's First Division, VI Corps. The corps came forward to a line in the vicinity of the red barns you see to the right on the forward slope of the hill. Keifer's Third Division, VI Corps occupied the hillside to your left. Getty's Second Division, VI Corps was camped east of the quarry towers you can see on the right. The quarry buildings occupy what was the Shipley farm at the time of the battle.

Before going to Stop 7, a visit to the house is suggested.

"A host of dead strewed the grounds." (James E. Taylor quote, drawing from the Belle Grove Plantation collection by Kate Schultz)

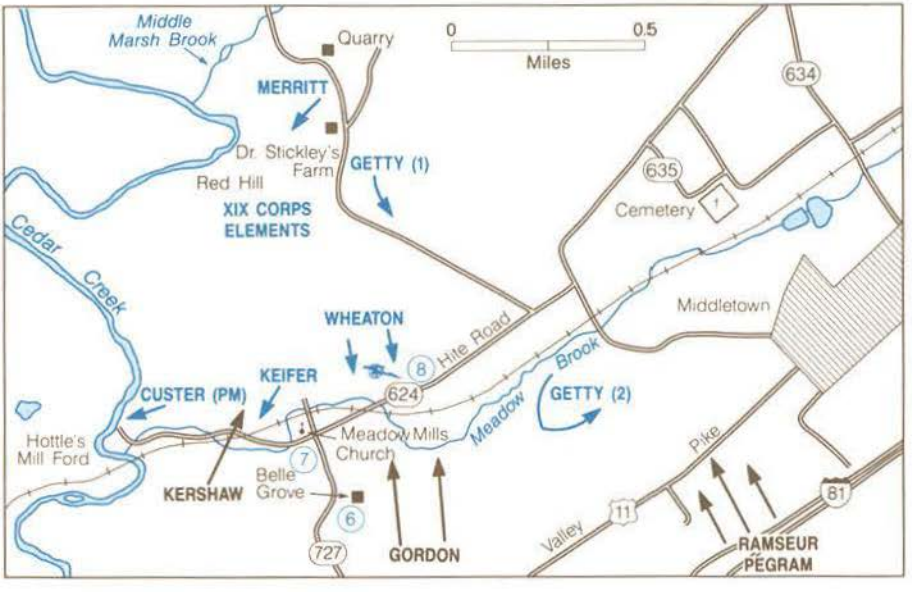


7 Meadow Brook

From the Belle Grove parking lot, make a right turn onto CR 727. Go .2 mile to the Meadow Mills Church, on the left at the intersection with CR 624. Park at the church and walk to the railroad tracks at the end of 727.

The left flank of Keifer's Division occupied the high ground to the rear of the white farmhouse. As you face the farmhouse, 300 yards to your left is where Colonel William Ball's Brigade crossed Meadow Brook at about 0550 to go up to the XIX Corps positions to help. It was forced back more by the tide of the XIX Corps refugees than the Confederate action. The fighting on the hillside position raged until about 0730. Keifer was joined on his right by reformed XIX Corps units. At one time, Keifer's Division counterattacked *Kershaw's* Division, forcing it back across Meadow Brook. However, *Kershaw* continued to press against Keifer's right, or north, flank and that, combined with developments on Keifer's left (east) flank farther up CR 624, forced the Third Division to withdraw.

Later in the day, about 1730, Custer's cavalry division came over the crest above the white farmhouse and paused to reorganize. Then it poured down route 624 to Hottle's Ford on Cedar Creek and on to Stickley Hill and the devastating charge against the retreating Confederates on the Pike.



Hite Road 8

From the church, proceed up the hill (north) on CR 624. In .1 mile, the road crosses Meadow Brook.

Battery D, First Rhode Island Artillery, pulled back through here to set up on the high ground to your left in support of Wheaton's Division.

Proceed about another .3 mile to a trailer house on the right at the top of the hill. Stop just beyond the trailer house.

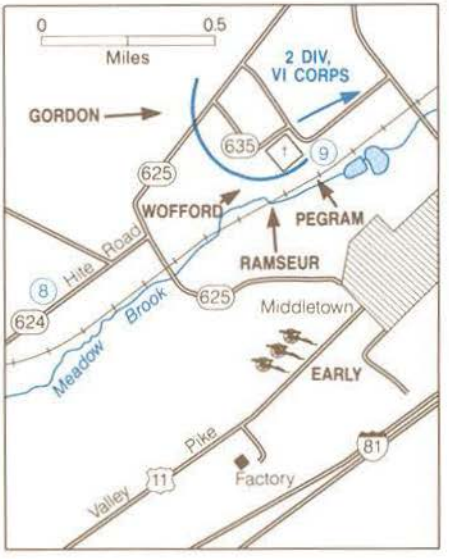
The VI Corps trains were located in the open to the left (west) of the road. They were successfully withdrawn in frantic haste by the time fighting reached Meadow Brook. The road parallels the line formed by Wheaton's Division. Fighting extended east of Meadow Brook nearly to Belle Grove. At one point, six guns, three each from the First Maine Battery and Battery M, Fifth U.S., were fought over between the ridge and Belle Grove. Pressure from *Gordon's* Division gradually forced Wheaton's Division back to Dr. Shipley's where you can see the modern quarry buildings. There the Third and First Divisions of the VI Corps reorganized at about 0830 and began to move farther to the rear (north) in conjunction with the XIX Corps Divisions. By 0900, they were no longer in contact.

Earlier, George Getty's Second Division, VI Corps had left its bivouac and moved down the quarry road outlined by the telephone poles you can see to your right front as you face away from the trailer. When Getty reached 624, he sent his Second Brigade (Grant's Vermont) out as skirmishers into the open area between the Pike and 624. He then moved his other brigades onto the plain to form a line of battle behind the Vermonters. His plan was to tie with Wheaton's Division to form a corps line. However, Wheaton was unable to hold and withdrew, leaving Getty on the plain. Getty pulled back onto the high ground just south of Middletown near the yellow building. Pressure from *Pegram's* and *Ramseur's* Divisions soon pushed him back to a hill west of Middletown where the town cemetery is located.

Continue north on 624. Just beyond the railroad tracks, look to your front.

The ridge line you see is the cemetery position occupied by Getty's Division. The red outbuildings you see mark the approximate center of Getty's crescentshaped line. He placed Lamb's Ohio Battery there, flanked by units from the Vermont Brigade. His right, or westernmost, brigade, Warner's, linked with the Vermonters about where you see the green shingle-covered house to your left (west) front (not the house to your far left on the quarry road). The other Brigade, Bidwell's, curved around the hill to face Middletown. You have stopped west of positions taken up by *Wharton's* Confederate Division between 0800 and 0900. *Kershaw's* Division, squeezed out of the leftmost position by Cedar Creek and by *Gordon's* advance, was in positions to your left front; *Ramseur's* Division was on your right front at the southwestern edge of Middletown.

Middletown Cemetery 9



Continue on CR 624 to the junction with CR 625 (.4 mile from trailer house). Turn left (west), and follow it nearly .5 mile to the intersection with CR 635. Turn right (east) onto 635 and drive .2 mile to the cemetery; make a left (north) turn and continue on 635 around the cemetery until you reach the main gate (3 red brick posts).

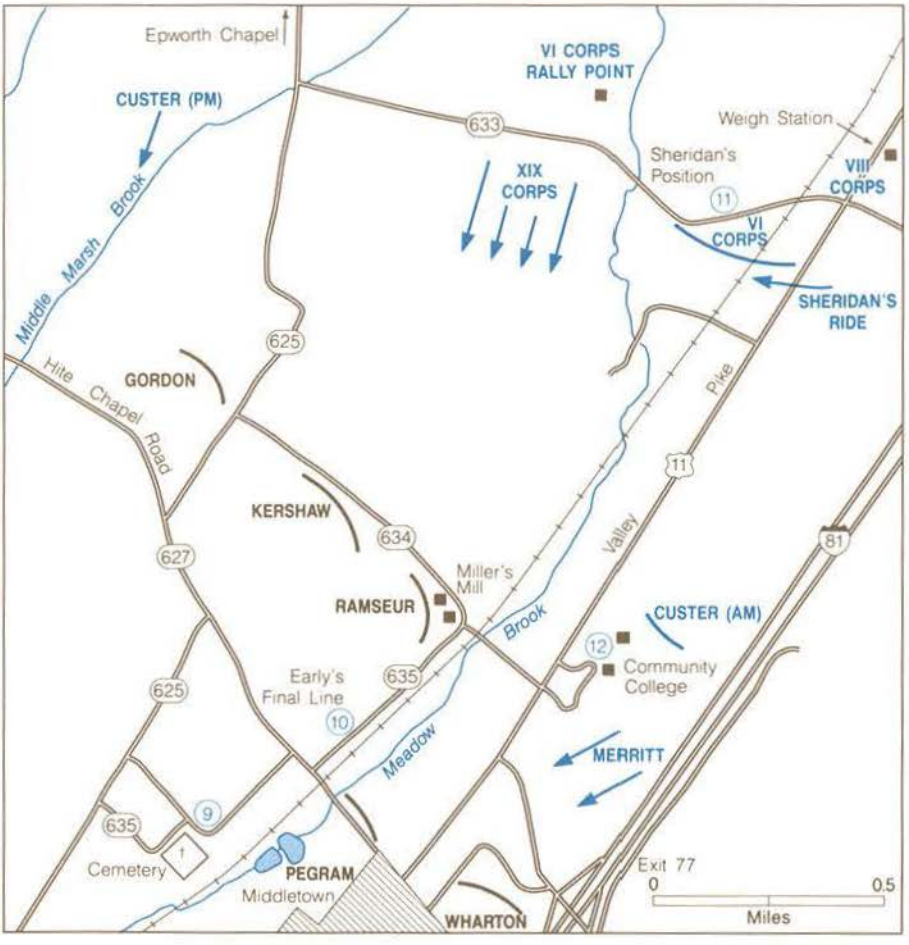
You have driven through and behind the positions of Getty's Division. You are stopped at what was the left flank of Bidwell's Brigade's lines where they linked with Moore's Cavalry Brigade. Moore had ridden from Buckton ford when he heard the battle. His men fought dismounted in a line running north from the cemetery along CR 635.

At the time of the battle, Bidwell's Brigade was mostly in the woods, the Vermonters were in the open, and Warner's unit was in partly open terrain. The first attack was launched by *Pegram's* Division into the area around the green shingled house, about where Warner and the Vermonters joined. The Federal troops lay down on the reverse slope of their position, then rose up and volleyed when the Confederates were within 30 yards, repulsing the attackers. *Grimes'* Brigade of *Ramseur's* Division next tried an assault on the other side of the Vermont Brigade where it linked with Bidwell's at the southeast corner of the present cemetery. The Federals repeated their performance, actually charging and forcing the Confederates back to the bottom of the hill. Confederate artillery played on the Federal positions for about half an hour. Then *Wharton's* Division attacked Warner west of the green shingled house and route 625. This attack similarly was repulsed. By this time about 20 Confederate guns were drawn up on the Pike in the vicinity of the large brown factory building and yellow building which you can see from the cemetery gate. *Wofford's* Brigade of *Kershaw's* Division tried to attack Bidwell's Brigade in the area where you are, but was repulsed. General Bidwell was mortally wounded by artillery during this attack. Confederate artillery pounded the position for about half an hour. When General Grant saw a fifth attack building on Warner's right (western) flank at about 1000, he directed a withdrawal northward.

The division pulled northward along CR 625 and 635. It got to the high ground

just north of CR 627 and rested for about 30 minutes before moving farther north. The Confederates occupied the vacated Federal position and rested as well.

10 Early's Final Line



Stop 10 is not a single location as in the earlier points, but rather a drive along the final opposing lines with intermitten stops.

Continue (north) on CR 635 for .3 mile to the junction with CR 627, turn right onto 627, and make an almost immediate left (north) onto CR 635 again. Go .2 mile and pause along the side of the road.

Hite Chapel Road (CR 627) marks the line where *Early's* forces halted their

advance to reorganize and consolidate. You have just driven briefly along a portion of the line occupied by *Ramseur's* Division. Farther eastward, *Pegram's* Division formed the line between Meadow Brook and the Pike. *Wharton's* Division extended the line still farther eastward to a point beyond the interchange of CR 627 and I-81. *Kershaw's* line was to the west of *Ramseur*, going to the point where CR 625 turns north. *Gordon's* line spread farther westward beyond Middle Marsh Brook.

This first rise on your left (west) was occupied by *Bryan's* Virginia Battery. From here it supported *Ramseur's* Division in an afternoon attack. *Gordon* and *Ramseur* persuaded *Early* to renew the offensive after a critical two-hour delay. Their divisions along with *Kershaw's* pressed forward about half a mile. This portion of CR 635 marks *Ramseur's* eastern flank. *Pegram* and *Wharton* remained in place just north of Middletown. Consequently, the farther *Ramseur* advanced, his eastern flank was more and more dangerously exposed to the Federal cavalry in position alongside and east of the Pike.

At .5 mile, you will see two red brick houses on the left. Here CR 635 temporarily ends, intersecting with CR 634. There is room to pull off the road on the right.

This was Miller's Mill, the point of farthest advance for the early afternoon Confederate probe. *Ramseur* placed one brigade along the road facing east and extending southward back to the white house (you passed it before getting to the brick houses). His other two brigades extended westward along CR 634 to a small stream where they linked with *Kershaw's* units. *Kershaw* in turn covered the ground to the junction of CR 634 and 625. *Gordon's* Division lay westward from there to the high ground east of Middle Marsh Brook.

Follow CR 634 bearing to the left.

About 300 yards along this road, in the orchard behind the large red brick house, fierce fighting took place during the Federal counterattack at about 1630. *Ramseur*, with 200 of his men and 200 men from *Kershaw's* Division led by Major *James Goggin*, resisted repeated assaults by the Second Division, VI Corps. They were aided by *Cutshaw's* Artillery Battalion. *Ramseur* was mortally wounded here and resistance broke.

Drive .8 mile on CR 634, then turn right onto CR 625. The road in .3 mile makes a 90 degree turn in front of a grey house.

This dogleg marks the Federal skirmish line after the final Federal line was established about 1100. The main line was just forward of CR 633 where you will turn right (east). (If you continue north half a mile from CR 633, you will reach Epworth Chapel. This was the general area to which the XIX Corps withdrew before it came forward to the line just south of CR 633.)

At .9 mile, turn right (east) onto CR 633.

In .7 mile you will see some abandoned 19th Century farm buildings on your left (north). They mark the area where the First and Third Divisions of the VI Corps rallied before coming forward to the final line established by their Second Division.

Sheridan's Position 11

Continue on CR 633 for .5 mile beyond the abandoned farm buildings (1.2 miles beyond the CR 625 intersection) and pull off on the right in the fringe area just beyond the lane with the brick gateposts, opposite the large barn.

You are in a position close to where General Sheridan established a temporary command post after his ride from Winchester. Looking to your right (south), the Second Division, VI Corps established a line perpendicular to the Pike (US 11) just beyond the yellow apartment buildings. Remnants of the VIII Corps gathered under Rutherford B. Hayes in the hollow to the left (north) of the yellow buildings. It was here that a cluster of VIII Corps flags rose to salute Sheridan, an incident he mentions in his memoirs. Sheridan conferred with the corps and division commanders where you are now, then later rode forward of the main line to show himself to the troops. Once his plans were determined, a lull ensued until about 1600. Thus, between 1300 and 1600, you would have seen along this line the Union veterans relaxing as best they could, brewing coffee and reading, waiting for orders.

Community College 12

Continue .3 mile east on CR 633 to the stop sign at US 11.

The power lines to your left front beyond the weigh station mark the VIII Corps rallying point.

Turn right (south) and go 1.3 miles to the Lord Fairfax Community College, turning left into the second entrance (student parking lot). Park next to the high berm (grass mound) separating the parking lot from the main entrance, and walk up to the crest.

Look west across US 11 and you will see the red brick house at Miller's Mill where *Ramseur* made his last stand. To the left a half mile beyond is visible the metal roof of a barn which marks *Kershaw's* western flank. Turning left (south), on your left you will see a tall sign and the turquoise roof of a restaurant at the I-81 interchange with CR 627. *Wharton's* line was 300 yards south of that.

The area on which you are standing saw Federal cavalry activity starting at 0730 the day of the battle. Wesley Merritt's two brigades fought dismounted most of the day. They were supported by Custer's Division which remained mounted on the plain just north of the college. Sheridan sent Custer to his army's



The Valley Pike, 1885

The Valley Pike, 1985 (photo by Ben Ritter)





Ramseur falls in Federal attack. (James E. Taylor, Western Reserve Historical Society)

western flank at about 1300. Thereafter Merritt's forces held their own, finally mounting to conduct a series of charges against *Wharton* as part of the Federal counterattack.

When the Federal attack began, Confederate resistance in this area was very determined. Positions in this area did not change much until XIX Corps units and Custer's Division broke *Gordon's* lines to the west. Even then, *Ramseur's* defense at Miller's Mill was strong until he was wounded. When that happened, *Early* was unable to hold in place *Wharton's* and *Pegram's* units. One final cavalry charge turned the Confederate withdrawal into a rout.

Earlier, pressure had been placed on *Ramseur* by Gibbs' Ohio Battery. The battery had been positioned first astride US 11 at about the yellow apartment complex. From there, the VIII Corps Artillery chief, Captain Henry A. DuPont, brought it and Light Battery B, Fifth U.S. Artillery down to a point just west of the college buildings so they could enfilade (flank) *Ramseur's* position, helping to break resistance there.

From the berm, walk to the main entrance to the college and read the sign adjacent to it.

This concludes the self-guided tour. You can get back to I-81 by going south on US 11 for .2 mile and turning east on CR 627 for .3 mile. A more interesting route is to follow US 11 southward through Middletown 4.3 miles to the intersection with I-81 at Stickley's Hill.

This drive takes you on the Pike back through the battlefield and serves as a review of the action. It also offers an opportunity to view a number of interesting sites in Middletown. The Wayside Inn, a Federal headquarters in 1862 and 1864, marks what was the northern edge of the village during the Civil War. Colonel Charles Russell Lowell died in the house across the street of wounds received in the final cavalry charge. Every church you see in the village was a hospital after the battle.

As you pass the open fields around Belle Grove, it is interesting to recall that

Gen. Sheridan held a vast final review here prior to returning to Winchester on 10 November 1864. His entire force was arrayed around the mansion.

The Battle of Cedar Creek is one of the thousands of events which compose the rich history of the Shenandoah Valley. May the memory of the brave men who fought here remain with you.

Notes

Acknowledgments

Many people helped to produce the original brochure from which this updated reprint was taken: Louise Arnold of the Military History Institute, Helen Wadsworth of Book Binders, Sharon Dougherty (who did the typing), and Leo Bernstein of the Wayside Museum. The reprinted brochure was taken through production by Arthur S. Hardyman and Rae T. Panella. Linda M. Cajka designed the reprint. My thanks to one and all.

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Illustrations in this brochure are courtesy of *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War; Harper's Weekly* (Frank and Marie-T. Wood print collection); Alfred A. Waud (Library of Congress); James E. Taylor (Western Reserve Historical Society); New York Historical Society; U.S. Army Military History Institute; *History of the Eighth Regiment, Vermont Volunteers;* Kate Schultz (Belle Grove Plantation); and Ken Ritter (*The Valley Pike 1985*). The cover detail is from a painting by Julian Scott, Vermont State Archives. This brochure is reprinted from a brochure, copyrighted by J. W. A. Whitehorne.

