

Historic Resource Study
Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park

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under the Auspices of the Organization of American Historians

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CEDAR CREEK AND BELLE GROVE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY

Preface

The Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, formed in 2002, encompasses some 3,700 acres of land situated in the lower Shenandoah Valley of northwestern Virginia. The Park includes grounds upon which numerous military engagements of the Civil War were fought, most prominently the Battle of Cedar Creek in 1864. Also within the Park may be found a host of historic sites and remnants of the built landscape of previous centuries that have survived the destruction of the Civil War and the depredations of time. Among them is Belle Grove, a limestone mansion house built in the eighteenth century as the seat of a large plantation, which numerous Civil War commanders used as their headquarters. This area of the lower Shenandoah Valley proved to be of great strategic significance during the Civil War. But the locale is historically important for other reasons as well. For by the early nineteenth century, the Shenandoah Valley had become a center of wheat production within Virginia and the South, and farmers' output of the crop burgeoned during succeeding decades. In the 1860s, the region became a major source of foodstuffs for provisioning Confederate armies, thus acquiring its iconic status as "the breadbasket of the Confederacy." Geography and historical circumstances combined to make the land of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park and the surrounding environs an epicenter of high levels of wheat production within the Shenandoah Valley. And, as well, this locale of the valley emerged as a center for the milling of wheat and the production of flour, and a hub of major transportation arteries (road, river, and rail) for its conveyance to extra-regional markets.

The United States National Park Service, under the auspices of the Organization of American Historians, has commissioned this study as an interpretive overview of the history of the lands encompassing the park and the peoples who lived there, in order to have a foundational document that

will assist park personnel as they develop educational and interpretive plans for it. The study includes two parts. Part I presents a broadly conceived interpretive overview of the history of the Shenandoah Valley, from the pre-contact period when Native Americans lived there and its settlement by Euro-Americans beginning in the 1730s, to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with particular attention to the lower Valley and the lands of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historic Park. This section of the study, written by Kenneth E. Koons, describes the physical and historical context of the Park, setting the stage for a more complete understanding of the Battle of Cedar Creek and its aftermath. Part II, by Jonathan Noyalas, analyzes the lower Shenandoah Valley's strategic significance during the Civil War, and describes both the military operations carried out within or near the park and their effects on civilians. Coverage of the Battle of Cedar Creek and related developments is placed into the war's wider context in order to illuminate their broader social, military, and political impact.

PART I

“FROM BACKCOUNTRY TO BREADBASKET -- AND BEYOND”: TOPICS, THEMES, AND ISSUES IN THE HISTORY OF THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY DURING VIRGINIA’S AGE OF GRAIN, 1730-1900¹

Introduction

In August of 1820 John S. Skinner, founding editor of the *American Farmer*, mounted his horse and left Baltimore to “ride up the fine lime stone valley of Shenandoah ... to view, for the first time, the most beautiful, and most bountiful portion of our country.” Skinner’s purpose was to note “whatever might fall under my view which should appear extraordinary, either for its excellence or defects, in the Agricultural implements, habits, produce, live stock, &c. of the counties through which I might pass,” so that he could report to his readers on “prevailing agricultural practices” in Virginia.² As the editor of a periodical devoted to the improvement of agriculture, Skinner would have been eager to see for himself the agrarian characteristics of this “delightful” and “highly cultivated” region where an “improving” state of agriculture prevailed.³ For, by the time of his visit to the Shenandoah Valley, the region had become widely known for its farmers’ high levels of wheat production. In 1810, for example, one authority had

¹The phrase, “From BackCountry to Breadbasket – and Beyond,” which aptly references major transitions in the historical development of the Shenandoah Valley, appears on the website of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park (<<http://www.nps.gov/cebe/index.htm>>). The “Age of Grain” refers to the period from ca. 1760 to 1900 in Virginia history, when wheat farming dominated the state’s agrarian economy. See Jack Temple Kirby, “Virginia’s Environmental History: A Prospectus,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 99 (Oct. 1991): 461, for the original usage of this phrase and a full discussion of this period in the environmental history of Virginia.

²John S. Skinner, “Observations on the Agriculture of Virginia,” in *Travels in the Old South: Selected from Periodicals of the Times*, ed. Eugene Schwaab (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1973), 1: 136-37. Skinner founded the *American Farmer* in 1819 and quickly established his reputation as a knowledgeable promoter of agricultural reform. Avery O. Craven, “The Agricultural Reformers of the Ante-Bellum South,” *American Historical Review*, 33 (Jan. 1928): 308-09.

³Thomas H. Palmer, “Observations in Virginia,” in *Travels in the Old South*, 96, and John Holt Rice, “Journey about Virginia,” in *Travels in the Old South*, 194-95.

called the Shenandoah Valley “by far the leading wheat-producing region in Virginia.”⁴ Moreover, much of the wheaten flour produced in the Shenandoah was carried to the port city of Baltimore (where Skinner lived), for shipment to foreign markets. Thus, the financial interests of flour merchants and other businessmen of that city—some of whom would likely have been readers of Skinner’s journal—linked directly to the economic activities of the Shenandoah Valley farmers who would be the subjects of Skinner’s writings.

Skinner rode south from Harpers Ferry to Charlestown and then Winchester, the county seat of Frederick County, as he traveled toward the town of Staunton. Skinner’s route of travel on the Valley Turnpike—the main artery of transportation that followed the length of the Shenandoah Valley—took him into the heart of a rural district of the lower Valley that today comprises Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park. “Soon after passing Middletown,” a few miles south of Winchester, he arrived at “Belle Grove estate,” a “fertile farm of *six thousand acres*” owned by Isaac Hite, a descendant of one of the earliest settlers of the area. From the Valley Turnpike, Skinner’s westward view of the landscape would have been dominated by Hite’s “gracious mansion”; looking toward the southeast horizon his gaze would have fallen upon the northern bulkhead of Massanutten Mountain rising up from the floor of the Valley.⁵

In commenting on the expansiveness of Hite’s agricultural holdings, Skinner compared the size of typical farms “South of the Chesapeake” to those north of it. He “could not help reflecting on the vast difference that exists in the rural and social economy, habits and circumstances of sister states; living, nevertheless, in the greatest harmony under the same general government. How wonderful is the political structure which binds together parts apparently so heterogeneous!”⁶ Skinner could not have realized, of

⁴Tench Cox, the “purveyor of public supplies, as quoted by Robert D. Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier: Perspectives on the Early Shenandoah Valley* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1977), 177.

⁵Skinner, “Observations on the Agriculture of Virginia,” 1: 137, 139.

⁶*Ibid.*, 139.

course, that sectional differences such as these would sharpen and multiply during the years ahead, heightening tensions and fueling animosities that four decades hence would result in a bitter civil war between these “parts apparently so heterogeneous.”

Nor could Skinner have anticipated that this region in which he sojourned would play a crucial and strategic role in that war. The high levels of agricultural productivity that motivated Skinner to visit the Shenandoah Valley persisted during ensuing decades so that by the 1860s, the unsurpassed capacity of the region’s farmers to produce foodstuffs, especially wheat, caused the Confederate leadership to rely heavily upon the Valley as a source of foodstuffs for provisioning soldiers. Thus, historical literature pertaining to the Civil War era teems with references to the Shenandoah Valley as the “breadbasket of the confederacy.”⁷ Further, the “old English manorial dwelling”⁸ of Belle Grove would serve as the headquarters for successive Union generals, including General Philip Sheridan who, late in the war, directed “the burning” of the Shenandoah Valley from there.⁹ In addition, the Battle of Cedar Creek was fought on Belle Grove estate as well as on other farmlands that lay between or proximate to the towns of Strasburg and Middletown, near where the boundaries of Frederick, Shenandoah, and Warren Counties intersect just north of Massanutten Mountain.¹⁰ The Battle of Cedar Creek marked an important turning

⁷As examples, see Kenneth E. Koons, “‘The Staple of Our Country’: Wheat in the Regional Farm Economy of the Nineteenth-Century Valley of Virginia,” in *After the Backcountry: Rural Life in the Great Valley of Virginia, 1800-1900*, ed. Kenneth E. Koons and Warren R. Hofstra (University of Tennessee Press, 2000); John L. Heatwole, *The Burning: Sheridan’s Devastation of the Shenandoah Valley* (Charlottesville, Virginia: Howell Press, Inc., 1998); and Michael G. Mahon, *The Shenandoah Valley, 1861-1865: The Destruction of the Granary of the Confederacy* (Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 1999).

⁸This is David Hunter Strother’s description of Hite’s home. Cecil D. Eby, Jr. ed., *A Virginia Yankee in the Civil War: The Diaries of David Hunter Strother* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 63.

⁹The most comprehensive treatment of Sheridan’s 1864 burnings in the Valley is Heatwole, *The Burning*.

¹⁰When Skinner traveled through this region, present-day Clarke and Warren Counties did not exist. These counties were carved out of Frederick and Shenandoah Counties in 1836. Thorough discussion of issues leading to the creation of these counties may be found in Warren R. Hofstra, *A Separate Place: The Formation of Clarke County, Virginia* (Berryville, Virginia: Clarke County Sesquicentennial Committee, 1986). Also, see Michael F. Doran, *Atlas of County Boundary Changes in Virginia, 1834-1895* (Athens, Georgia: Iberian Publishing Co., 1987).

point in the Civil War. The Union victory dealt a severe blow to the capacity of Confederate armies to maintain a foothold in the Shenandoah Valley and, as well, it helped to secure the reelection of Lincoln.

The Battle of Cedar Creek profoundly disrupted the lives of ordinary men and women who lived in the area. Cataclysmic developments unfolded there: soldiers fought and died, homes were destroyed and civilian populations traumatized, and at war's end much of the area's economic infrastructure lay in ruins. The families who lived along or near Cedar Creek, in the swath of territory between Middletown and Strasburg—the Stickleys, the Hupps, the Bowmans, the Heaters, the Millers, and many others—experienced in full measure the maelstrom and violence of warfare.

Daniel Stickley, a farmer who lived on the west side of the Valley Turnpike a few miles south of Middletown and owned a grist mill across the road on Cedar Creek, provides a case in point. His property served intermittently as the field headquarters for various military officers; his mill was destroyed during Sheridan's "burning" of the Valley; and in the Battle of Cedar Creek his property lay directly in the path of Confederate troops surging forward to meet their federal adversaries. Stickley's home was taken over as a hospital, with the kitchen serving as a surgery for the amputation of soldiers' shattered limbs. Countless numbers of wounded soldiers died or suffered amputations, or both, in and about the Stickley home, and many of the dead were buried in the Stickley farmyard (full discussion of the role of the Stickley home in the Battle of Cedar Creek may be found in Chapter Five of this study).

Considering the significance of the Battle of Cedar Creek in the larger conflict of the Civil War, it is not surprising that the battle has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention, resulting in a voluminous body of literature describing and analyzing battle conditions and troop movements, and evaluating military leadership. In the vast preponderance of these studies, however, the homes, barns, or mills of local inhabitants such as the Stickleys are treated merely as features of the built environment, serving as reference points to describe, or mark on maps, military engagements, and troop movements. Historians have devoted comparatively little attention to themes and topics relevant to a deeper understanding of the lives of local inhabitants and to the history of social experience and economic life in the region. For

greater than a century before the firing on Fort Sumter and for considerably longer than a century after Appomattox, successive generations of men and women—of African American as well as Euro-American descent—made their homes on farms in the open-country neighborhoods of the Cedar Creek area, or in nearby hamlets, villages, and towns, quietly working and earning livelihoods, forming families and raising children. But these and other aspects of the private lives of Shenandoah Valley peoples are poorly understood. We are often keen to know about—and to celebrate even—the capacities of Valley residents to cope with the trauma and chaos of the Civil War. But how did inhabitants of the Shenandoah Valley and those of the communities of Cedar Creek, in particular, live when they were free of the mayhem of invading armies, destruction, and violent death? What structures of everyday life and long-term historical processes of change shaped the lives of peoples—both black and white, free and unfree—who lived in or near the paths of armies that clashed in the shadow of Massanutten Mountain in October of 1864? How did they earn livelihoods for themselves? What were the main demographic and familial circumstances of these peoples who lived in small-towns or in the open-country neighborhoods of the outlying countryside? Part I provides answers to questions such as these as it describes and analyzes the development of society and economy in the Shenandoah Valley from its “backcountry” phase in the eighteenth century to the Civil War era and its aftermath in the nineteenth century. In so doing, it presents background and context for Part II of this study.

Chapter One: Land and People in the Shenandoah Valley

The Physical Setting

Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park is located in the northern Shenandoah Valley, Valley, a discrete physiographic region of western Virginia that forms one segment of the Great Valley, the broad expanse of lowland that stretches along the eastern side of Appalachia, from upstate New York to central Alabama (Figures 1 and 2). Throughout the Shenandoah Valley, named for the river that drains it, the defining character of local topography is the broad valley floor and the mountain ridges rising to either side of it. From many vantage points within the Valley one can look to either side and see the mountain ridges that define and give shape to it—the Blue Ridge Mountains to the east and the mountains of the Allegheny Plateau to the west. The floor of the Valley, an upland plateau, varies in width ranging from twenty to thirty miles in most of its sections.¹ Also, the floor varies considerably in elevation, from 635 feet above sea-level in the northern Valley at Winchester, to 1,635 in southern Augusta County, a distance of about 115 miles.²

The Blue Ridge Mountains bounding the east side of the Valley comprise a series of parallel ridges of irregular height. As an eighteenth-century traveler observed in crossing the Blue Ridge, “instead of one great mountain to pass over ... there is a succession of small hills rising imperceptibly one above the other so that you get upon the top of the ridge before you are aware of it.”³ The mountains of the Blue Ridge are relatively low, averaging about 2,500 feet above sea level. Referring to the height and

¹Joseph Martin, *A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia and the District of Columbia* (Charlottesville, Virginia: Moseley and Tompkins, Printers, 1835), 19.

²Elevations are from “Weather Underground,” website at <http://www.wunderground.com/>.

³Isaac Weld Jr., *Travels through the States of North America, and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada during the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797*, as quoted in Michael P. Branch and Daniel J. Philippon, ed., *The Height of Our Mountains: Nature Writing from Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains and Shenandoah Valley* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 126.

steepness of the slope of the Blue Ridge Mountains, a European who visited the Valley in the 1780s wrote that they cannot be “compared at all to the ... Appenines, and much less of the Alps.”⁴ Another visitor to the region similarly described the Blue Ridge as “not high” and their summits as “more like hilltops.”⁵ Low though the summits of the mountains may be, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they impeded travel and the flow of goods between the Shenandoah Valley and regions lying eastward—the Piedmont, which extends from the Blue Ridge to the fall-line, and east of that line, the coastal plain of the Tidewater region which reaches to the Chesapeake Bay. Travelers moved back and forth between the Valley and the uplands of the Piedmont by following openings or “gaps” between ridges of the Blue Ridge Mountains. All along the Blue Ridge, numerous gaps allow movement from one side of the mountain to the other. One such opening—the Manassas Gap—is situated immediately east of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park (Figure 3). As discussed in subsequent sections of this study, this opening in the Blue Ridge played an important role in the history of the lower Shenandoah Valley, including the lands of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park.

On the opposite side of the Shenandoah Valley, the mountain ridges of the Allegheny Plateau unfold westward toward the Ohio River Valley. This region, which geographers refer to as the Ridge and Valley Province of Appalachia, encompasses many parallel mountain ridges of nearly uniform height, separated by long, narrow, discontinuous valleys. In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson reported that this region of “ridges one behind another, running nearly parallel,” was called the “endless mountains” by Indians.⁶ As with the various segments of the Great Valley itself, these mountains have local names. The mountain ridge defining the western edge of the Shenandoah Valley in its section

⁴Luigi Castiglioni, *Voyage into the United States of America*, as quoted in Branch and Philippon, ed., *The Height of Our Mountains*, 120.

⁵Louis Philip, [King of France], *Diary of My Travels in America*, as quoted in Branch and Philippon, ed., *The Height of Our Mountains*, 132.

⁶Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Electronic Text Center, University of Virginia, 142-144 [etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/JefVirg.html].

adjacent to the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, for example, is known as Little North Mountain, and beyond it to the west the next ridge is known variously as North Mountain, Great North Mountain, or Shenandoah Mountain. As with the Blue Ridge, these mountains also contain gaps among them, which allow westward movement from the Valley (Figure 4).⁷

Immediately south of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park and a few miles west of the Blue Ridge, mountain ridges rise up from the floor of the Valley to a height of about 1,500 feet above sea-level. This range, often referred to simply as Massanutten Mountain, extends southward parallel to the Blue Ridge for about fifty miles, thus bisecting the floor of the Valley for that distance. The peak of the northern-most section of Massanutten Range, called Signal Knob, would have been within John Skinner's vista as he rode southward on the Valley Turnpike between Middletown, located on the eastern edge of the northern end of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, and Strasburg, a town located southwest of and adjacent to the Park. Between Massanutten Mountain and the Blue Ridge lies the Page Valley.⁸

The hydrology of the Shenandoah River, a tributary of the Potomac, features two main Forks—the North and the South—both of which flow toward the northeast from their headwaters in southern sections of the Valley. Near Strasburg, the North Fork courses sharply eastward (and for a short distance serves as the southern border of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park) before intersecting with the South Fork where it emerges from behind Massanutten Mountain near Manassas Gap.⁹ From there, the main stem of the Shenandoah flows northward to its confluence with the Potomac River at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Throughout the length of the Valley, extensive networks of

⁷John W. Wayland, *Twenty-Five Chapters on the Shenandoah Valley* (Harrisonburg, Virginia: C. J. Carrier, 1976), 3.

⁸“Page Valley” takes its name from Page County, the entirety of which lies between the Massanutten Range and the Blue Ridge, south of Warren County.

⁹Ernest Ingersoll, *To the Shenandoah and Beyond: A Chronicle of a Leisurely Journey Through the Uplands of Virginia and Tennessee, Sketching their Scenery, Noting their Legends, Portraying Social and Material Progress, and Explaining Routes of Travel*, with illustrations by Frank H. Taylor (New York: Leve & Alden Printing Company, 1885), 28.

streams and waterways of various sizes connect to the two forks of the Shenandoah River, both of which meander sinuously to form extremely serpentine courses. Throughout geologic time, the flow of water has created large, horse-shoe shaped bends in their channels known as “meanders” or “oxbows” (Figure 5).

Since the river flows north to lower elevations, the northern Shenandoah Valley is customarily referred to as the “lower Valley” and, conversely, the southern portion of the valley is known as the “upper Valley.” Thus, in traveling from northern sections of the Valley toward the south, one goes *up* the Valley (to higher elevations), and in moving from the south toward the north one travels *down* the Valley. Moving from the lower valley to the upper Valley, elevations increase progressively from 635 feet above sea level at Winchester to about 1,300 feet at Staunton. In the vicinity of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, the towns of Strasburg and Middletown are both at 749 feet. The elevation at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, where the Shenandoah River empties into the Potomac, is 465 feet above sea-level.¹⁰

Historically, the Shenandoah Valley has been noted widely for the agricultural productivity of its soils. When John Skinner wrote of “the fine lime stone valley of Shenandoah,” he referenced a soil type that prevails widely in the Shenandoah Valley and is well known for its extraordinary agricultural productivity. Even nineteenth-century scientists understood the superior qualities of limestone soils, such as those found in the Shenandoah Valley, for mixed farming generally and wheat farming in particular.¹¹ According to one historian, “it was the limestone land of the lower Valley that all considered the most

¹⁰Elevations of each of the county seats—all located on the Valley Turnpike—are as follows: Winchester (Frederick County), 635; Woodstock (Shenandoah County), 1,000; Harrisonburg (Rockingham County), 1,395; and Staunton (Augusta County) 1,280. Steeles Tavern, a village located south of Staunton on the Valley Pike, on the boundary line of Rockbridge and Augusta Counties near the southern-most headwaters of the Shenandoah, is 1,635 above sea-level. Moving north to south in the Page Valley, between the Massanutten Range and the Blue Ridge, which is drained by the South Fork of the Shenandoah, elevations for county seats are: Front Royal (Warren County), 700; and Luray (Page County), 951. Port Republic, a village located east of Harrisonburg on the South Fork, is situated at 1,191 feet above sea-level. All elevations are from the “Weather Underground,” website at <http://www.wunderground.com/>.

¹¹Wm. Gilham, “The Soils of the Valley of Virginia,” *The Southern Planter*, Vol. XVI, No. 1 (January 1856): 22, 26-28.

fertile in the Shenandoah region” and “many ... judged it the best in the entire colony.”¹² Aside from the excellence of limestone-based soils for crop production, limestone rocks proved a valuable resource as well. Farmers of the region must have found the rocks and fieldstones troublesome as they could break plows and other tillage equipment, and therefore had to be removed from croplands in order to create smooth seedbeds. However, the stone served as a durable building material for many structures including homes, barns, outbuildings such as springhouses, grist mills, fences, building foundations, and the like. Thus, throughout the lower Shenandoah Valley, limestone structures—some built as early as the eighteenth century—form distinctive and highly visible elements of the built landscape. In addition, limestone rocks softened by burning could be ground and pulverized for use as a soil amendment to sweeten acidic soils. Many farmers constructed lime kilns for the production of agricultural lime. In the mid-1880s, “evidences of an important manufacture of lime,” could be found in the vicinity the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park.¹³ Iron manufacturers also benefited from the widespread availability of limestone rocks; they dumped large quantities of them into their furnaces to serve as a flux for purifying iron ore.¹⁴

Limestone produces distinctive karst topography. In limestone areas of the Valley, gradualness of change in elevation creates large expanses of smooth, gently rolling terrain featuring minimal slope. Hills tend to be relatively low and rounded. Throughout limestone areas of the Valley, characteristic features of karst topography may be found, e.g., frequently occurring springs, caverns, and sinkholes. Limestone is highly susceptible to chemical weathering; slightly acidic water erodes away portions of the

¹²Willard F. Bliss, “The Tuckahoe in New Virginia,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (Oct., 1951): 388.

¹³Ingersoll, *To the Shenandoah and Beyond*, 28; and *An Account Descriptive of the Washington City, Va. Midland, and Great Southern Railroad, and of the Terminal and Intervening Cities, Towns, and Counties Upon Its Line, Containing Full Information in Regard to the Lands Offered for Sale to Actual Settlers by the Company, on Long Credits and Easy Terms; and Other Facts of Public Interest* (Lynchburg: Virginia Book and Job Print, 1874), 48.

¹⁴Charles B. Dew, *Bond of Iron: Master and Slave at Buffalo Forge* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994), 30.

underground lithic structure, creating fissures and cavities that result in the formation of irregular drainage systems. Streams follow channels of least resistance, in many instances entering underground passages and emerging miles away as springs, which served as important sources of water for settlers establishing homes and farms. Springs on the western edge of the Shenandoah Valley or situated among the mountains ridges beyond developed as popular tourist destinations during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. “Elite Southerners” flocked to these “medicinal” springs seeking the health benefits of bathing in or drinking the waters and, as well, the company of others who visited the resorts for relaxation and conviviality.¹⁵

Underground caverns and sinkholes abound in the Shenandoah Valley, resulting from the vulnerability of limestone to chemical weathering. Bedrock far beneath the ground surface has been weathered away, creating underground cavities or caverns. With time and continuing erosion, the ceilings of underground cavities sometimes collapse, resulting in sinkholes.¹⁶ Often, sinkholes provide access to expansive underground caverns that in earlier times, as now, provided a source of wonderment to inhabitants of the Valley and visitors to it as well. Numerous caverns are located near Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park.¹⁷

Although limestone soils predominate in the Valley, shale soils—which are less fertile and agriculturally productive than limestone soils—are present as well (Figure 6). In general, shale areas of

¹⁵Charlene M. Boyer Lewis, *Ladies and Gentlemen on Display: Planter Society and the Virginia Springs, 1790-1860* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 212; Martin, *A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia*, 302. For a detailed description of the springs as experienced by one visitor to them in the mid-nineteenth century, see Lucretia Ramsey Bishko, “John S. Skinner Visits the Virginia Springs, 1847,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 80 (1972): 158-192.

¹⁶Warren R. Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia: Settlement and Landscape in the Shenandoah Valley* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2004), 31-32. Also instructive on these points are Randall C. Orndorff and George E. Harlow, Jr., “Field Trip Guide: Hydrologic Framework of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Carbonate Aquifer System,” in *U.S. Geological Survey Karst Interest Group Proceedings*, Shepardsstown, West Virginia, August 20-22, 2002, ed. Eve L. Kuniansky (U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey, Office of Groundwater <<http://water.usgs.gov/ogw/karst/>>); and Charles S. Prosser, “The Shenandoah Limestone and Martinsburg Shale,” *Journal of Geology* 8 (1900): 655-663.

¹⁷Martin, *A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia*, 303.

the Valley are at higher elevations and include more rugged terrain than limestone sections. Compared to limestone, shale is much more resistant to chemical weathering but much less resistant to physical weathering. Consequently, in shale areas of the Valley, water drains across ground surfaces, with the consequence that stream beds are deeply incised into the landscape. Sharp escarpments and deep ravines result, giving the upland shale areas a hillier and more broken relief than is typically found in limestone areas.¹⁸

Thus, throughout the Valley floor, the characteristics of each major soil type—limestone and shale—with regard to weathering and erosion have created a topography of considerable variation in elevation and degree of slope. In (and near) Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, both major soil types are found. Sections of the Park include lands in the so-called “Shale-Limestone Contact” or “interface,” where the two soil-types meet one another (Figure 7).¹⁹ Accordingly, consistent with the association of limestone-based soils with high levels of agricultural productivity, and the association of shale-based soils with lower levels of fertility for agricultural purposes, over one-half of the Park (55 percent) is composed of lands classified as “prime farmland” or “farmland of statewide importance,” and the remaining portion (45 percent) is classified as “not prime farmland.” Most of the best farmland is located in the northern portion of the Park, and the poorer (“not prime”) farmland is located in the southern portion of the Park. Even within the southern portion of the Park, however, sections of “prime farmland” and “farmland of statewide importance” are found in the bottomlands of creeks and rivers, and elsewhere as well.²⁰

¹⁸Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia*, 31-32.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 32.

²⁰*Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2008), 3-41 and the map on 3-43. Also, see Randall C. Orndorff, Jack B. Epstein, and Robert C. McDowell, *Geologic Map of the Middletown Quadrangle, Frederick, Shenandoah, and Warren Counties, Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey, 1999), and Eugene K. Radar, Robert C. McDowell, Thomas M. Gathright, II, and Randall C. Orndorff, *Geologic Map of Clarke, Frederick, Page, Shenandoah, and Warren Counties, Virginia: Lord Fairfax Planning District*, Geologic Map Prepared in

The predominance of highly fertile limestone soils played a significant role in the development of the Shenandoah Valley as a prime agricultural region. Also important, however, were climatic conditions propitious for farming. The Valley has a temperate climate with well defined seasons and abundant rainfall. Average summer temperatures range from 70 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit, with the average temperatures of winter months ranging from 30 to 34 degrees Fahrenheit. Average annual rainfall varies from 30 to 34 inches. The growing season averages 165 to 180 days, and its length increases progressively from southwest to northeast, with the consequence that within the Valley the growing season is longer in its lower sections. The crops (including corn, hays, and small cereal grains) and livestock (such as horses, cattle, swine, and sheep) that settlers from Pennsylvania brought with them to the Valley were “well adapted” to prevailing seasonal temperatures and amounts of rainfall.²¹

Historically, political authorities have divided and subdivided Virginia—as both colony and commonwealth—into counties as units of civil administration²² (Figure 8). The subsection of the Great Valley drained by the Shenandoah River includes the counties, running from north to southwest, of Frederick, Clarke, Shenandoah, Warren, Page, Rockingham, and Augusta.²³ However, historians and geographers who study the region have tended to define the Shenandoah Valley as a cultural region, which leads to the inclusion of areas of the Great Valley not drained by the Shenandoah River, e.g., sections north of Frederick and Clark Counties drained by waterways leading directly to the Potomac River (rather than to the Shenandoah), such as the West Virginia counties of Berkeley and Jefferson.²⁴

Cooperation with the U.S. Geological Survey (Charlottesville: Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy, Division of Mineral Resources, 1996).

²¹Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 21-22.

²²A full discussion—with accompanying maps—of the formation of Virginia counties may be found in Doran, *Atlas of County Boundary Changes in Virginia*.

²³These are the modern counties of the Valley. In 1836, Clarke County was carved out of eastern Frederick County, and Warren (and part of Page as well) was created out of territory in eastern Shenandoah County (see Doran, *Atlas of County Boundary Changes in Virginia*).

²⁴Some waterways of Frederick and Clarke Counties run directly to the Potomac, e.g., the Opequon Creek.

Scholars sometimes include Rockbridge County (south of Augusta County), and Botetourt County (south of Rockbridge) as well, both drained by the James River or its tributaries. Thus, one historian of the region has written that “in ordinary usage of the term, the Shenandoah Valley reaches ... to Lexington [in Rockbridge County] or beyond.”²⁵ Botetourt County is sometimes regarded as the southernmost extension of the Shenandoah because it is where the Great Valley narrows considerably to form a bottleneck that widens again south of the city of Roanoke (located immediately south of Botetourt County), thereby creating a natural break between the Shenandoah Valley (or sometimes called the “Valley of Virginia”) and the region known as “southwest Virginia.” In this study, for the purposes of compiling county-level numerical data pertaining to the Shenandoah Valley, the region is defined as comprising the nine counties from Frederick and Clarke in the north, to and including Botetourt in the southwest (Figure 9).²⁶ Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park encompasses the intersection of the three lower-valley counties of Frederick, Shenandoah, and Warren. Accordingly, in order to particularize region-wide trends at the level of the Park through the use of county-level historical data, the analytical focus must fall upon these three counties.²⁷

Numerous features of the built landscape—some historic and some modern—as well as natural landmarks are helpful for describing the spatial location of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park within the lower Shenandoah Valley. Park lands encompass sections of present-day Route 11—known successively as the Great Warriors’ Path, the Great Wagon Road, and in the nineteenth century the Valley Turnpike—between and adjacent to Middletown, the southernmost town within

²⁵Wayland, *Twenty-Five Chapters*, 1.

²⁶It should also be noted that the areal extent of these counties identified as encompassing the Shenandoah Valley include the mountain ridges to either side that define the Valley floor.

²⁷However, Clarke County may also be included at times for, although this county lies wholly outside Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, a significant portion of its southern section is situated substantially closer to the Park than more distant sections of Frederick, Shenandoah, and Warren Counties. As discussed elsewhere in this study, Clarke County’s cultural and socio-economic development differed dramatically from that of the remainder of the Valley. Nonetheless, if used discerningly and with care, historical data from Clark County can also illuminate trends and central tendencies in Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park.

Frederick County located on Route 11, and Strasburg, the northernmost town within Shenandoah County located on that road. These towns are seven miles apart from one another (Figure 10).²⁸ Cedar Creek, a major tributary of the North Fork of the Shenandoah that serves as the boundary between Frederick and Shenandoah Counties, runs through the Park from the northwest toward the southeast, and empties into the North Fork of the Shenandoah River about three miles east of Strasburg. This is not far from where, on the opposite bank of the North Fork, Signal Knob, the peak at the northernmost extension of Massanutten Mountain, rises 1,350 or so feet above the river bottomlands. This section of the North Fork forms the southern border of the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park.²⁹

A combination of historical circumstances and attributes relating to geography and spatial location contributed to the emergence of farmlands in the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park area of the lower Shenandoah as the epicenter of wheat and flour production in the Shenandoah Valley. The lands encompassed by Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park were propitiously located for commercial wheat farming and the conversion of wheat to flour. The fertile limestone-based soils of the river bottom lands were supremely well suited for the production of wheat, and the fast-flowing waters of Cedar Creek and its tributaries, as well as other nearby streams, provided ample motive power for turning grist mills' water wheels for the conversion of wheat to flour. Also, proximity to both the Valley Turnpike and the Shenandoah River—two major transportation arteries of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—gave farmers and millers of the lands encompassing Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park and its surrounding environs ready access to markets for wheat and wheaten flour. In the 1850s, Strasburg became an important rail center in the lower Valley,

²⁸In earlier times present-day Route 11 was also known as “the Valley Road” or the “Philadelphia Wagon Road.” See Karl Raitz, “The Lay of the Land,” in *The Great Valley Road of Virginia: Shenandoah Landscapes from Prehistory to the Present*, ed. Warren R. Hofstra and Karl Raitz, 47 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), and Warren R. Hofstra, “The Colonial Road,” in *The Great Valley Road of Virginia*, 80. Modern Interstate Route 81, which runs southwest to northeast parallel to Route 11 through the Valley, bisects the Park. Also, about halfway between Middletown and Strasburg, Interstate Route 66 intersects with Route 81 from the east.

²⁹Further east, within a few miles of the southeast border of the Park, the North and South Forks of the Shenandoah converge, near Manassas Gap and immediately north of Front Royal, the seat of Warren County.

providing area farmers and millers with ready access to a more efficient means of transporting flour and other farm products to extra-regional markets. Moreover, lands of the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park lay within the commercial orbit of Winchester, historically the largest town and most important commercial center of the Shenandoah Valley, especially commerce relating to the flour trade. Subsequent chapters of Part I of this study describe the circumstances by which wheat farming developed as the main engine of economic growth and development in the Shenandoah Valley and, as well, document the growing ubiquity of grist mills for processing wheat into flour.

Patterns of Settlement

The Shenandoah Valley was settled largely by peoples of German, Scots-Irish, and English descent. And, because Virginia formed a part of the slave South, African Americans also became an element of the cultural mix. Beginning in the 1730s, settlers formed two migrant streams into this “backcountry” region, one from Pennsylvania and a smaller one from eastern Virginia. The Great Valley, bounded by mountain ridges to either side, formed a natural corridor of movement from south-central Pennsylvania into the Shenandoah Valley. Peoples mostly of German or Scots-Irish origin, but some of English descent as well, migrated from Pennsylvania by moving westward and entering the Cumberland Valley (the southcentral-Pennsylvania segment of the Great Valley), and following it southward on the Great Wagon Road into the Shenandoah Valley. Some of these migrants to the Valley had lived for a time in Pennsylvania, or were from other colonies such as New York or New Jersey; others were from Ulster, Switzerland, or the Palatinate who came to North America through the port city of Philadelphia.³⁰ Settlers from eastern Virginia, most of whom were of English cultural background, entered the Valley by moving westward through gaps in the Blue Ridge. By the nomenclature of the late eighteenth century,

³⁰Wayland Fuller Dunaway, “Pennsylvania as an Early Distributing Center of Population,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 44 (1931): 135.

these settlers were moving from “old Virginia” to “New Virginia,” or from “lower Virginia” to “upper Virginia.”³¹ As they migrated to the lower Shenandoah Valley and took-up land there, these settlers from east of the Blue Ridge brought large numbers of African American slaves with them to serve as agricultural laborers.

Prospective settlers arriving to the Virginia backcountry found a mosaic of woodlands and open, cleared areas and edge habitats that had been created by Indians in earlier centuries. Paleo-Indians had entered the region as early as about 9000 B.C. During the following millennia, they circulated through the region as hunter-gatherers, living in temporary encampments that they returned to seasonally. Archaeologists have discovered numerous camp sites in the lower Valley, near Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park. Around 900 A.D., Indians of the lower Valley began to live in hamlets as they supplemented their food supply by practicing agriculture. A resulting surplus of food led to population growth, which created tension and conflict as greater numbers competed for fewer resources. Increasingly, Indians of the region lived in stockaded villages for protection from both internecine strife and intertribal warfare, which became “endemic” by 1500. By 1680, the League of the Iroquois had gained total control of the larger region including the Shenandoah Valley. Leaders of the League, seeking to maximize their trade in skins with the British and the French, forced the depopulation of the region so that it could serve as a territory for hunting and trapping animals. By 1700, for Native Americans the Shenandoah Valley had become a “no man’s land.” Consequently, when Euro-Americans moved into the Valley beginning in the 1730s, Native Americans no longer lived there. They occasionally passed through the Valley as they traveled interior regions of North America.³²

³¹Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia*, 5; and Bliss, “The Tuckahoe in New Virginia,” 389 and 395.

³²William H. Gardner, *Lost Arrowheads and Broken Pottery: Traces of Indians in the Shenandoah Valley* (N.p.: Thunderhead Publications, 1986), 29, 77, and 89-90. Gardner provides an excellent account of the role of Indians in shaping the landscape of the Shenandoah Valley, particularly in its lower sections in the vicinity of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park. Other helpful works include James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), Chapters 2 and 3; Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia*, 18-21, 24-25, 50-51, 101-105, 328; and Michael N. McConnell, “Before the Great Road: Indian Travelers on the Great Warriors’ Path,” in *The Great Valley Road of Virginia*, 57-78.

A leading historian of the settlement process in “New Virginia” argues that the peopling of the Shenandoah Valley was shaped broadly by the goals and desires of three main groups: the British crown, land speculators, and the actual settlers.³³ The British crown’s interest in the Virginia backcountry was for settlement, in order to reinforce its control of the region and thereby thwart French claims to it. Colonized by British subjects, the region west of the Blue Ridge would serve as a protective buffer for Virginia east of the Blue Ridge, against the French and their Indian allies. Accordingly, in the late 1720s, royal authorities began to grant large expanses of land in the Shenandoah Valley to land speculators. These tracts ranged in size from a few thousand acres to several hundred thousand acres. Under the terms of this “land grant” system, speculators were required to establish settlers on the land within a specified period. Specifically, within two years of the grant, one family per thousand acres granted had to be settled on the land.³⁴ Speculators, in turn, sold land to settlers in order to earn a profit and fulfill their obligation to establish people on the land. The primary goal of settlers in purchasing land from speculators was to acquire good farm land inexpensively in order to establish a competence upon which they could support their families and provide an inheritance for their children as they came of age.³⁵

Among the earliest settlers arriving to the Valley were peoples of mostly Germanic or Swiss origin from Pennsylvania who, following the Valley Turnpike—then called “the Great Wagon Road”—moved southward into the lower Valley and, during the early 1730s, formed settlements in three different locations, all near Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park.³⁶ One group moved into the Page Valley beginning in 1728 or 1729 and settled on lands that would be patented by Jacob Stover in

³³Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia*, 53-56.

³⁴Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 29.

³⁵Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia*, 7, 117.

³⁶*A History of Roads in Virginia: the most convenient wayes* (Richmond: Virginia Department of Transportation, 2002), 4.

1730, thereby establishing the so-called Massanutten settlement on the South Fork of the Shenandoah.³⁷ In 1731, another group, this one led by a land speculator from Pennsylvania named Jost Hite—the grandfather of Isaac Hite, the owner of Belle Grove when John Skinner visited there in 1820—founded a settlement a few miles south of present-day Winchester on the Opequon Creek and its tributaries, a location that placed them immediately northeast of the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park. In time, members of the “Opequon settlement” and their descendents expanded southward into the Cedar Creek watershed, onto lands that today are part of or near Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park.³⁸ A third group settled south of the Park on the western side of Massanutten Mountain, establishing the “Shenandoah Colony” a few miles southwest of Strasburg.³⁹ These “neighborhoods” expanded so that by the 1740s they formed “one contiguous German tract.”⁴⁰ During ensuing decades rising numbers of both German and Scots-Irish migrants from Pennsylvania—or European émigrés entering Philadelphia—poured into the backcountry. New settlement were also established with the consequence that by the mid-eighteenth-century, continuous but narrow bands of settlement extended along both sides of both forks of the Shenandoah River and their larger tributaries, from the lower to the upper Valley.⁴¹ In the upper Valley, settlers flocked to lands that had been granted to William Beverley and Benjamin Borden, in the present-day counties of Augusta and Rockbridge, respectively (Figure 11).⁴²

³⁷Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 27-28; Klaus Wust, *The Virginia Germans* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1969), 29-31.

³⁸Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 29; Wust, *Virginia Germans*, 33.

³⁹Wust, *Virginia Germans*, 37.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 37.

⁴¹Many works provide thorough description and analysis of the beginnings of Euro-American settlement of the Shenandoah Valley, and subsequent developments as well. Among the best are Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia*, Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, David Hackett Fischer and James Kelly, *Bound Away: Virginia and the Westward Movement* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 83-87, 106, and 111-126; and Wust, *The Virginia Germans*, 27-38. Also, Hofstra, Mitchell, (and Hofstra and Mitchell, and Mitchell and Hofstra), have written numerous informative articles. Among the most helpful are: Mitchell, “Content and Context: Tidewater Characteristics in the Early Shenandoah Valley,” *The Maryland Historian* 5 (1974), 79-92; Hofstra, “Ethnicity and Community Formation on the Shenandoah Frontier, 1730-1790,” in Michael Puglisi (ed.), *Diversity and Accommodation: Essays on the Cultural Composition of the*

Some areas of the Shenandoah Valley were settled predominantly by one ethnic group. Peoples of German descent, for example, dominated in Shenandoah and Rockingham Counties. In Augusta and Rockbridge Counties—on the Beverley and Borden Tracts—a disproportionate share of the population was Scots-Irish. For this reason, Augusta and Rockbridge Counties became known colloquially as “the Irish Tract.”⁴³ Despite these clearly discernible patterns of “residential segregation” during the settlement period and thereafter, ethnic pluralism gradually dissipated.⁴⁴ Among Valley populations, Germanic peoples used their native language well into the nineteenth century, thereby maintaining a strong sense of ethnic identity far longer than other groups. In contrast, by the mid-1770s, the Scots-Irish could not be distinguished from English peoples hailing from Pennsylvania. Gradually, however, the growing commercialization of economic life in the Valley led to acculturation and assimilation, because since Germans and Scots-Irish were “commercially-minded farmers rather than communally-oriented peasants ... commercialization transcended ethnic boundaries.”⁴⁵

Settlers were attracted to the Valley by cheap land which, during the 1730s and 1740s, could be had at “nominal” prices, perhaps as low as approximately one-third the cost of land in Pennsylvania.⁴⁶ The manner in which settlers took up land and developed farms resulted in the formation of “open-

Virginia Frontier, 59-81 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997); Hofstra, “The Virginia Backcountry in the Eighteenth Century: The Questions of Origins and the Issue of Outcomes,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 101 (1993): 485-508; Hofstra and Mitchell, “Town and Country in Backcountry Virginia: Winchester and the Shenandoah Valley, 1730-1800,” *Journal of Southern History* 59 (1993), 619-646; and Mitchell and Hofstra, “How do settlement systems evolve? The Virginia backcountry during the eighteenth century,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 21 (1995): 123-147.

⁴²Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, 202.

⁴³Ibid., 214; and Dunaway, “Pennsylvania as an Early Distributing Center of Population,” 138-145.

⁴⁴Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, 212.

⁴⁵ Mitchell, “Content and Context,” 88-90, and Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 104-109.

⁴⁶Dunaway, “Pennsylvania as an Early Distributing Center of Population,” 136, and Mitchell, “The Shenandoah Valley Frontier,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 62 (1972): 467. Wust, *Virginia Germans*, 35, asserts that “throughout the period of first land-taking,” land in the Shenandoah Valley could be bought at considerably lower prices (£8 or £9 per hundred acres) than in Pennsylvania (£15 per hundred acres).

country neighborhoods.” Settlers established farmsteads of a few hundred acres, on average, that were situated at some remove from their nearest neighbors, giving rise to a dispersed pattern of settlement that featured “open country” between and among farms and nucleated settlements (Figure 12).⁴⁷ Factors other than price that settlers considered as they sought land included the character of the terrain, the perceived natural fertility of the soil, access to wood and water, and nearness to family or other members of their ethnic group.⁴⁸ Water was essential, of course, and wooded areas yielded logs and lumber for the building of homes, storage sheds, livestock shelters and other outbuildings.⁴⁹ Settlers used the metes and bounds system to identify a parcel of land to be surveyed for warrant and purchase, and in so doing included as many types of natural resources or topographically advantageous features as reasonably possible, with the result that, contrary to the wishes of proprietors and speculators, the sizes and shapes of farms could be highly irregular.⁵⁰

The population of the Shenandoah Valley burgeoned during the decades after initial settlement, at least in part because of the large numbers of Scots-Irish and German immigrants arriving through the port city of Philadelphia. Nearly 40,000 Germans immigrants, for example, passed through Philadelphia during years from 1749 to 1754. One authority estimates that the population living “west of Virginia’s Blue Ridge” more than doubled in less than a decade, from 10,000 persons in 1745, to 17,000 in 1750, and almost 21,000 by 1755.⁵¹ However, population growth stagnated and perhaps even declined until

⁴⁷Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia*, 7, and 98-101. Also, see Hofstra and Mitchell, “Town and Country,” 628, where, in describing emerging settlements in the lower Shenandoah Valley, they write that “the economic landscape of dispersed family farms and kinship communities encompassed what might best be called open-country neighborhoods.” Elsewhere (p. 3 of “How Do Settlement Systems Evolve?”), Hofstra and Mitchell describe open-country neighborhoods as “loosely defined” settlements in which “farms were distributed on terraces above stream bottoms 0.5 to 1 mile apart within settlements about 6 to 8 miles ... long and 3 to 5 miles ... wide, thus accommodating about 15 to 20 families each.”

⁴⁸Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 239-240, and Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, 216.

⁴⁹Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia*, 126-131.

⁵⁰Ibid., 109-110, and 146, and Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, 222-223.

⁵¹Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, 213.

1763 as a consequence of the Seven Years' War. Braddock's defeat "left the Virginia frontier defenseless" as "Native Americans attacked with impunity" and "panic set in."⁵² In fear for their safety, settlers stopped migrating to or through the Valley to other destinations, and many families who had settled earlier, departed the region (returning to Pennsylvania or to eastern Virginia) until the cessation of hostilities.⁵³ A positive outcome of this conflict was that the significant demand for goods and services generated in order to supply troops served as a major stimulus to economic growth and development in the Shenandoah Valley. Farmers and other inhabitants of the Valley "responded to the lure of wartime profits" by supplying troops with foodstuffs and providing for their transportation needs as well.⁵⁴ The demand for flour posed by soldiers fighting in the Seven Years' War fostered the emergence of wheat as the main cash crop of farmers.

Population increase continued during the second half the century. One estimate shows the population of the Shenandoah Valley, defined as including the counties of Berkeley, Frederick, Shenandoah, Rockingham, Augusta, and Rockbridge, at about 75,000 persons by 1790 and about 83,500 by 1800.⁵⁵ As numbers of settlers rose and as the economy grew increasingly commercialized, Virginia authorities took steps to facilitate the establishment of order in the backcountry. Counties were formed and within them, at a central location on the Valley Turnpike, towns were identified or laid out to serve as county seats.⁵⁶ Winchester, the county seat of Frederick County, was founded in 1744, while in the upper Valley, Staunton, the county seat of Augusta County was established in 1747.

⁵²Stephen L. Longenecker, *Shenandoah Religion: Outsiders and the Mainstream, 1716-1865* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2002), 18.

⁵³Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia*, 258. Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 39, writes of "the thrust of renewed migration patterns after the disruption of the French and Indian War," but argues that most deaths among settlers actually occurred in areas to the west and south of the Shenandoah Valley.

⁵⁴Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, 235-239, and Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia*, 251-252 and 258-259.

⁵⁵Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 99.

⁵⁶Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia*, 8.

These towns, as well as other county seats, which would become the largest central places in the Valley, served as locations for courts and the administration of local government, but they were centers of trade and commerce as well. Merchants, artisans, and professionals who inhabited the towns provided goods and services to outlying farmers.⁵⁷ On monthly “court days,” when courts were in-session, county towns bustled with activity, for these were days of neighborly conviviality as well as opportunities to buy and sell, which attracted farmers of the outlying districts to town.⁵⁸ Gradually, a settlement continuum developed that featured, in addition to county seats, a hierarchy of central places of all sizes, including hamlets, villages, and small service towns. A host of smaller towns arose in the Valley between the late 1750s and early 1770s, including Woodstock (1762) in central Shenandoah County, and closely proximate to Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, Strasburg (1761) and Middletown (1767).⁵⁹

As the population of the Shenandoah Valley increased, it became more concentrated. Historians have noted frequently that in contrast to Virginia east of the Blue Ridge, which was “town poor,” the Shenandoah Valley developed as a “town rich” region.⁶⁰ This was especially the case in the lower Valley where historically the population was far denser than in the upper Valley, and urban development significantly more advanced owing to its relative proximity to eastern seaboard market cities (Figure 13). In Frederick County, for example, “four towns were spaced by speculators to form a commercial belt,” with the consequence that “Winchester, Kernstown, Stephensburg, and Middletown became nuclei for the

⁵⁷Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 154-158 and 195-201.

⁵⁸E. Lee Shepard, “‘This Being Court Day’: Courthouses and Community Life in Rural Virginia,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 103 (1995): 459-470.

⁵⁹Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Valley*, 238-239. Detailed description and analysis of town development in the Shenandoah Valley may be found in Christopher Hendricks, *The Backcountry Towns of Colonial Virginia* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006), Chapter 4 (“The Great Valley”). See especially his discussion of the formation of Stephensburg (today, Stephens City), Strasburg, and Woodstock (103-110).

⁶⁰Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia*, 6, and Hofstra and Mitchell, “Town and Country in Backcountry Virginia,” 639-646.

sale of goods and services associated with the sale of wheat.”⁶¹ A network of roads connecting central places to one another emerged as well. During the period of the mid-1760s to the mid-1770s, local authorities “made provision for hundreds of local roads leading from mills to new highways or connecting areas of settlement with new highways.”⁶² Thus, increasingly, roads connected farms to grist mills and other rural-based manufacturing establishments such as distilleries, tanneries, saw mills, woolen mills, i.e., where crops or raw materials were processed into goods or commodities consumable at home or saleable in distant, even extra-regional, markets.⁶³ Over time, as agriculture became increasingly commercialized and a manufacturing sector of significant size arose, roads which had “previously extended an irregular web across rural space, increasingly took on a new pattern linking rural communities to market towns as spokes of a wheel to the hub.”⁶⁴

The Cultural Imprint of Pennsylvania

The Shenandoah Valley formed a discrete physiographic province of Virginia, and developed as a region of separate cultural identity. The mountains to either side of the Valley that defined the region topographically also served as barriers to the easy movement of peoples and free flow of cultural ideas. People of Scots-Irish, German, and English ancestry from Pennsylvania who settled in the Valley in the

⁶¹Wilma Dunaway, *The First American Frontier: Transition to Capitalism in Southern Appalachia, 1700-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 60.

⁶²Freeman H. Hart, *The Valley of Virginia in the American Revolution, 1763-1789* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942), 21.

⁶³Informative discussion of the development of roads as a response to the increasing commercialization of rural life in the Shenandoah Valley may be found in Warren R. Hofstra, “Private Dwellings, Public Ways, and the Landscape of Early Rural Capitalism in Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley,” in *Gender, Class, and Shelter: Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, V*, ed. Elizabeth Collins Cromley and Carter L. Hudgins (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 211-224; and Warren R. Hofstra and Clarence R. Geier, “Farm to Mill to Markets: Historical Archaeology of an Emerging Grain Economy in the Shenandoah Valley,” in *After the Backcountry*, 48-61.

⁶⁴Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia*, 11.

eighteenth century imparted to the region a distinctive human and cultural geography that persisted through the nineteenth and into the twentieth century; traces of it remain discernible today. Numerous observers commented upon the unusual cultural mix that prevailed in the Valley. Historian Ulrich B. Phillips asserted that nineteenth-century peoples of the Shenandoah Valley “dwelt and wrought much as did those of inland Pennsylvania from whence they came.”⁶⁵ Another historian remarked similarly that by 1760 immigrants from Pennsylvania had moved into the Valley “in such great numbers as to become the determining factor in its life and to give tone and direction to its subsequent history.”⁶⁶ Nineteenth-century inhabitants of the Valley also perceived that the ethnic heterogeneity of their region’s population—which resulted from the Valley having been settled by peoples from Pennsylvania—created cultural distinctiveness. David Hunter Strother, a writer and illustrator who as a native son of the Shenandoah was well acquainted with the Valley’s peoples and their folkways, provides a case in point. Writing in 1857, Strother remarked that “the Scotch-Irish and German elements form the basis of the Valley population, and the manners and characteristics of the people, although modified by their connection and intermixture with the lower country, still very much resemble those of the Middle States.”⁶⁷

This aspect of the Shenandoah Valley’s settlement history and subsequent development has led some historians to characterize the region as a socio-economic and cultural extension of Pennsylvania referred to as “greater Pennsylvania.” Scots-Irish and German migrants from Pennsylvania carried with them to the Valley a host of cultural traits characteristic of that colony or of their particular ethnic groupings, including architecture, foodways, languages or dialects, social customs, religions, and

⁶⁵Ulrich B. Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1946), 344.

⁶⁶Wayland Fuller Dunaway, “Pennsylvania as an Early Distributing Center of Population,” 138.

⁶⁷David Hunter Strother, *Porte Crayon Sampler*, ed. Jim Comstock (Richmond, W. Va.: Jim Comstock, 1974), 92.

agricultural methods.⁶⁸ Thus, culturally, the Shenandoah Valley resembled Pennsylvania; over time, these similarities were intensified by the continuing migration to the Valley of Scots-Irish and German peoples who had lived in or traveled through Pennsylvania on their way to the Shenandoah Valley. Aside from a period in the late 1750s and early 1760s when violence associated with the Seven Years' War resulted in a diminished migration from Pennsylvania, those settlers continued to arrive in the Shenandoah Valley until the late eighteenth century. Also, the cultural affinities between southeastern Pennsylvania and the Shenandoah Valley were reinforced by long term and ongoing commercial linkages between the two regions. Because the Blue Ridge served as a barrier inhibiting east-west trade flows, and since the Shenandoah Valley served as a natural corridor of travel from northeast to southwest, the commercial orientation of the Valley remained largely toward the northeast and Pennsylvania, rather than directly east.⁶⁹

The idea of the Shenandoah Valley as "Greater Pennsylvania" has proven attractive to many historians. However, two factors call this interpretation into question. First, in the lower Valley—specifically in Old Frederick County east of the Opequon Creek which became Clarke County in 1836—the influx of large numbers of English-descended Virginians from the Piedmont and Tidewater regions led to the emergence of a substantially different culture than that prevailing in Pennsylvania or elsewhere in the Shenandoah Valley where Scots-Irish and German settlers dominated. Also, unlike Pennsylvania, the Shenandoah Valley formed a part of the slave South, with the consequence that the region's

⁶⁸Informative discussions of the distinctive folkways, material culture, and built landscapes of these peoples are available in Fischer and Kelly, *Bound Away*, 111-128; Wust, *The Virginia Germans*, passim., but especially Chapters Eleven and Twelve; Elmer Lewis Smith, John G. Stewart, and M. Ellsworth Kyger, *The Pennsylvania Germans of the Shenandoah Valley* (Allentown, Pennsylvania: Schlechter's, 1964); Kenneth W. Keller, "The Outlook of Rhinelanders on the Virginia Frontier," in *Diversity and Accommodation: Essays on the Cultural Composition of the Virginia Frontier*, ed. Michael J. Puglisi (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 99-126. On the Scots-Irish, see James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962); and Kenneth W. Keller, "What is Distinctive about the Scotch-Irish," in *Appalachian Frontiers: Settlement, Society, & Development in the Preindustrial Era*, ed. Robert D. Mitchell, 69-86 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1991).

⁶⁹Mitchell, "The Settlement Fabric of the Shenandoah Valley," in *After the Backcountry*, 44-46.

population included substantial numbers of African American slaves. These two points are not unrelated. Planter families of Old Virginia purchased large tracts of land in eastern Frederick County from Lord Fairfax or his agents, for the express purpose of expanding their production of tobacco.⁷⁰ Leading families of eastern Virginia established “quarters” in eastern Frederick County where they brought large numbers of slaves—hundreds of them in some cases—to serve as laborers for the production of tobacco. In time, many of these planters built large homes like or reminiscent of the grand plantation seats of Tidewater Virginia that, during an earlier era, had been financed by the profits of tobacco.⁷¹

Nomenclature that originated during the colonial period and persisted into the nineteenth century signaled a cultural division between peoples from Pennsylvania who had settled in the Shenandoah Valley, who were called “Cohees,” and those from eastern Virginia who settled there and were called “Tuckahoes.” With these labels, members of each group denoted the cultural otherness of the opposing

⁷⁰A rivalry that developed between Governor William Gooch of Virginia and Lord Thomas Fairfax over ownership of the lower Shenandoah Valley complicated the settlement process for some who had migrated there with the goal of settlement. Lord Fairfax had inherited the Northern Neck Proprietary, an expanse of territory encompassing all lands between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers, stretching westward from the Chesapeake Bay. The boundary at the far west of the Northern Neck Proprietary was the issue in contention. The original patent for the Proprietary stated that its lands extended to the fall-line of the two rivers but, later, royal authorities revised the patent so that its western extremities were defined as their headwaters.. Governor Gooch adopted the original definition of the western bounds of the Proprietary, which would have excluded lands of the Piedmont and Shenandoah Valley to form a parcel of approximately 1.3 million acres. Fairfax adhered to the later, more expansive, understanding of the bounds of his domain, claiming all land between the rivers extending across the lower Valley and into modern West Virginia, a tract of about 5.3 million acres. Meanwhile, despite the confusion over who owned lands of the lower Valley, both Gooch and Fairfax worked with alacrity and dispatch to settle people there. In 1745, after years of legal wrangling, the British Privy Council adjudicated the issue in favor of Fairfax who, as he had promised, honored the claims of those who had settled on his land under the authority of Virginia. In the meantime, however, prior to 1745, some, perhaps many, prospective settlers passed through the disputed territories to seek land further south in the Valley in order to avoid the possibility of their land claims not being honored by the eventual winner of the legal contest. Historical literature discussing details of the dispute regarding the Northern Neck Proprietary is voluminous. Among the most informative accounts are Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 9-11, 28-31, and 55-56; Hofstra, *A Separate Place*, 3-9; Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia*, 5, 85-86, and 178-179; Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, 191-192, 196-197, 200-202, and 223-225; Fischer and Kelly, *Bound Away: Virginia and the Westward Movement*, 83-87; Wust, *The Virginia Germans*, 34-35; and Alonzo Thomas Dill, “Sectional Conflict in Colonial Virginia,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 87 (1979): 300-302.

⁷¹On culture among tobacco planters of lower Virginia, see Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), and T. H. Breen, *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve Revolution* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985).

group, which amounted to mutual expressions of what one historian has called “sectional prejudice and resentment.”⁷² “Eastern Virginians” began arriving in eastern Frederick County (later Clarke County), after 1728; by 1740 Lord Fairfax or his agents had granted over 470,000 acres of land to “Tuckahoes” with the consequence that a cultural enclave of Old Virginia emerged there.⁷³ Planter families with large land holdings concentrated in eastern Frederick County set themselves apart from the culture of “greater Pennsylvania” by the size of their holdings in land alone, but also their members formed a subculture featuring distinctive social customs and mores. They maintained strong ties of affinity with “Old Virginia,” held slaves in large numbers (37.6 percent of all slaves in the Valley in 1800 lived in Frederick County), and cultivated cultural values and ideals that stressed conspicuous consumption.⁷⁴ As a social grouping, they distinguished themselves by their “relatively substantial homes, fine furnishings and expensive clothes, annual visits to western health spas where they mingled with eastern planters, and the introduction of cultural activities into the social life of Winchester.”⁷⁵ Thus, “Tuckahoes” cultivated appearances of wealth and gentility that their neighbors, the “Cohees,” “who spoke in a strange dialect or in a completely different foreign tongue, [and] who had entirely different customs and beliefs,” would have found alien.⁷⁶ Writing of the cultural values of peoples of Germanic and Scots-Irish descent who lived in the Valley, an 1847 visitor to the region asserted that its farmers “are almost universally plain,

⁷²Warren R. Hofstra, *A Separate Place: The Formation of Clarke County, Virginia* (White Post, Virginia: Clarke County Sesquicentennial Committee, 1986), 34-38; and Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia*, 340n.

⁷³Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 30.

⁷⁴The percentage of slaves living in Frederick County in 1800 is calculated on the basis of data in Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 99. According to Mitchell, in 1800 the number of slaves in the Valley, which he defines as the six counties extending from Berkeley to Rockbridge, stood at 13,603, and 5,118 of them lived in Frederick County (some of these, of course, would have been owned by “Cohees” who lived in western Frederick County). A superb description of cultural values and outlook, social customs, and the like among Virginia’s Tidewater elite may be found in the Hunter Dickinson Farish’s introduction to his edition of Philip Vickers Fithian’s journals and letters. See Farish, ed. *Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian, 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion* (Williamsburg, Virginia: Colonial Williamsburg, Incorporated, 1943), Chapter I, “Virginia During the Golden Age,” xvii-xxxiv.

⁷⁵Mitchell, “Content and Context,” 86.

⁷⁶Bliss, “The Tuckahoe in New Virginia,” 389.

hardworking, economical men, differing in this respect from their fellow citizens in the tide-waters of the State.”⁷⁷ The contrasting values of each group are perhaps best captured by a historian who wrote that the “distinguishing feature” of Valley peoples of German and Scotch-Irish descent was “merely that most of the well-to-do had no cult of urbanity, of nicety in speech or fashion in dress, of distinction in house or equipage, of competitive expenditure or conspicuous waste. In short, they were plain men and women, not ladies and gentlemen.”⁷⁸

Another important cultural difference between the two groups, the basis of which dissolved over time, relates to their distinctive agricultural traditions and practices. Elite families of lower Virginia took up land in eastern Frederick County in order to expand tobacco production. As such, they considered themselves “planters.” By contrast, the “plain men” who settled elsewhere in the Valley thought of themselves as “farmers.” These “farmers” practiced general mixed agriculture, and in the second half of the eighteenth century they began to emphasize production of wheat as a cash crop. As the price of tobacco deteriorated during the same period, and prospects for future profits grew dim, “planters” of eastern Frederick County gradually reduced their focus on that crop and, as with “farmers” elsewhere in the Valley, turned increasingly to the production of wheat. As “planters” more fully embraced commercial wheat production in order to earn profits in agriculture, they understood themselves to have become “farmers.” One historian, describing the situation in Frederick County in the late eighteenth century, has commented that “everybody farmed; everybody grew wheat ... the term ‘planter’ dropped out of common usage.”⁷⁹

The Varied Experiences of African Americans

⁷⁷ Lucretia Ramsey Bishko, “John S. Skinner Visits the Virginia Springs, 1847,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 80 (1972): 170.

⁷⁸ Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South*, 344.

⁷⁹ Hofstra, *A Separate Place*, 25.

Planters of eastern Frederick County introduced large-scale slave holding into the Shenandoah Valley and so African Americans, too, in significant numbers, formed a part of the cultural mix in the region. Until recently, however, historians have not devoted much attention to slavery as it was institutionalized in the Valley.⁸⁰ Rather, most historians of North American slavery have tended to focus on its development on large plantations of the American South where tobacco, cotton, or rice were produced on a large scale, and in cities. Slavery in southern regions such as the Shenandoah Valley, where farms were relatively small and agriculture was mixed rather than oriented toward the production of a monocultural staple crop, has received scant attention from historians. Indeed, most of the older historical literature that includes discussions of slavery as it was practiced in the Valley underestimates the numerical presence of slaves, undervalues their labor contributions to economic growth and development, and is generally dismissive of the cultural imprint of slavery on the region. Implicit in these writings is the notion that in the Shenandoah Valley the institution of slavery was moribund and not very important for understanding regional culture.⁸¹

This view, as it pertains to the numerical prevalence of slaves in the Valley, is unsupported by information readily available in the United States federal censuses of the nineteenth century. Although it is true that fewer slaves lived in the Shenandoah Valley than in many sections of Virginia east of the Blue Ridge, their numbers were not insignificant. In 1755, 760 slaves—3.6 percent of the total population of 21,000—lived in the six counties of Berkeley, Frederick, Shenandoah, Rockingham, Augusta, and Rockbridge. By 1800, the number of slaves in these six counties had risen to 13,603, or 16.1 percent of

⁸⁰This section draws heavily upon Kenneth E. Koons, "'The Colored Laborers Work as Well as When Slaves': African Americans in the Breadbasket of the Confederacy, 1850-1880," in *Archaeological Perspectives on the American Civil War*, ed. Clarence R. Geier and Stephen R. Potter (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 229-252.

⁸¹This perspective is typified in the writings, for example, of Ulrich B. Phillips, a leading historian of the American South in the decades prior to the mid-twentieth century who, writing in the late 1920s, described slavery in the Shenandoah Valley as "a sprinkling of slaves who gave sluggish assistance to their owners" (Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South*, 344).

the total population of 83,525 persons. Not surprisingly, in light of the propensity of “Tuckahoes” of eastern Frederick County to own slaves, a disproportionate share of these slaves (70.1 percent) lived in the lower Valley in 1800. However, from 1755 to 1800, the slave population grew at a much faster rate in the upper Valley (4,985 percent) than in the lower Valley (1,302 percent).⁸² By 1800, slaves composed about 20 percent of the Valley population and this proportion fluctuated only slightly from then until the Civil War.⁸³ By 1850, the number of slaves in the Valley had risen to 24,841, and they constituted 19.5 percent of the total population.⁸⁴ Thus, through most of the first half of the nineteenth century, one in every five inhabitants of the Valley was an African American held in bondage.

Another misconception relates to the extent to which slave labor was actually utilized in the region. Historians who have studied slavery in the Valley have shown that slave owners who practiced general mixed farming with an emphasis on wheat production successfully integrated slavery into their agrarian enterprises.⁸⁵ The number of slaves in the Valley burgeoned in the second half of the eighteenth century, during the period when the wheat farming was becoming increasingly commercialized. Slave labor was utilized heavily for tasks associated with wheat farming—plowing, sowing, reaping, and threshing—but “slaves were not underemployed” during periods free of activities relating to wheat production.⁸⁶ Farmers relied upon the labor of slaves for work integral to the production of food and fiber in a grain-livestock economy. In addition to helping with the production of small cereal grains other than wheat, for example, slaves planted, thinned, hoed, shocked, and shucked corn, the “crop of second-most

⁸²Percentages are calculated on the basis of data pertaining to numbers of slaves in 1755 and 1800, as found in Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 99-100.

⁸³Longenecker, *Shenandoah Religion*, 115-116.

⁸⁴U.S. Census Office, *Statistical View of the United States. . . . Being a Compendium of the Seventh Census* (Washington, D.C.: A.O.P. Nicholson, Public Printer, 1854). (Hereafter, noted as *Seventh Census*).

⁸⁵As examples, see Koons, “The Staple of Our Country,” in *After the Backcountry*, 6; Kenneth W. Keller, “The Wheat Trade on the Upper Potomac, 1800-1860,” in *After the Backcountry*, 27-28; and Longenecker, *Shenandoah Religion*, 117-118.

⁸⁶Keller, “The Wheat Trade on the Upper Potomac,” 27.

importance” in the Valley, and they mowed and harvested hay.⁸⁷ Their work included a diverse array of activities, from planting fruit trees to picking apples, building fences to cutting firewood, and feeding and caring for livestock to butchering hogs. Thus, “the world of wheat was not at odds with the world of slavery”; farmers in the Shenandoah Valley demonstrated that the institution of slavery could readily be adapted to a system of agriculture that did not feature the production of a labor-intensive monocultural staple crop.⁸⁸

Data pertaining to the antebellum population of Shenandoah County show the extent to which farmers utilized a disproportionate share of slave labor. The mid-century population of the county comprised 12,656 whites (91.3 percent), 292 free blacks (2.1 percent), and 911 slaves (6.6 percent). The 1850 slave schedules for the county list 197 slave holders. Of these, 160 (81.2 percent) could be linked to the information pertaining to them in the manuscript schedules of free inhabitants for that year, in order to discern the occupations of their owners. These 160 slaveholders owned a total of 781 slaves (85.7 percent of all slaves in the county). Among these 160 slaveholders, 74 (49.4 percent) were farmers and, collectively, they owned 494 (63.3 percent) of the 781 slaves (Table 1). To summarize, among slaveholders in Shenandoah County whose occupations could be determined, one-half of them were farmers and they owned nearly 65 percent of all the slaves. Slave-holding farmers owned an average of 6.3 slaves each.⁸⁹ Many slaveholders in the county were not farmers. Leaving aside the 18 slaveholders for whom no occupation was listed (and the 53 slaves they owned), merchants and professionals formed the largest slaveholders among non-farmers. Seventeen merchants owned 62 slaves, which placed them far below farmers but far above (almost double) the occupational group beneath them (8 physicians who,

⁸⁷“The Harvest,” 11.

⁸⁸Koons and Hofstra, “Introduction: The World Wheat Made,” in *After the Backcountry*, xxvi.

⁸⁹Manuscript Slave Schedules, Shenandoah County, 1850; manuscript Schedules of Free Inhabitants, Shenandoah County, 1850; U.S. Department of State, *Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants and Statistics of the United States. . . From the Returns of the Sixth Census* (Washington, D.C.: Thomas Allen, 1841). (Hereafter, noted as *Sixth Census*).

collectively, owned 30 slaves). Remaining slave owners in the county included a motley array of professionals, local officials, and artisanal craftsmen.

A salient feature of slavery in the Shenandoah Valley was the highly uneven spatial distribution of slaves within the region. This unevenness was particularly manifest in the lower-Valley, in the three counties where Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park is located. In Shenandoah County, for example, in 1850 slaves composed only 6.6 percent of the population. But in Frederick County, immediately north of Shenandoah, the proportion of the population formed by slaves, at 14.4 percent, was about twice as high. In Warren County, contiguous to both Shenandoah and Frederick, the corresponding figure stood at 26.5 percent—nearly twice as high as Frederick County and four times greater than Shenandoah County. Thus, in 1850, the proportion of the total population composed of slaves in these three counties varied considerably, and none of the proportions closely approximated that of the Valley as a whole (19.5 percent). Meanwhile, in Clarke County, located only a few miles northeast of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, slaves formed nearly one-half (49.2 percent) of the total population, a figure nearly twice as high as the corresponding figure for Warren County (Table 2).⁹⁰

The varying densities of slave populations elsewhere in the Valley are not easy to explain. Some historians have suggested that lower numbers of slaves relative to the white population would have prevailed in counties of the Valley where Germans settled and persisted in disproportionate numbers; many Germans refused to own slaves as a matter of religious conviction. Mennonites and Dunkers, German pietistic sects, for example, denounced slavery as a violation of the Golden Rule and held that the institution was “sinful because “all are free in Christ.”⁹¹ Thus, in Shenandoah County, especially, but

⁹⁰All percentages cited in this and the succeeding paragraph are calculated on the basis of data in the *Seventh Census*. The greater number of slaves relative to the white population in Clarke County is attributable to its having been settled by slave-holding families of the Tidewater and Piedmont who acquired land there in order to expand their production of tobacco. It is probable that these circumstances also explain the relatively higher ratio of slaves to whites in Warren County, as that county, too, attracted large numbers of settlers from east of the Blue Ridge.

⁹¹Stephen L. Longenecker, “The Narrow Path: Antislavery, Plainness, and the Mainstream,” in *After the Backcountry*, 189.

also in Rockingham County, where large numbers of Germans settled (Figure 14), the ratios of slaves to whites were lower than elsewhere in the Valley (in 1850, about 7 percent in Shenandoah and about 12 percent in Rockingham). By contrast, in the upper Valley counties of Augusta and Rockbridge, where the Scots-Irish dominated numerically, the proportion of the population composed of slaves was relatively high (about 21 percent in Augusta and about 26 percent in Rockbridge). Thus, the ethnic background and more specifically the religious sensibilities of white inhabitants of the Valley seem to have played a role in promoting the uneven spatial distribution of slaves in the Shenandoah Valley, but this issue deserves further study by historians.⁹²

In the Shenandoah Valley, as throughout the slave South, most slaves were owned by agriculturalists who relied upon them to meet their need for labor. However, owners of industrial enterprises in the Valley also tended to utilize large numbers of slaves. This was especially the case with iron manufacturers, with the consequence that large numbers of slaves could be found living in the vicinity of the Valley's iron furnaces and forges.⁹³ In the upper Valley, for example, William Weaver, who owned numerous furnaces and forges in antebellum Rockbridge and Botetourt Counties, owned large numbers of slaves that he used for a wide range of tasks involved in the manufacture of pig iron, from cutting wood and making charcoal, to filling the furnaces and drawing out the molten pig iron. He also used slave labor in his forges to pound the pig iron into anconies and then to hammer the anconies into bar iron.⁹⁴ In the lower Valley, at mid-century, George F. Hupp, who lived near Strasburg, owned three iron furnaces and 92 slaves, making him perhaps the largest slave owner in the Valley. Also, at mid-

⁹²Koons, "The Colored Laborers Work as Well as When Slaves," 233-234; and Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 130-131. Mitchell has remarked that "the most nagging question about slavery in the Shenandoah Valley has been the attitudes of Germans about slavery" (130).

⁹³Fitzhugh Brundage, "Slavery in Antebellum Rockbridge County, Virginia," ms. on file at Stonewall Jackson House, Lexington, Virginia; Dew, *Bond of Iron*; and Robert S. Starobin, *Industrial Slavery in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); and Ronald L. Lewis, *Coal, Iron, and Slaves: Industrial Slavery in Maryland and Virginia, 1715-1865* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1979).

⁹⁴Dew, *Bond of Iron*, 10-12.

century, most (five of six) iron manufacturers in Page County owned slaves, including one who owned 77 bondsmen. A Page-County tanner owned 20 slaves and a miller owned 14 slaves.⁹⁵

Farmers and manufacturers who needed labor but either did not own slaves or did not own a sufficiency of them to meet their labor needs, could hire-out slaves owned by others. In the Shenandoah Valley, perhaps more so than elsewhere in the slave South, “slave-hiring,” provided a mechanism by which non-slave owners could utilize and benefit from slave labor. Slave-hiring developed as “a profitable way to deploy the excess labor of slaves,” thereby introducing a degree of flexibility into the allocation of labor resources that benefitted both slave owner and slave-hirer. In Rockbridge County, for example, iron master William Weaver hired about sixty slaves annually during the 1830s and 1840s.⁹⁶ Also in Rockbridge County, in 1854 farmer Henry B. Jones hired-out a 26-year old male slave for 150 dollars and two female slaves for 40 dollars each. In 1855, Jones recorded in his diary that three of his “twelve servants ... are hired out.” In most years, he hired-out two or three of his slaves.⁹⁷ Typically, agreements between slave owner and slave-hirer were reached annually around the turn of the year, and they specified in detail the material needs of the slave that would be provided by the slave-hirer. Contracts customarily included language requiring the slave-hirer to provide clothing and shoes for the slave. In Clarke County, one diarist observed in early 1855 that “hiring the servants [slaves] is all the talk now. People went out & hire from other men at about \$100., 110., 120., or so ... youth 20. , 10. or board and clothes.”⁹⁸

As shown in Table 2, during the decade of the 1850s, in the Valley as a whole, the number of slaves declined by 1,272 (24,841 to 23, 569), and the proportion of the population accounted for by slaves declined by 1.7 percent (19.5 in 1850 to 17.8 in 1860). This trend was Valley-wide; the proportion of

⁹⁵Longenecker, *Shenandoah Religion*, 116-117.

⁹⁶Dew, *Bond of Iron*, 67.

⁹⁷Turner, ed., *The Diary of Henry Boswell Jones*.

⁹⁸[?]Hibbard Journal (punctuation added to enhance clarity).

slaves in every county fell. The general reduction in the number of slaves in the Valley during the 1850s probably resulted from the participation of Valley slave holders in the trend of selling slaves to buyers in the West and especially those in the cotton-raising areas of the South. During the first half of the nineteenth century, Virginia served as a center for the sale of slaves to slave owners of these regions. This trade accelerated during the late antebellum period and although it is certain that at least some of the slaves sold and taken from Virginia were from the Valley, their precise numbers are not known (Figure 15).⁹⁹

Not all African Americans who lived in the Shenandoah Valley were slaves. Free blacks—African Americans of free legal status—also dwelled in the Valley. Whereas in 1850 the 24,841 slaves living in the Valley formed 19.5 percent of the total population, 3,836 free blacks also inhabited the Valley in that year and composed 3.1 percent of the total population (Table 2). Although free blacks lived in all counties of the Valley patterns in their spatial distribution are not easy to discern. In five of the nine Valley counties, the proportion of the total population composed of free blacks held at between 2 and 3 percent. Behind Massanutten Mountain, in Page and Warren Counties, percentages were considerably higher, ranging from 4.1 to 5.5. In the lower Valley, at 5.7 percent, Frederick County manifested the highest proportion of free blacks to whites in the Valley, but in adjacent Clarke County, could be found the lowest proportion in the Valley, at 1.7 percent .

Many free blacks lived within the households of whites, for whom they worked as farm hands, laborers, or domestic servants. In late antebellum Shenandoah County, for example, 75 free blacks lived in households headed by whites. A large majority of them—55 of 75—were not assigned an occupational designation by census enumerators, but 15 of the 20 for whom occupations are listed carry the designation of “farmhand.” Among the remaining 5 persons, only one, a shoemaker, practiced a skilled occupation. The other 4 included a “house servant,” a “day laborer,” a “hostler,” and a “nurse.” It is reasonable to

⁹⁹Fischer and Kelly, *Bound Away*, 230-235, and J. Susanne Simmons and nancy T. Sorrells, “Slave Hire and the Development of Slavery in Augusta County, Virginia,” in *After the Backcountry*, 179-182.

surmise that most of the free blacks living with households headed by whites and for whom no occupation is listed, worked as farmhands or domestic servants or as a similar type of unskilled laborer for the head of the household in which they lived.¹⁰⁰

It was not uncommon for white heads of households with free blacks living within, to also own slaves. Levi Funkhauser, a Shenandoah County farmer who owned one slave, headed a household whose members included one free black whose occupation is listed as “farmhand.” Similarly, Reuben Moore, another farmer of Shenandoah County, included ten free blacks within his household and also owned a slave. Manassa Blackburn, an iron manufacturer of the county, owned three slaves and had two free blacks living within his household. It is likely that in household settings such as these, free blacks and slaves would have worked and socialized together. Perhaps some of them established families together as well.¹⁰¹ Consistent with other evidence of free blacks often serving as laborers on farms is that in late antebellum Shenandoah County, farmers dominated numerically (29 of 66) among white heads of households whose members included free blacks.¹⁰² Some free blacks maintained their own households. In late antebellum Shenandoah County, free blacks headed 57 independent households. A small degree of occupational diversity prevailed among these household heads. These heads of households included 15 farmhands, 6 day laborers, and 6 washerwomen. Other free black heads of independent households held occupations indicative of some training or perhaps an apprenticeship, e.g., blacksmith, boot and shoemaker, farmer, forgerman, wagoner, or wagon maker.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰Manuscript Population Schedules, Shenandoah County, Virginia, 1860.

¹⁰¹Manuscript Population Schedules, Shenandoah County, Virginia, 1850, and Manuscript Slave Schedules, Shenandoah County, 1850. Free blacks living in Reuben Moore’s household consisted of the following: two women, each with three children, a 21 year-old males designated as a “farmhand,” and a 23 year-old female.

¹⁰²Manuscript Population Schedules, Shenandoah County, Virginia, 1860. Physicians headed five households with free blacks living within, blacksmiths three, merchants and potters two each. Each of the remaining white households with free blacks living within were headed by an individual holding one of the following occupations (one of each): artist, attorney, butcher, carpenter, carriage maker, collector of claims, conductor on railroad, cooper, farmhand, iron manufacturer, mason, milliner, postmaster, shoemaker, tanner, tanner and farmer, teacher, and tinner (ten heads of such households had no occupation listed).

¹⁰³ Manuscript Population Schedules, Shenandoah County, Virginia, 1860.

Most free blacks, especially those living within the households of whites but also including independent householders, seem to have formed a relatively impoverished more or less permanent source of farm or domestic labor for hire by whites, comparable in living standard to white laborers, but somewhat poorer by most measures. Among the 57 free blacks who headed independent households, only 9 (6.3 percent) owned real estate, the average value of which stood at \$363. By comparison, among the 354 white heads of household in Shenandoah County who self-identified as laborers in the 1860 census, 78 (20 percent) owned real estate, the average value of which was \$92. Thus, compared to white laborers who were heads of households, far fewer free black heads of households owned real estate but its average value was significantly higher than that of whites. Also, whereas 322 of 354 white laborers who were heads of households (91 percent) owned personal estate, the average value of which was \$139, only 42 of 57 free black heads of households (73.7 percent) owned personal estate, the average value of which was \$82.¹⁰⁴ Among heads of households, free blacks were generally poorer than white laborers. Despite their free status, the material circumstances of many free blacks probably were little different from those of slaves. During the antebellum period, free blacks also struggled under the increasing efforts of whites who, perceiving them as a threat to the racially stratified social order, passed legislation circumscribing their freedom.¹⁰⁵ Despite these difficulties, free blacks continued to live in the Valley during the antebellum period. As laborers on farms, as well as in shops and industrial enterprises, African Americans—slave as well as free—lived in communities throughout the Shenandoah Valley and participated actively in the emergence of the region as one of the most productive wheat and flour-producing regions of Virginia and the South.

¹⁰⁴Figures or calculations based on them are from the Manuscript Populations Schedules, Shenandoah County, Virginia, 1860. Greater detail pertaining to these free black households is provided in Koons, “The Colored Laborers,” 238-240.

¹⁰⁵Ellen Eslinger, “‘Sable Spectres on Missions of Evil’: Free Blacks of Antebellum Rockbridge County, Virginia,” in *After the Backcountry*, 194-205.

Chapter Two: Economic Growth and Development: Farming and Industry

General Mixed Farming and the Emergence of Wheat as a Cash Crop

In the Shenandoah Valley, farmers practiced a system of agriculture known as “general mixed farming,” which entails production of a broad range of crops and livestock. Indeed, the main aspect of mixed farming is diversity of enterprise. This was the dominant form of agriculture practiced in Pennsylvania, and migrants from that colony who settled in the Shenandoah Valley brought this system of farming with them.¹ Thus, the environmental historian Albert Cowdrey has remarked that because the Shenandoah Valley was peopled by farmers “whose agriculture, like their ancestry, is Pennsylvanian,” it formed a region of the South that was “only ambiguously southern.”² This ambiguity stemmed from the distinctiveness of general mixed farming as practiced in the Shenandoah Valley compared with the rural economy based on tobacco production in Virginia’s Tidewater and Piedmont regions.³

The dominant concern of early Euro-American settlers of the Valley was to produce a variety of crops and animals for subsistence. Thus, the earliest farmers of the Valley raised a diverse array of crops and domesticated farm animals for home use as well as for local sale or barter. Farmers raised corn, as well as numerous cereal grains, including wheat, rye, oats, barley, buckwheat, and spelt. They also sowed various artificial grasses, such as timothy and clover, to provide summer grazing and winter forage for

¹Thorough description and analysis of general mixed farming as it was practiced in southcentral Pennsylvania is available in James T. Lemon, *The Best Poor Man’s Country: A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), Chapter 6, “General Mixed Farming and Extensive Use of the Land.” Also informative is Frederic K. Miller, “The Farmer at Work in Colonial Pennsylvania,” *Pennsylvania History* 3 (1936): 118. Discussion of the European origins of mixed farming may be found in Brian Fagan, *The Little Ice Age: How Climate Made History, 1300-1850* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 143.

²Albert E. Cowdrey, *This Land, This South: An Environmental History* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 7.

³Detailed discussions of the rise of tobacco in colonial Virginia, and of the nature of its production, especially its year-round labor intensiveness, may be found in Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*; and Breen, *Tobacco Culture*.

livestock. Flax for the home production of linen formed a key element of the crop mix as well. Livestock included horses, cattle, swine, and sheep. Horses served as the main source of draught power for plowing and hauling; cattle provided meat, milk, cheese, and butter; swine were a main source of animal protein among eighteenth- and nineteenth-century rural populations; sheep were an additional source of meat but also provided wool for home or local production of textiles.⁴ This “grain-livestock complex” that arose in the Shenandoah Valley during the settlement era persisted through the nineteenth century and into the early decades of the twentieth century.⁵

Although the Valley’s earliest settlers produced a range of different foodstuffs or other farm goods for home use and local sales, they were commercially oriented.⁶ Consequently, they embraced emergent opportunities to produce cash crops for wider, extra-regional markets. The first cash crops raised by Valley farmers for external markets were tobacco and hemp. Both were grown throughout the region but lower-Valley farmers produced a disproportionate share of tobacco and upper-Valley farmers concentrated on hemp production.⁷ Stock raising and fattening cattle destined for markets in Philadelphia and Baltimore formed another important enterprise among Valley farmers, and these remained a substantial source of farm revenue far into the nineteenth century.⁸

⁴On the unspecialized nature of agriculture among the early settlers of the Valley, see Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 135-137.

⁵Koons, ““The Staple of Our Country,”” 4. The following sections on agriculture as it was practiced in the nineteenth-century Shenandoah Valley relies heavily upon this article.

⁶Mitchell has argued persuasively that early settlers to the Valley were commercially oriented. See *Commercialism and Frontier*, passim, but especially 5-9 and 160-162. Also helpful in this regard, is Wilma Dunaway, *The First American Frontier*, 123, where she presents as “myth,” the idea of the “subsistent homesteader.”

⁷On commercial production of hemp in the Valley, see Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 162-172; G. Melvin Herndon, “Hemp in Colonial Virginia,” *Agricultural History* 37 (1963): 86-93; and G. Melvin Herndon, “A War-Inspired Industry: The Manufacture of Hemp in Virginia during the Revolution,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 74 (1966), 301-311.

⁸Koons, ““The Staple of Our Country,”” 4; Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 147-149; Richard K. MacMaster, “The Cattle Trade in Western Virginia, 1760-1830, in *Appalachian Frontiers: Settlement, Society, and Development in the Preindustrial Era*, ed. Robert D. Mitchell (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky), 127-149; and Lewis Cecil Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institute, 1933; reprint, New York: Peter Smith, 1941), 2: 840.

However, the long term future of the regional economy lay in wheat. The process by which wheat supplanted hemp and tobacco as Valley farmers' main cash crop was gradual. Wheat had always been an element of the mix of crops raised by farmers in their practice of mixed farming, but until about the middle of the eighteenth century most wheaten flour was for local consumption. In the late 1750s, however, the need to feed troops fighting in the French and Indian War stimulated demand for flour, and Valley farmers responded by producing larger surpluses of wheat. Demand for flour continued to rise because of changing market conditions in Europe and the West Indies, with the consequence that farmers continued to increase their production of wheat. During the era of the American Revolution, markets for hemp and tobacco declined and virtually disappeared. Meanwhile, however, demand for flour on world markets had continued to rise so that by the late 1760s prices for flour were high enough to offset the costs of its transportation to east-coast markets such as Alexandria, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. Valley farmers prospered during the final quarter of the eighteenth century as they allocated increasing proportions of their resources to wheat production. Although wheat had become the dominant cash crop of Shenandoah Valley farmers, and its production became the main engine of economic growth and development in the region, the crop never became a monoculture. Farmers produced burgeoning amounts of wheat but they did so within the diversity of enterprise that general mixed farming entailed.⁹

Rising material prosperity based on the profits of wheat created a rural middle class capable of higher levels of material consumption. Flour production in the Shenandoah Valley gave rise to commercial linkages with market cities such as Alexandria, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. Merchants of Valley towns traveled to one or more of these cities once or twice annually to buy goods for stocking their own retail stores.¹⁰ In this way, Valley residents were able to consume goods manufactured outside the region. By the early decades of the nineteenth century, the profits of wheat gave rise to "the Valley's first

⁹Koons and Hofstra, "Introduction: The World Wheat Made," in *After the Backcountry*, xviii.

¹⁰Hofstra, *A Separate Place*, 32-33.

major building boom” in which original settlers of the Valley or their descendants replaced their log and timber houses dating from initial settlement with larger, architecturally stylish homes constructed of more durable building materials such as brick or stone.¹¹ Thus, throughout the Shenandoah Valley, commercial wheat production fostered the development of “the economic circumstances” through which “an emerging local political elite expressed its social status and growing fortunes through larger, more stylish houses.”¹²

In the summer of 1845, the editor of a Shenandoah Valley newspaper wrote that “the last fortnight has been the busy season of our people in this wheat raising country ... the country has been alive with the industrious bands of cradlers, rakers, binders, and shockers. Every farm—almost every golden-colored hill and valley—has been peopled by the harvesters ... securing the staple of our country, the wealth of the farmer, and the food of all classes.”¹³ The author of this Jeffersonian tableau concluded that “wheat is the crop which the farmer looks to, to bring money,” recognizing the crop’s role in creating regional cultural identity and underscoring the significance of commercial wheat farming to the regional economy.

During the era of the American Revolution, wheat farming emerged as the main engine of economic growth and development in the Shenandoah Valley, and during the entire age of grain—which in the Shenandoah Valley persisted until the 1940s—wheat production remained the prime cash crop of the region’s farmers.¹⁴ By the 1790s the valley “had become one of the most important wheat- and flour-

¹¹Anne McCleary, “Forging a Regional Identity: Development of Rural Vernacular Architecture in the Central Shenandoah Valley, 1790-1850, in *After the Backcountry*, 92.

¹²*Ibid.*, 92.

¹³“The Harvest,” *The Valley Farmer, and Gardeners’ Monthly Chronicle*, Vol. II, No. 1 (August 1845), 11. This piece appeared originally as a “communication” in the *Martinsburg Gazette*. Martinsburg, in Berkeley County (now West Virginia), is located a few miles north of Winchester (where, *The Valley Farmer* was published).

¹⁴For a detailed discussion of the long-term importance of wheat to the Shenandoah Valley economy, see Koons, “The Staple of Our Country.” For definition and discussion of “Virginia’s age of grain,” see Jack Temple Kirby, “Virginia’s Environmental History: A Prospectus,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 99 (1991): 461.

producing regions in the entire south.”¹⁵ Commercial wheat production led to the extensive development of infrastructure for the processing and storage of grain and flour. The creation of this infrastructure transformed the region’s built landscape. On farms, barns or granaries to thresh and store the grain were built, and along the Valley’s waterways grist mills for the production of flour were constructed. One estimate places the number at about one hundred grist mills in the upper Valley by 1775. By the end of the eighteenth century, about six hundred mills had been built in the Valley—about two hundred in the upper Valley and over four hundred in the lower. During the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, “mills sprang up in the interior [of Virginia,] ... and the three counties of Augusta, Rockbridge, and Rockingham, established ‘upwards to one hundred mills’ in the space of three or four years.”¹⁶

By 1810, Tench Coxe identified the Shenandoah Valley as “by far the leading wheat-producing region in the entire south.” The importance of wheat-farming to the regional economy continued to grow, so that by the mid-nineteenth century the Valley had achieved wide renown as the “great wheat-growing section of the state.”¹⁷ In the antebellum period the Shenandoah Valley continued as the prime wheat-producing region of Virginia. In 1840, Valley farmers produced one-fifth of Virginia’s wheat crop, and a decade later they worked only nine percent of the improved farmland in the commonwealth but produced twenty-two percent of its wheat crop.¹⁸ At mid-century the Valley remained the most productive wheat-producing region within the American south, as well. In 1855, a resident of Winchester remarked to a correspondent from outside the region that “wheat is the staple crop with us and the only one not consumed at home.”¹⁹ In 1850, farmers in a four-county region of the Shenandoah Valley—Augusta, Rockbridge, Rockingham, and Page—produced almost twenty bushels of wheat per capita while

¹⁵Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 175.

¹⁶Craven, *Soil Exhaustion*, 78.

¹⁷“Harvesting Wheat,” *Southern Planter* 16 (August 1856): 237.

¹⁸Percentages calculated from data contained in *Seventh Census*.

¹⁹Robert Young Conrad, Winchester, Virginia, to [Dan], 15 August 1855, in Robert Young Conrad Papers, 1850-1944, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

farmers in nine multi-county regions encompassing portions of Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, and Georgia produced fewer than six bushels per capita, and in many cases only one or two.²⁰ In the lower-Valley counties of Frederick, Shenandoah, and Warren, per capital production of wheat, at 18 bushels, adhered closely to the average of the four upper-Valley counties.²¹ However, in nearby Clarke County, owing to a combination of factors (heavier reliance on slave labor, lower population, and larger farms), per capita production of wheat, at 41.7 bushels, more than doubled that of other areas of the Valley. Among Valley farmers of the antebellum period, wheat cultivation was nearly universal. In 1850, for example, 96 percent of all farmers in the Valley produced wheat, and the proportion of farmers in a given Valley county who raised the crop ranged from a low of 92 percent in Botetourt County, to a high of 99 percent in Rockingham County.²²

All during the Valley's age of grain, wheat production and the commercial manufacture and trade of flour served as the lifeblood of the regional economy and the dominant source of economic growth and development in the region. Accordingly, the work and entrepreneurial activities of farmers and members of the manufacturing, artisanal, and business classes with whom they interacted, created, shaped, and sustained the rural, agrarian, and small service-town society of the Shenandoah Valley. Broad categories of occupations in this society included farmers, artisans and craftsmen, merchants, and professionals. Although the work of all these occupational groupings was critical to the functioning of the regional economy, in the agrarian society of the Shenandoah Valley the work and entrepreneurial activities of farmers were fundamental.

The agricultural work force of the region also included large numbers of laborers. Men bearing occupational designations such as laborer, day laborer, or farm hand, who worked mostly in the employ

²⁰Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*, 2: 140.

²¹Percentages calculated from data in the manuscript Agricultural Schedules of Clarke, Frederick, Shenandoah, and Warren Counties, 1850.

²²Percentages calculated from data in the manuscript Agricultural Schedules of Augusta, Botetourt, Clarke, Frederick, Page, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah, and Warren Counties, 1850 and 1860.

of farmers, inhabited the hamlets, villages, and open-country neighborhoods of the nineteenth-century Shenandoah Valley by the tens of thousands. They were essential to agricultural entrepreneurship. In an age when human muscle accomplished most farm work—the advent of horse-powered agricultural implements notwithstanding—farmers’ access to a dependable source of labor for digging, lifting, chopping, hoeing, picking, hauling, shucking, and the like, formed a critical component of the resources they mobilized for the production of wealth in the form of crops and livestock.

Multiple sources of labor were available to Shenandoah Valley farmers during the age of grain. Members of farmers’ own families formed a routinely relied upon labor force. Nineteenth-century farms, although commercially oriented, were essentially family-run enterprises in that farmers themselves and their wives and children, especially sons, served as the core group of workers.²³ Often, however, too few children of working age or extraordinary workloads forced farmers to look outside their immediate families to meet labor needs. Until the Civil War era and emancipation, farmers could secure additional labor by purchasing slaves or by hiring the labor of slaves owned by others. After the Civil War, emancipated slaves who continued to live in the Valley integrated themselves into the regional workforce and were available for hire as farm laborers.²⁴ However, perhaps the most frequently relied upon source of unskilled physical laborer on Valley farms was white laborers who, both before and after the Civil War, hired themselves out to farmers by the day, week, month, or year.

To examine in more detail the rural occupational structure and patterns of wealth-holding among farmers and laborers in the lower Shenandoah Valley, and to particularize trends pertaining to the region

²³Thorough discussions of this point may be found in Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 23-31, and 51; and Lance E. Davis, Richard A. Easterlin, and William N. Parker et al., *American Economic Growth: An Economist's History of the United States* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 394-395.

²⁴Kenneth E. Koons, "'The Colored Laborers Work as Well as When Slaves': African Americans in the Breadbasket of the Confederacy, 1850-1880," 229-252. On slave-hiring in the Shenandoah Valley, see Simmons and Sorrells, "Slave Hire and the Development of Slavery in Augusta County, Virginia," in *After the Backcountry*, 169-84.

as a whole, the analytical focus is now set directly upon Shenandoah County.²⁵ In Shenandoah County, as elsewhere in the Valley and in the nineteenth-century United States generally, the household functioned as the basic economic and reproductive unit of society, as well as the main living arrangement. All elements of the Valley population—black and white, free and unfree—lived in households located in places of all sizes on the settlement continuum—open-country neighborhoods, hamlets, villages, and towns. In 1860, 13,896 persons lived in Shenandoah County, and they resided among 2,306 households scattered throughout the county’s rural districts and central places.²⁶ Woodstock, the county seat located on the Valley Turnpike in approximately the center of the county, at 2,113 persons, contained the largest concentration of population. Lower on the settlement continuum were the smaller towns or villages located along the Valley Turnpike both north and south of Woodstock, e.g., New Market (1,442), Mount Jackson (1,316), Edinburg (1,377), Tom’s Brook (508), and, near present-day lands of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, Strasburg (1,583). Still smaller clusters of population, most of which ranged in size from about 300 to 500 persons, were the hamlets and villages situated in the corridor of territory that lay west of the Valley Turnpike.²⁷ These functioned as nodal points in the network of roads that lay across the county and connected central places of all sizes. The remaining inhabitants of Shenandoah County lived on dispersed farms scattered throughout the open-country neighborhoods of its rural districts. As in the Shenandoah Valley as a whole during the antebellum era, in Shenandoah County farmers and laborers formed a substantial cross-section of the population that lived outside of its towns

²⁵ U. S. Census Office, *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior, by Joseph C. G. Kennedy, Superintendent of Census* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864). (Hereafter referred to as *Eighth Census*). Manuscript Population Schedules, Shenandoah County, Virginia, 1860.

²⁶ Manuscript Population Schedules, Shenandoah County, 1860.

²⁷ *Eighth Census*. Discussion of the “settlement continuum” as it developed in the Valley may be found in Robert D. Mitchell, “The Settlement Fabric of the Shenandoah Valley, 1790-1860,” in *After the Backcountry*, 34-47.

and villages. Farmer and laborer were the two most common occupations in the county; 744 of all households (32.3%) were headed by farmers and 353 (15%) were headed by laborers.²⁸

In August of 1850, George F. Hupp, who lived on the northern outskirts of Strasburg during much of the nineteenth century, just outside what today is the southwestern edge of CeBe NHP, identified himself as a “farmer” to the enumerator of the population schedule of the U.S federal census. The manuscript agricultural schedule of that year shows that, as with most farmers in the region, Hupp practiced mixed farming with an emphasis on wheat. However, for the Shenandoah Valley, Hupp farmed on an unusually large scale. His farm, valued at \$113,000 , included 19,310 acres of land, 2,100 of which were improved. His livestock, valued at \$1,388, included 105 horses, 194 cattle, 100 sheep, and 250 swine. He produced hundreds of bushels each of a variety of small cereal grains, 6,000 bushels of corn, and 5,500 bushels of wheat. The farm implements and equipment his slaves or other laborers used to produce these crops was valued at \$2000. Hupp is shown in the industrial schedule of the 1850 census as having been the proprietor of three iron furnaces valued collectively at \$62,000, at which 23,000 tons of iron ore were processed into 6,750 tons of “pig metal” worth \$165,000. Although Hupp self-identified as a farmer, his entrepreneurial activities included industrial undertakings as well as agricultural ones. These economic activities that Hupp presided over would have required substantial amounts of labor, and so perhaps it is not surprising that the slave schedule of the census shows him as owning 92 slaves.²⁹

The value of Hupp’s real estate and the enormous scale of his entrepreneurship—the size of his agricultural holdings, the extent of his financial interests in the manufacture of iron, and the number of

²⁸Census enumerators did not provide occupational designations for 298 household heads (12.9 percent). The remaining 911 households (39.5 percent) were headed by members of other occupational groups such as merchants, craftsmen, or members of the professions. Manuscript Population Schedules, Shenandoah County, 1860. Hereafter, unless noted otherwise, all numerical data pertaining to the population of Shenandoah County in 1860, or to individual members of that population, are from this source, or were calculated on the basis of information contained in this source.

²⁹Manuscript Agricultural, Industrial, and Slaves Schedules, Shenandoah County, Virginia, 1850. In the Industrial Schedule, Hupp is listed as an “individual, producing Articles to the Annual Value of \$500.” Whether Hupp owned the three iron furnaces is unknown. However, in the Agricultural Schedule, his farm is valued at 113,000 dollars, and in the Schedule of Free Inhabitants the value of his real estate is valued at \$113,000, suggesting that he did not own the furnaces.

slaves he owned—made him a member of the region’s social and economic elite and set him far apart from most farmers, manufacturers, or slave holders in Shenandoah County and even the Shenandoah Valley. Hupp was an “agrarian capitalist” of his section of the Valley.³⁰ Statistics relating to Hupp’s enterprises reveal the upper limits of what could be achieved by the region’s farming and industrial entrepreneurs at mid-century, but they are not typical of the region. An examination and analysis of patterns of wealth-holding among Shenandoah County heads of households who were farmers or laborers will provide a sense of Hupp’s fit into the rural social and economic structure of Shenandoah County and his neighborhood.

Owing to the nature of the occupations of laborer and farmer and the process by which individuals were recruited (or recruited themselves) into them, occupational data pertaining only to heads of households systematically under-represent the number of laborers relative to farmers in the population. To be a farmer required ownership of or access to land and generally this condition prevailed only among heads of households. Individuals could not attach themselves to the households of others and function as farmers. Consequently, farmers headed their own households.³¹ Laborers, by contrast, did not need access to land in order to work as laborers, and so many of them lived within households headed by others. Often, for example, unmarried laborers lived within the households of the farmers who employed them. During their progression through the stages of the family cycle, most farm households at times included one or more live-in laborers.

Owing to the different life circumstances of farmers and laborers, wealth differentials between the two occupational groups were quite substantial. Farmers owned or had acquired access to capital assets which they managed as entrepreneurs to earn livelihoods and to accumulate wealth over time. Laborers, by contrast, owned only their labor—their capacity to work—which they sold as a market commodity.

³⁰Dunaway, *The First American Frontier*, 123.

³¹Generally, the only exceptions to this occurred when control of a farm was passing (gradually, one assumes) from one generation to the next. Often in these cases, occupants of these households included a father and son each of which the census enumerator listed as a “farmer,” but of course only one of them could be designated as the head of the household.

Their working capital was their muscle, which they used in the employ of farmers to earn livelihoods for themselves and their dependents. Consequently, and as one might expect, laborers were materially less well off than farmers. As shown in Table 3, in Shenandoah County in 1860, levels of wealth among farmers, in the form of both real estate and personal estate, exceeded by a large margin those prevailing among laboring classes. Great inequalities of wealth existed between the two occupational groups. Not only did average values of both real estate and personal estate among farmers range at levels substantially higher than among laborers, but a far greater number of laborers than farmers owned no real estate or personal estate.

Although wealth inequalities between farmers and laborers were quite substantial, steep gradations of wealth also prevailed among farmers themselves. These may be shown by dividing all 1860 Shenandoah County farmers into quintiles formed on the basis of their wealth as measured by the sum of the value of real estate and value of personal estate they owned. As shown in Table 4, the average wealth of farmers of each quintile ranged from \$22,011 among those of the highest quintile to \$252 among those of the lowest. Especially remarkable is the difference in average wealth between farmers of the highest quintile (\$22,011) and those of the upper-middle quintile (\$6,766), when compared against the differences in average wealth between other quintiles. At \$15,245, this *difference* in average wealth was substantially greater than the average wealth of farmers of each the four lowest quintiles combined (\$12,047). As shown, the 149 wealthiest farmers of Shenandoah County, comprising only 20% of the total number of farmers, possessed 65% of the wealth owned by all farmers in the county. By contrast, farmers of the lowest quintile held less than one percent of the total wealth among farmers. Farmers of the upper-middle quintile were the only ones who held a proportion of farm wealth commensurate with their numbers.

Thus, farmers of the highest quintile formed an economic elite of rural society whose levels of wealth-holding set them far apart from other farmers of the county. The foregoing analysis pertains to all farmers of Shenandoah County in 1860. In narrowing the focus to include only those farmers who lived in the Strasburg District of Shenandoah County—the census district where George F. Hupp lived and that

encompassed county lands upon which the Battle of Cedar Creek was fought—the findings replicate those pertaining to all farmers of the county. Although, as shown, the average wealth of each quintile of Strasburg District farmers is somewhat higher than the corresponding average for the county as a whole, the percentages of total wealth held by farmers of each quintile closely approximate the corresponding quintiles for farmers of the county as a whole (Table 4). In short, the wealth-holding elite among Shenandoah County farmers as a whole included a sizeable contingent of farmers of the Strasburg District.

More to the point, this wealth-holding elite of Shenandoah County's agrarian classes included men upon whose properties the Battle of Cedar Creek was fought. Daniel Stickley, for example, who owned real estate and personal effects the value of which summed to \$30,640, was the fifth wealthiest farmer of Strasburg district. Among all farmers of Shenandoah County, only 23 of them owned more wealth than Stickley. George F. Hupp, whose property included the eponymous Hupp's Hill, and whose house was commandeered to serve as the headquarters of several federal military commanders, held real estate and personal property valued at nearly \$50,000, which made him the wealthiest farmer of Strasburg District and the tenth most wealthy farmer in all of Shenandoah County. This wealth-holding elite of Shenandoah County and of Strasburg District also included Isaac Bowman, Amos Spengler, and Jacob Pifer, all farmers whose land became part of Cedar Creek battlefield (Bowman and Pifer were wealthier than Stickley but less wealthy than Hupp). Though he lived in a nearby section of Frederick County rather than in Shenandoah, Solomon Heater, whose property formed part of the battlefield, would have fit into this group as well; with wealth valued at \$19,830, only 54 farmers in Shenandoah County held more wealth than he did.³²

However, as made abundantly clear by the data presented in Table 4, many farmers of less grand means—the remaining 80 percent of farmers included in the lower four quintiles—also resided in neighborhoods in or near present-day Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, and sizeable

³²Manuscript Population Schedules, Frederick County, 1860.

gradations in wealth prevailed among these farmers as well. The difference in average wealth between farmers of the lowest quintile and those in the lower-middle quintile, is especially striking and, in relative terms, is greater than the difference between the highest two groups. Whereas the average wealth of farmers of the highest quintile was more than 3 times greater than that of the quintile immediately beneath it, the average wealth of farmers in the lower-middle quintile was nearly six times greater than that of farmers of the lowest quintile. Thus, significant numbers of farmers of these communities were poor, by relative standards. Moreover, laborers, who on average were poorer than many farmers of the lowest quintile, also lived in those communities.

On the eve of the Civil War, rural society in the lower Shenandoah Valley featured sharply defined wealth inequalities. Farmers, as owners of the means of production for the creation of food and fiber, held far greater levels of wealth than members of the laboring classes who were their neighbors and employees. Further, among farmers themselves, wealth was not evenly distributed; the wealthiest farmers of the locale controlled a vastly disproportionate share of total farm wealth. Although a goal of this study is to examine the lives of “ordinary” people of the locale whose homes and farms lay in the path of clashing armies at Cedar Creek, some of these individuals were not so ordinary, at least insofar as a quality such as ordinariness may be discerned on the basis of patterns of wealth-holding. Historians’ attention is often drawn to the elite of a given community or region—and the lower Shenandoah Valley is no exception—because many of the homes and other structures owned or built by them continue to occupy the landscape. Befitting their wealth, structures built by them tended to be well-planned and of grand and expansive design, a consequence of which has been that subsequent generations deemed them worth preserving. Thus, often to a disproportionate degree, a community’s historic elite created a cultural imprint in the form of a built landscape that persists to the present. But the relative absence of a built landscape created by non-elites should not obscure the fact that they existed, in sizeable numbers, and that through their economic activities they played a significant role in shaping their communities.

During the nineteenth century, as farmers and their laborers—black as well as white—made the Shenandoah Valley the most productive wheat farming region of the Virginia and the South, a technological revolution transformed the practice of agriculture in the United States. Until the middle third of the nineteenth century, productivity gains in agriculture resulted mostly from the application of new farming techniques rather than from the adoption of labor-saving implements; American farm tools resembled those of classical antiquity. An examination of the seasonal cycle of wheat farming will serve to highlight how technological advances in farming made it possible for commercial wheat growers in the Shenandoah Valley to increase both the proportion of their land holdings devoted to wheat and their per acre yields the crop.

Wheat farming entailed four major tasks: plowing and preparing the fields; sowing and covering the seed; harvesting the crop; and threshing the grain. Valley farmers produced winter wheat, which is sown in the fall and harvested the following summer. Consequently, field preparation, which involved plowing to turn over the soil and harrowing it in order to make a smooth seed bed, was done in late summer and early fall. Henry B. Jones, for example, a farmer of northern Rockbridge County, noted in his diary on August 16 of 1845, that his slaves had finished plowing twenty-five acres of wheat land.³³ A traveler enroute to the lower Valley in October of 1854 described coming upon “open cultivated lands” just south of Harpers Ferry; she observed that “five ploughs, 3 horses to each, were preparing for sowing wheat.”³⁴ Sowing was done by hand-broadcasting or, by about mid-century, through the use of horse-drawn seed drills. The wheat would be sown anytime after the ground had been plowed and harrowed, and received soil amendments such as manure, lime, or plaster in order to enhance its fertility. In 1847, for example, Henry Jones of Rockbridge began to sow wheat on September 1, and he finished on October 16. To cover the seed, farmers used harrows, the most common type a “spike-tooth harrow.” On

³³Turner, ed., *The Diary of Henry Boswell Jones*.

³⁴Alma Hibbard[?] Journal.

September 6, 1847, Jones recorded in his diary that he had sown fifty-one bushels of wheat, and noted that “it will be harrowed tomorrow.”³⁵

In the Shenandoah Valley the wheat harvest began in the last week of June or first week of July.³⁶ Throughout the Shenandoah Valley during the first half of the nineteenth century, the “cradle” served as the dominant implement for harvesting wheat.³⁷ The device was a scythe with a rake-like appendage attached to it that caught (“cradled”) the stalks of wheat as they were cut, and caused them to fall in the same direction. As cradlers moved through a wheat field cutting the grain, they were followed by rakers, binders, and shockers. Rakers used wooden rakes to pull the fallen stalks together to form sheaves, which binders tied.³⁸ Shockers gathered the sheaves and stacked them into shocks, which stood in the field in rows until they were loaded onto wagons and hauled to barns or granaries for storage.³⁹ Thus, all through the Shenandoah Valley, in the course of a few weeks, teams of harvesters altered the appearance of the mid-summer landscape; by mid-July, waves of standing grain on “every golden-colored hill and valley” had given way to fields of golden stubble crisscrossed with rows of wheat shocks.

After mid-century, increasing numbers of farmers harvested wheat with horse-drawn mechanical reapers. Numerous brands of reapers were commercially available to farmers, but the McCormick Reaper, invented by Cyrus McCormick in the upper Valley in the 1830s and perfected during ensuing

³⁵Turner, ed., *The Diary of Henry Boswell Jones*.

³⁶John T. Schlebecker, “Farmers in the Lower Shenandoah Valley, 1850,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 79 (1971): 472, claims that farmers harvested wheat in May but this is incorrect.

³⁷John T. Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive: A History of American Agriculture, 1607-1972* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1975), 113; and Peter McClelland, *Sowing Modernity: America’s First Agricultural Revolution* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), 140-143.

³⁸John T. Schlebecker, *Agricultural Implements and Machines in the Collections of the National Museum of History and Technology* (City of Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1972), 120.

³⁹Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive*, 116. In 1851 farmer Henry B. Jones of Rockbridge County described the ideal harvest team as comprising fourteen persons: six laborers to cradle the wheat, six to rake and bind the wheat, and two to gather the wheat. Jones’ own harvest teams sometimes fell short of the ideal—in 1849, his harvest team included only two cradlers and five other helpers. He did not indicate what tasks the five helpers performed (Turner, ed., *The Diary of Henry Boswell Jones*).

decades, became the most well-known and widely-used mechanical reaping machine.⁴⁰ Mechanical reapers saved substantial amounts of labor, revolutionizing wheat farming. By some estimates, a mechanical reaper could harvest as much wheat as five or six cradlers.⁴¹ Although mechanical reapers became increasingly popular, cradling remained in use as a method of harvesting wheat. During the late nineteenth century, an agricultural implement repair shop in the village of Tom's Brook, located on the Valley Pike a few miles south of Strasburg, repaired many mechanical reapers and other modern horse-drawn mechanical implements, but large numbers of cradles were repaired, as well.⁴² Also, Charles B. Pence, a farmer of Quicksburg, a few miles south of Tom's Brook, noted in his 1899 diary that he had used a cradle to harvest his wheat crop that year.⁴³ Although mechanical reapers were widely adopted in the Shenandoah Valley they did not completely or quickly replace more traditional implements for harvesting wheat.

Threshing wheat—the process by which the grain is removed from the stalks—was done in late July or early August, and sometimes during the ensuing months of fall and winter as well, as time permitted or help was available. The traditional method of threshing entailed use of a flail. Sheaves of wheat were unbound and laid on a threshing floor (typically the wooden floor of a barn), and then beaten with flails in order to separate the grain from the stalks.⁴⁴ Winnowing removed the chaff from the grain. Traditionally, this was accomplished by throwing the mix of grain and chaff into a breeze, which would carry the lighter chaff away from the heavier grain (often barns were sited to facilitate winnowing; with doors open, prevailing winds would blow across the threshing floor). Increasingly during the nineteenth

⁴⁰Schlebecker, *Agricultural Implements*, 172-173.

⁴¹Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive*, 114-118, and McClelland, *Sowing Modernity*, 174-184.

⁴²J.S. Borden and Sons Co., Toms Brook, Virginia, Account Books, 1886-1896, in Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia.

⁴³Charles B. Pence Diary, 1899, Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

⁴⁴McClelland, *Sowing Modernity*, 165-170. A flail is a device consisting of a long wooden handle to which is attached, with leather strapping so that it swings freely from the handle, a stout cylindrical shaft of wood about eighteen inches long.

century, however, a mechanical device called a “wheat fan” could be used to clean grain. This was essentially a wooden box with a hopper into which the mix of grain and chaff was poured as the operator used a hand crank to rotate a fan. The rotation of the fan created a strong flow of air under a set of screens that moved back and forth. The screens caught fragments of straw and other debris; grain falling through the screens fell into a container beneath; and the flow of air blew the chaff off of and away from the grain.⁴⁵

Mechanical threshing machines came into use during the 1820s and became widely available during succeeding decades. Early machines were small, hand-powered, and designed for use by a single farmer. In 1850, Henry Jones bought such a threshing machine at an auction for eighty dollars.⁴⁶ Other threshing machines in use in the Shenandoah Valley by the antebellum period were very large and powered by horses on treadmills or turning a power sweep, although by the late 1870s some farmers began to use steam engines. One historian has described these “larger rigs,” as having “devices for delivering the straw to a stack,” as well as “automatic grain-bagging devices.” One of these large threshing machines, which “became prevalent in wheat areas, both east and west, by the 1860s,”⁴⁷ is depicted in a threshing scene drawn by James E. Taylor, a sketch artist who accompanied Sheridan’s troops in the Valley in 1864 (Figure 16).⁴⁸ In many cases, these larger machines were bought by farmers not only for the threshing of their own wheat crops, but also to work as “custom jobbers” for other farmers. They moved their threshing machines from farm to farm through their neighborhoods, spending

⁴⁵John T. Schlebecker, *Agricultural Implements and Machines in the Collections of the National Museum of History and Technology*, 41, 149; McClelland, *Sowing Modernity*, 185-193.

⁴⁶Turner, ed., *Diary of Henry Boswell Jones*.

⁴⁷Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive*, 119.

⁴⁸In the accompanying diary Taylor described a threshing machine in action: “...from the direction of Harpers Ferry road came a buzzing sound, and with curiosity aroused, I proceed to investigate to find a threshing machine in full blast with seven horses in a merry-go-round under the persuasions of an impartial lash, at the hands of a yokel on a pivot platform. Wheat was the staple under disintegration from the chaff, and as the latter upward frisks to settle into a straw heap at the tail of the thresher, in a steady stream the former glides through the shute into the bags underneath.” James E. Taylor, *With Sheridan Up the Shenandoah Valley in 1864: Leaves From a Special Artists Sketch Book and Diary* (Cleveland: The Western Reserve Historical Society, 1989), 24.

a few days at each until the threshing of the wheat or other small cereal grains produced on that farm was complete. In 1850, for example, William Harner, of Rockingham County, “thrashed” his wheat on July 19th and then “moved [the] machine to William Crickenbargers.” By November 14, Harner had threshed the wheat (and sometimes rye) of eighteen other farmers of his neighborhood.⁴⁹ After threshing, farmers hauled bags of wheat to a nearby grist mill where it was converted into flour and packaged into barrels to be sold locally or transported to extra-regional markets.

The Manufacturing Sector: A Mixed Economy

Historians typically characterize the Shenandoah Valley as a region richly endowed for agriculture, and whose skillful farmers raised crops at extraordinary levels of productivity. Accordingly, historical literature pertaining to the Civil War era teems with references to the Shenandoah Valley as the “breadbasket of the Confederacy,” the “breadbasket of the South,” or similar appellations.⁵⁰ Such characterizations of the region are not unwarranted, considering the historical size, strength, and dynamism of the region’s agricultural sector, but this image of the regional economy is incomplete. Historians have underappreciated the role of manufacturing and specifically flour production as a force that profoundly influenced the nature of the regional economy. This section of the study explores the nature of the Shenandoah Valley’s manufacturing sector, according particular attention to grist mills and flour production, as it demonstrates that the comparative strength and vitality of the regional economy resulted from the balanced *mix* of agriculture and manufacturing that prevailed.

The rise of flour production as a dominant element of the Shenandoah Valley’s manufacturing sector resulted from the emergence of wheat as the main cash crop of the region’s farmers. Farmers

⁴⁹William M. Harner Farm Diary, 1848-1861, M.L. Garber Collection, Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia,

⁵⁰As examples, see Koons, “‘The Staple of Our Country,’”; Heatwole, *The Burning*; and Mahon, *The Shenandoah Valley, 1861-1865*.

produced wealth in the form of wheat, realized only after the crop was processed into a market commodity.⁵¹ Thus, grist mills for the processing of wheat into flour became abundant and widely dispersed throughout the Shenandoah Valley. As with most other types of manufacturing establishments for processing crops or raw materials, grist mills arose in the countryside, close to where farmers produced wheat and other grains. Flour was transported to extra-regional markets directly from farms or mills, bypassing towns and remaining decentralized. Town-based merchants played no direct role in its export from the region.⁵² Artisanal handicraftsmen, many of whom lived in towns, manufactured a broad range of products chiefly for local consumption rather than principally for extra-regional markets, e.g., cabinets, shoes, barrels, ceramic pottery, carriages, wagons.⁵³

Grist mills were scattered throughout the countryside of the Shenandoah Valley but their sites were not randomly chosen. With rare exceptions, mills of the antebellum period were powered by water. In areas of the lower Valley where shale is the dominant soil type, a host of individual mills and numerous clusters of mills arose along Opequon and Cedar Creeks and their tributaries. Here, owing to the nature of surface drainage on shale soils, streams are deeply incised into the landscape, creating steep

⁵¹Works discussing markets for flour produced in the Shenandoah Valley include Avery Odelle Craven, *Soil Exhaustion as a factor in the Agricultural History of Virginia and Maryland, 1606-1860* (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1965), 78-79; Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 189-195 and *passim*; Arthur G. Peterson, "The Alexandria Market Prior to the Civil War," *William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine*, 2nd Ser., 12 (1932): 104, 108, and *passim*; and Peterson, "Flour and Grist Milling in Virginia: A Brief History," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 43 (1935): 104. It should be noted that some comparatively small quantities of wheat, rather than flour, were shipped out of the region, presumably for reduction to flour elsewhere. For example, see North River Canal Boat Accounts, 1854-1856, Rockbridge County Courthouse, Lexington, Virginia. These accounts reveal that although flour was the commodity that dominated shipments by canal boat—to Lynchburg, at least, but perhaps on to Richmond as well—some wheat was shipped also. In 1854, for example, nearly 5,500 pounds of wheat were sent on the canal from Lexington, as compared to nearly 2,900,000 pounds of flour.

⁵²Most manufactured items shipped out of the Shenandoah Valley originated from farms, or in iron furnaces, forges, and foundries; gristmills, sawmills and distilleries; and tanneries. These manufacturing establishments were widely dispersed across the countryside and, with relatively few exceptions, were not located in towns of the region. Thus, they conformed to Robert D. Mitchell's characterization of manufacturing in the valley, circa 1860, as rural-based and only tenuously linked to urbanization. Mitchell, "The Settlement Fabric of the Shenandoah Valley," 46.

⁵³*Seventh Census*; 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880, Manuscript Manufacturing Schedules, Augusta County, Botetourt County, Clarke county, Frederick County, Page county, Rockbridge County, Rockingham County, Shenandoah County, and Warren County, Virginia, 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880.

gradients with fast water. On Red Bud Creek, for example, a few miles north of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, mills could be powered without impoundments of water as “the stream’s flow simply was diverted by races to power an array of mill wheels.”⁵⁴ In some cases, numerous mills were powered by a “piggy-backed race system in which the tail race of one mill flowed directly into the head race of the next one downstream.”⁵⁵

Grist mills were diverse in their physical size, productive capacity, and capital worth, as well as in the range of processing activities other than flour production that occurred within them, and the nature of their relationship to flour markets external to the region. Grist mills varied in size and complexity from smaller mills that ground flour or meal for farmers of the immediate neighborhood, to large, highly capitalized mills that were deeply enmeshed in the commercial networks by which wheaten flour produced in the Valley was exported to international markets. Census enumerators usually distinguished between these two types of mills on the basis of their dominant type of business, but many highly capitalized merchant mills that sold branded and inspected flour destined for the international flour trade engaged in some custom milling, and many mills that specialized in custom work also participated to some degree in the long-distance flour trade.⁵⁶ Thus, a chief aspect of diversity among mills resulted from the degree to which a mill functioned for extra-regional or international flour markets.

⁵⁴Warren Hofstra and Clarence R. Geier, “Farm to Mill to Markets,” in *After the Backcountry*, 58. Hofstra and Geier argue that early settlers chose shale lands upon which to build mills because of both the comparatively poor quality of the soil for farming, and also the surface drainage of shale soils, which produce streams with steep gradients and deeply-incised beds; their fast-flowing waters were well-suited for powering mills. For an alternate point of view pertaining to a different region of Virginia, see Carolyn A. Copenhaver, Stephen P. Prisley, Judd R. Pittman, Mary E. Yonce, Cristina M.S. Issem, and Kristopher A. Jensen, “The Geography of Grist, Flour, and Saw Mills: Indicators of Land-Use History in Virginia,” *Southeastern Geographer* 47 (1) 2007: 138-154.

⁵⁵Warren Hofstra and Clarence Geier, with contributions by Joseph Whitehorne, Leila Wood, Henry Karnes, Marcus LeMasters, and Kathy Coffett, “The Abrams Creek-Redbud Run Project: A Cultural Resource Inventory Study of Archaeological Sites in the Shale Area East of Winchester, Virginia: A Report of Findings Submitted to Board of Supervisors, Frederick County, and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources” (1992), 90.

⁵⁶These generalizations are supported by data found in the manuscript manufacturing schedules for Augusta County in 1880 (information on the degree to which millers engaged in “custom” work was not collected until this census). In Augusta County, millers’ responses to the question of how much of their work was “custom” generated the following responses: 1/10=3; 1/5= 1; ¼=1; 1/3= 7; ½=8; 2/3=1; ¾=6; 4/5=4; and “all” = 22 (no response = 2).

Grist mills were multi-faceted businesses where a host of economic activities necessary for the welfare and material comfort of the local community were performed. Their main purpose was to reduce grains to flour or meal, but the power generated by waterwheels, and the grinding apparatus integral to the functioning of mills, were utilized for a host of other purposes as well.⁵⁷ Wheat was converted to flour; corn as well as small cereal grains other than wheat were ground into meal for human and animal consumption as well as for use as mash in distilleries; apples were ground for the production of cider; logs were sawn to produce lumber for the construction and building trades as well as for various types of artisans who manufactured wooden items; lime and plaster were pulverized to serve as soil amendments for the improvement of soil fertility; wool was carded for the production of woolen textiles; and flaxseed was pressed for linseed oil. Some grist mills integrated the distillation of whiskey into their operations. In the case of one Rockingham County miller, a portion of every load of corn brought to his mill was set aside for conversion to whiskey.⁵⁸ Grist mills (as well as distilleries) often incorporated hog-raising into their enterprises. In these mills, hogs were kept nearby and fed the screenings and other byproducts of grain milling. These millers and distillers sold large quantities of bacon or pork and, in some cases, census enumerators recorded the profits of hog-raising in their listings of the annual profits of these businesses.⁵⁹ Thus, aside from their role in establishing and reinforcing economic and cultural connections to cities and regions that lay outside the valley, grist mills provided important services to local residents as well.

These data may be summarized as follows: the work of about 15 percent of all millers was one-half custom; the work of about 20 percent was less than one-half custom; the work of about 20 percent was greater than one-half custom, and the work of 40 percent was "all custom."

⁵⁷These observations are supported by the manuscript Manufacturing Schedules of each Valley County. Those for Rockbridge County, 1860, provide especially clear and representative examples.

⁵⁸Heatwole, *The Burning*, 162.

⁵⁹T.S.W. Gisiner, Brownsburg, Virginia, 26 March 1856, to P.S. Roller, Rockingham County, Virginia, in the Roller Family Papers, 1837-1917; John Hart Lyle, Account Book, 1856-1870, in the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia; and Memorandum of Agreement (Miller agreement) between Samuel McDowell Reid and Fountain Berry, 7 October 1857, in Reid Family Papers, Special Collections, Leyburn Library, Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia.

The linkage between farming and manufacturing was direct: farmers brought their crops, fiber, or soil amendments to a local mill for processing. In some cases, enterprising farmers built or bought a grist mill, which then served as an extension of their agricultural entrepreneurship. Some also integrated distilleries into their enterprises.⁶⁰ Many mill proprietors were men of substance in their communities capable of drawing together a large array of productive resources and enterprises that included grist mills. The term “agrarian capitalism” characterizes this form and scale of economic activity.⁶¹ Agrarian capitalists in the Shenandoah Valley, particularly the proprietors of the larger grist mills, were critical to the formation of commercial networks connecting rural economic activity in the region to broader, external markets. Through their entrepreneurial efforts, the Shenandoah Valley emerged as an important source of flour for international trade.

In the nineteenth-century Shenandoah Valley, numerous types of manufacturing establishments in addition to grist mills emerged directly from the primary economic activity of farming. Although farmers emphasized wheat production, their grain-livestock complexes featured diversity of farm enterprise, and spawned the emergence of rural-based manufacturing establishments to process the food and fiber they produced. Excess corn and rye was often distilled into whiskey, while a portion of the annual crop of apples, and other fruits as well, were distilled into brandies. Wool was processed into textiles in local woolen mills, and animal hides were sold to local tanneries for processing into leather.⁶² Farmers contributed to the growth and development of the hide-tanning industry most obviously by selling raw livestock hides to tanneries for processing into leather. Farmers and rural laborers contributed to this manufacturing enterprise in another important way. Tannic acid, integral to the processing of skins into

⁶⁰The manuscript population schedules of the nineteenth century pertaining to any county of the Shenandoah Valley include numerous individuals with joint occupational designations, e.g., farmer and miller, farmer and distiller, or farmer and cooper.

⁶¹Dunaway, *The First American Frontier*, 123.

⁶²See Koons, “The Staple of Our Country,” 4-5, for a discussion of whiskey distilling and the use of apples for brandy. Also see John Robinson Papers, 1810-1837, McCormick Collection, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; and Varner Family Papers, 1807-1933, in Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

finished leather, was extracted from the bark of trees, usually oak. Consequently, many tanyards of the Valley created significant demand for oak bark. During slack seasons, small armies of farmers and their hired hands could be found in the wooded districts of the Valley, peeling bark by the hundreds of tons and loading it onto carts or wagons for transport to tanneries.⁶³ Sawmills and iron furnaces, also of considerable significance to the regional economy, processed forest and mineral resources of the region.⁶⁴ In nearly all cases, raw material inputs to manufacturing processes were of local origin.⁶⁵

The manufacturing sector of the Shenandoah Valley economy was quite robust on the eve of the Civil War, and it continued to show comparative strength and vitality all during the nineteenth century.⁶⁶ A comparison of total capital investment in manufacturing, per capita, in seven multi-county and largely rural regions of Virginia, including the Shenandoah Valley, shows that in 1860, at nearly \$20 per capita, manufacturing in the Valley was capitalized at levels far higher than any other region in the state. Also, the secular trend of per capita investment in manufacturing was steadily upward: it tripled from 1840 to

⁶³See Chris Bolgiano, "Tanbark Harvesting As an Economic and Environmental Factor in Appalachia," presented at the Shenandoah Valley Regional Studies Seminar, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia, in Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University. Also see the following in Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia: Lumber Ledgers; Virginia Hisey Myers Collections, Journal No. 4; Cootes' Store Records, in Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society Collections; Mr. and Mrs. Robert Strickler Collection, John Ziegler Daybook/Ledger 9; and McHone Brothers Collections.

⁶⁴Studies of iron manufacture in the Shenandoah Valley include Charles B. Dew, *Bond of Iron*; Kurt C. Russ, John M. McDaniel, and Katherine T. Wood, "Archaeology of Nineteenth-Century Iron Manufacturing in Southwestern Virginia: Longdale Iron Mining Complex," in *After the Backcountry*, 135-144; and Kathleen Bruce, *Virginia Iron Manufacture in the Slave Era* (New York: Century, 1931).

⁶⁵Tanneries represent the only known exception to this generalization. As early as the late 1840s, for example, agents for the Ziegler Tannery, at Broadway in northwestern Rockingham County, purchased raw hides in Baltimore and wagoned them back to the valley for processing. See John Ziegler Tannery Daybook/Ledger 10, in Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Strickler Collection, Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

⁶⁶This is in contrast to one historian's assertion that in 1860 manufacturing in the Shenandoah Valley was "capitalized at low levels" (Mitchell, "The Settlement Fabric of the Shenandoah Valley, 1790-1860," 46). However, compare Mitchell's point of view with Dunaway's, in which she suggests that by 1860 a great deal of the manufacturing activity in the valley, including flour production, was urban-based. In her discussion of towns as "bulking centers," she argues that the distribution of flour to extra-regional markets was urban-based as well (see Dunaway, *The First American Frontier*, 145-149, and 199-202). For extended description and analysis of the comparative weakness of Virginia's manufacturing sector in the antebellum era, see John A. Majewski, *A House Dividing: Economic Development in Pennsylvania and Virginia Before the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

1880, fell modestly by 1890, but rebounded by 1900. Similar generalizations emerge from a regional comparison of two other indices of manufacturing activity: the annual value of production in manufacturing per capita and the number of manufacturing establishments per capita.⁶⁷

The regional economy of the Shenandoah Valley featured strong interdependencies between its agricultural and manufacturing sectors that were essential to the successful functioning of each, and of critical importance for overall economic prosperity. Profits deriving from manufacturing were distributed throughout the regional society. A team of economists who studied Rockingham County early in the twentieth century aptly captured this point when, in describing “the strong link between ... agriculture and manufacturing” that prevailed there, noted the high productivity of wheat farming and the large number of grist mills for processing wheat into flour. They asserted that “the difference in value between wheat and milled flour is saved as wealth for Rockingham County.”⁶⁸ Thus, the profits of commercial wheat farming accrued not only to farmers, but redounded also to the millers and their employees who processed the wheat into flour, and further, to the coopers who made the barrels into which flour was packaged for shipment, the wagon makers who built the wagons in which the wheat and flour was hauled, as well as the wheelwrights and blacksmiths who furnished wagon components to them, the leather workers who fabricated the harnesses for pulling the wagons, and so on. In turn, the wages earned by workers in these and other manufacturing operations could be spent in the consumption of goods

⁶⁷For the purposes of this comparison, Shenandoah Valley counties include Frederick, Clarke, Shenandoah, Warren, Page, Rockingham, Augusta, Rockbridge, and Botetourt; Alleghany Highlands counties include Alleghany, Bath, Highland, Craig, and Giles; Piedmont counties include Madison, Green Orange, Albemarle, Nelson, Amherst, and Bedford; Northern Piedmont counties include Loudoun, Fairfax, Fauquier, and Prince William; Central Piedmont counties include Goochland, Cumberland, Powhatan, and Amelia; Southside counties include Charlotte, Lunenburg, Pittsylvania, Halifax, and Mecklenburg; Tidewater counties include King and Queen, King William, New Kent, Surry, Sussex, Southampton, Isle of Wight, and Nansemond. Unless noted otherwise, all per capita manufacturing statistics presented in this and succeeding paragraphs were calculated from data found in University of Virginia Library, Geospatial & Statistical Data Center, Historical Census Browser, Census Data Over Time (the data and terminology used in the Historical Census Browser are drawn directly from historical volumes of the U.S. Census of Population and Housing). URL: <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/newlong3.php>.

⁶⁸J.S. Peters and W.F. Stinespring, “An Economic and Social Survey of Rockingham County,” a Laboratory Study in the James Wilson School of Economics of the University of Virginia. University of Virginia Record Extension Series 9 (1924): 42-43.

produced locally by other manufacturers, or used to consume goods originating from outside the region and being marketed by local retailers in country stores and in service towns of the region.

The Development of Transportation Networks to Extra-Regional Markets

Shenandoah Valley wheat crops did not become a marketable commodity until they were converted to flour in the region's grist mills and then transported to coastal or fall-line cities such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, Georgetown, Alexandria, Fredericksburg, and Richmond. The Blue Ridge Mountains hem-in the Valley on its eastern edge and separate the region from those markets, posing a barrier that impeded the free flow of trade. Accordingly, the growth of the flour trade required the use of rivers, or the development of transportation routes that traversed the Blue Ridge in order to connect the Valley to extra-regional market cities. Roads, and later railroads, were built through gaps in the Blue Ridge Mountains in order to link the Valley to regions or cities east of the mountains. Also, however, the northeast-to southwest orientation of the Shenandoah Valley placed its lower portion within the commercial orbit of seaboard cities such as Baltimore and Philadelphia that served as markets for Valley flour.

Winchester, located in the lower Valley on the Valley Turnpike, was the largest commercial center of the region. It anchored the regional transportation network and served as a collection and forwarding point for flour produced in the Valley. Middletown and other small towns south or southeast of Winchester in the vicinity of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park served as important nodal points along the capillary roads connecting to the Valley Turnpike, the main transportation artery of the region. Strasburg, another town near the Park, played an especially significant role in the commercial flour trade because of its strategic location on the Valley Turnpike, along the North Fork of the Shenandoah River, and on a major rail line. Thus, increasingly during the nineteenth century but especially with the advent of railroads, towns near Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park emerged as central places of great significant in the marketing and transportation of

wheaten flour produced in the Shenandoah Valley. This section of the study describes the nature and evolution of transportation facilities for carrying wheaten flour and other products to extra-regional markets, and documents the importance of lower-Valley towns located near the Park, to the commercial flour trade.

Farmers or millers from all parts of the Shenandoah Valley used the Valley Turnpike to carry flour to Winchester. This was the main transportation artery that connected all of the larger towns of the Valley, including Winchester, to one another. The road was relatively well maintained and improved over time.⁶⁹ In 1840, a farmer who lived in southern Augusta County noted in a letter that “they have got the Macadamized road nearly completed from Staunton to Winchester.” Two years later, he reported that “our Macadamized road is beginning to be of some service to the valley. The large wagons ... carry from 80 to 85 hundred [pounds of] produce from Staunton to Winchester for 50 cents per hundred.”⁷⁰ This “produce” included large quantities of flour.⁷¹ An 1847 visitor to the Valley, writing in tones of admiration, referred to the Valley Turnpike as “the great Macadamized Turnpike which leads from Winchester to Staunton.”⁷²

Farmers or millers wishing to market their flour in cities that lay east of the Blue Ridge Mountains sometimes hauled it there by wagon, passing through one of the numerous gaps in those mountains. William Harner, a farmer who lived near McGaheysville in eastern Rockingham County,

⁶⁹Wayland, *Twenty-Five Chapters on the Shenandoah Valley*, 333-340. Detailed discussions of macadamization and other improvements to the Valley Turnpike during the 1830s and 1840s are also available in Karl Raitz, “The Lay of the Land,” in *The Great Valley Road*, 38-39; Gabrielle M. Lanier, “An Early Road to the Old West, 1780-1837,” in *The Great Valley Road*, 108-134; Kenneth W. Keller, “The Best Thoroughfare in the South,” in *The Great Valley Road*, 160-166; and Parke Rouse, Jr., *The Great Wagon Road, from Philadelphia to the South* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), 219-220.

⁷⁰Robert and Sally McCormick, Augusta County, Va., to William and Rebecca McCormick, Caledonia, Washington County, Missouri, May 30, 1840; and Robert and Salley McCormick to William and Rebecca McCormick, Greenville, Wain County, Missouri, December 25, 1842; both in William Steele McCormick Papers, 1833-1879, McCormick Collection, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

⁷¹Keller, “Valley Turnpike,” 18-19.

⁷²Bishko, “John S. Skinner Visits the Virginia Springs,” 169-170.

near the southern end of the Massanutten range, wagoned his flour through Brown's Gap or Swift Run Gap on his way to markets in Richmond, Fredericksburg, Gordonsville, or Charlottesville at least twice yearly during the period from 1847 to 1860. On May 15, 1848, Harner "had horses shod and greased wagon gears." In the next two days he "went [to the mill] after a load of flour and fixed to go over the mountain." On the 18th, he "started to Fredericksburg" carrying 9 barrels of flour and 123 pounds of bacon. He "got to town" on the 21st, and sold his flour for \$5.25 per barrel and his bacon for \$6. He arrived home on the 25th with 80 pounds of coffee, 70 pounds of sugar, two sacks of salt, and some cotton. Most of Harner's trips to sell flour were to Richmond. Usually, he hauled ten barrels of flour in his wagon, and returned home with goods and supplies such as coffee, sugar, salt, and plaster, with ten or eleven days of travel.⁷³

Some farmers and millers of the region utilized water transport for carrying their flour to market. From numerous points along the Shenandoah River—but most prominently Port Republic in eastern Rockingham County—barrels of flour were loaded onto flatboats locally called "gundalows," and transported down the south fork of the Shenandoah River and into the Potomac River at Harpers Ferry. Gundalows were long, low, shallow-draft river boats constructed of rough lumber. After a gundalow had carried its freight downriver, it was disassembled and the lumber sold locally for use in construction.⁷⁴ The carrying capacity of a gundalow depended on its size and the depth of the river, but some could hold over one hundred barrels of flour. When waters ran high enough to permit it—typically in the spring of each year—convoys of gundalows carried downriver flour and other products such as iron and lumber.⁷⁵

⁷³Harner Farm Diary.

⁷⁴On the reuse of lumber from gundalows, see Seth C. Bruggeman, "The Shenandoah River Gundalow and the Politics of Material Reuse," presented at the Shenandoah Valley Regional Studies Seminar, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia (February 2000). A recent publication that provides additional perspectives and analyses is Seth C. Bruggeman, "The Shenandoah River Gundalow: Reusable Boats in Virginia's Nineteenth-Century River Trade." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 118 (2010): 315-349.

⁷⁵Informative accounts of flour transport on the river are Anthony Greiner, "Navigation and Commerce on the Shenandoah River of Virginia," *Log of the Mystic Seaport* 52 (Summer 1990): 42-46; and Ann McCleary and Nancy Sorrells, "Port Republic: Portrait of a Shenandoah River Town," Potomac Valley Chronicle: *Journal of the*

In October of 1854, one Clarke County observer on an evening ride passed along the bank the Shenandoah River where “2 or 3 boats laden with flour were passing to Harpers Ferry.” Later in the month, traveling “up the river bank,” she “came opposite some gondolas (sic) laden with flour” and destined for Harpers Ferry.⁷⁶

Farmers and millers of Rockbridge and other nearby counties used a combination of land and water transport to market flour. During the 1840s and early 1850s, three or four times annually Henry B. Jones had one of his slaves haul his flour and other farm produce by wagon over the Blue Ridge to Scottsville on the James River, where the flour was placed onto a boat for shipment to Richmond. On the return trip, Jones’s wagons usually carried provisions such as salt, coffee, sugar, plaster, or guano.⁷⁷ In the early 1850s, with the completion of the North River Canal linking the town of Lexington in Rockbridge County to the James River, Jones and other upper-valley millers and farmers began sending their flour and other produce to Lynchburg and then Richmond by water.⁷⁸ In February, 1854, Jones “sent Madison to Lexington with twelve barrels of flour,” and his diaries include many other instances of his sending slaves or employees to “the boat yard” with flour. Jones was not the only farmer or miller to ship flour to eastern markets via the canal and river transport. Records of the freight carried on boats at the North River canal at Lexington during the mid-1850s indicate that more flour—over four million pounds—was transported on canal boats than any other good or commodity, including pig iron.⁷⁹

Potomac River Consortium 1 (n.d.): 75-85. An especially detailed discussion of this topic may be found in John W. Wayland, *A History of Rockingham County, Virginia* (Dayton, Virginia: Ruebush-Elkins Company, 1912), 418-423.

⁷⁶Alma Hibbard[?] Journal, 1854-1855, in Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

⁷⁷ Turner, ed., *The Diary of Henry Boswell Jones*.

⁷⁸Among the canal boats that worked the trade on the North River Canal, 36 (25 percent) hailed from Lexington or Rockbridge County; 80 (56 percent) hailed from Lynchburg; 6 (4 percent) hailed from Richmond; and the remaining 21 (15 percent) hailed from points between Lexington and Richmond. See list of “hailing places” of boats on the North River Canal in North River Canal Boat Accounts.

⁷⁹The amount of flour shipped on the canal during the year from September 1854 to September 1855, at 4,051,046 pounds, barely exceeded the amount of pig iron shipped, at 4,049,300 pounds. The pounds of flour

The advent of railroads revolutionized the transport of flour to market. In 1849, George F. Hupp, was asked by a railroad official to estimate the amount of freight traffic that would be generated by a rail line traversing the Blue Ridge and connecting Strasburg to the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. In his response, Hupp documents the extent to which wheaten flour served as the dominant cash crop of the Shenandoah Valley, the importance of the Shenandoah River in connecting to extra-regional markets, the competition between Baltimore and Alexandria for the Shenandoah flour trade, and, the potential for new rail lines to transform the marketing of flour.

My not getting a return from the different parts of the Valley, of the quantity of flour manufactured at the different mills, causes my delay, as I was anxious to get the facts. From the reports I have received, I find that there were manufactured, in the year 1848-1849, in the county of Rockingham, one hundred and thirty-six thousand barrels of flour, and in Shenandoah, eighty-four thousand barrels; thirty-six thousand of which passed down the Shenandoah river to Baltimore, Georgetown and Alexandria, from parts of Rockingham, Page and Warren. Take the thirty-six thousand barrels that passed down the river from the quantity manufactured in these two counties and it leaves one hundred and eighty thousand barrels which would pass down the Winchester and Potomac Railroad. I examined the railroad report at Winchester; they say they have sent over their road upwards of two hundred thousand barrels, all of which came from the Valley except a small portion which was manufactured around Winchester.

From the best information I can obtain, and I have taken considerable pains to collect information, there would pass over this road the first year, from the west side of the Blue Ridge, two hundred thousand barrels; three thousand tons of iron would pass over the road the first year, and it is impossible for any human to say what quantity of manganese would pass over this road, as our mountains abound with it. Lime, lumber, pork, beef, clover seed, marble, etc., would constitute a heavy item in the tonnage upon this road. It is impossible to arrive at the quantity of corn, rye, fruit, etc. etc., that would pass over this road. I am clearly of the opinion that the tonnage from manganese, iron, corn, bacon, lime, lumber, etc. would be equal to that of flour.
...

The people of Shenandoah and Rockingham are desirous of the passage of the Valley railroad bill ... and feel that they have claims to the kind consideration of the legislature; a portion also, of Augusta County is deeply interested. The valley trade formerly went to Alexandria. The people of that place ask for a return of a portion of it; they have one of the finest shipping harbors in the state, and if with a saving of between seventy to eighty miles between Baltimore and Alexandria they cannot give as good prices they will not deserve it.⁸⁰

shipped composed 29.2 percent of the weight of all freight shipped on the canal during this year. See North River Canal Boat Accounts.

⁸⁰Broadside, "Letters from Gen. William Gibbs MacNeill and Mr. Alexander, Engineers, [Aldie], to Edward C. Marshall, Esq., Chairman, 24 November 1849, on the Subject of the Valley and Alexandria Railroad, and from George F. Hupp, Esq., Strasburg, Shenandoah County, Virginia, 4 January 1850, to E.C. Marshall, Esq., on the

The rail line to Strasburg—called the “Manassas Gap Railroad”—was in use by 1853, and extended to Mount Jackson, near the southern end of Shenandoah County, by 1868. Hupp was correct in his view that the rail line would be an attractive option for shippers of flour and other goods. Prodigious quantities of freight were diverted from the Valley Pike to the railroad, causing turnpike officials to argue that the railroad had “irreparably damaged” the turnpike. Apparently, however, the Manassas Gap Railroad did not reduce freight traffic on the South Fork of the Shenandoah River. In 1874, an observer described the rail station at Riverton, noting that “a large amount of freight is received here that comes down the Shenandoah in flat boats from the counties of Rockingham, Page and Warren.”⁸¹ In 1854, a new rail line—the Virginia Central Railroad—connected Staunton (in the upper Valley) to Richmond, providing market access to farmers and millers of Augusta and Rockingham Counties. These rail lines, including the Winchester and Potomac Railroad in service since 1836 between Winchester and Harpers Ferry, played a significant role in transforming the process by which flour produced in the Valley was shipped to markets in Baltimore and Richmond.⁸²

Additional rail lines were built after the Civil War. Perhaps most damaging to the financial success of the Valley Turnpike was the construction of the “Valley Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad” which, by 1874, linked Staunton to Winchester. This railroad paralleled the Valley Pike between the two towns, diverting increasing amounts of freight from the turnpike. As a result, the Valley Turnpike was used for local traffic between towns along its path rather than for the transportation of flour to extra-regional markets.

subject of the quantity of Produce that will pass the road,” in Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia.

⁸¹*An Account Descriptive of the Washington City, Va. Midland and Great Southern Railroad*, 48.

⁸²In this and the succeeding paragraph, I have relied heavily upon Keller, “Valley Turnpike,” 18, 28-31.

By the late 1870s, the Valley Branch of the B&O Railroad resulted in the concentration of grist mills along its route through five Valley counties, from Augusta in the south to Jefferson (West Virginia) in the north. As shown in Table 5, by the late 1870s, 84 “towns” were situated along the rail line. Of these places, 37 of them (44 percent) featured at least one grist mill; Shenandoah and Rockingham Counties included a disproportionate share of them, each with 14. A number of the larger towns had between three and five mills. In all, six towns along the rail line included within them greater than one-half of all the mills along the line. Four of these towns were in Shenandoah County: Strasburg with three mills, Woodstock and Mt. Jackson with two mills each, and New Market with five mills, indicating Shenandoah County as an epicenter of flour production within the Valley.⁸³ While during the first half of the nineteenth century, grist mills were scattered through the countryside and commercial flour production and trade remained decentralized and largely unconnected to urban growth, the advent of railroads in the late antebellum period appears to have had the gradual effect of concentrating mills in or near central places located along the path of Valley rail lines, particularly that of the Valley Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Railroads not only moved flour more efficiently than water or wagons, but they stimulated the emergence of a stronger relationship between flour production and urban development.

The numerous towns of the Shenandoah Valley located on these rail lines, including those in or near Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, played an important role in this trend. In 1891, among the many towns and villages situated along the line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railway extending from Frederick County southwestward to Rockbridge County, 24 served as depots for the shipment of grain. Collectively, these 24 towns or villages included 52 businesses that functioned as “grain dealers and shippers.” In or near Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, were three such towns or villages with firms involved in the business of shipping wheat or flour on the railroad:

⁸³Business Directory of Towns along the Valley Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, 1878-1879,” Special Collections, Carrier Library, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Strasburg, with two firms, Middletown with one, and, within the bounds of the Park, Cedar Creek (Meadow Mills), with four.⁸⁴ Thus, farmers and millers who lived on lands that today are within Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, or who lived in its vicinity, would have noticed this trend and perhaps benefitted from it.

⁸⁴*The 1891 Grain Dealers and Shippers Gazetteer, Baltimore and Ohio Railroad*, index (<http://www.memoriallibrary.com/Trans/RRGaz/BO/data.htm>).

Chapter Three: The Civil War and Its Aftermath

The Breadbasket of the Confederacy as a Target of Federal Armies

In the Civil War, the Confederate leadership viewed the Shenandoah Valley as a region of great strategic importance. The Valley formed a natural corridor of invasion; Confederate armies moving into its lower portion gained access to the northern cities of Baltimore and Philadelphia, as well as the capital city of Washington.¹ Equally important, however, is that Valley farmers' exceptional capacity for producing wheat and other foodstuffs led to Southern military commanders relying heavily upon the region as "the Breadbasket of the Confederacy," a source of provender for their men and horses. As a result, the Valley became a specific target of federal troops as Union military authorities understood that without a major source of food, Confederate troops would not be able to sustain their war effort.

Valley inhabitants, especially its farmers, suffered greatly in this conflict. Invading and occupying armies stripped the Valley of its agricultural products, resources, and infrastructure, burned barns and grist mills, ruined crops, and confiscated livestock. In the summer of 1864, General Grant directed General Hunter, his chief subordinate in the Valley, to "take all provisions, forage and stock wanted for the use of your command; such as cannot be consumed, destroy."² Late in the fall of 1864, General Sheridan, who replaced Hunter, received essentially the same instructions. These orders resulted in pilferage, burnings, freebooting, and livestock depredations through large swaths of territory in the central and lower Valley. At the height of Sheridan's raids, federal troops made daily forays through the countryside, killing or driving off livestock and taking all the "bread, bacon, butter, lard, and poultry" that

¹James M. McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War* (New York: Knopf, 1982), 184; and Bruce Catton, *The Civil War* (New York: American Heritage Press, 1971), 243-244.

²As quoted in Samuel Horst, *Mennonites in the Confederacy: A Study in Civil War Pacifism* (Scottsville, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1967), 98.

could be found.³ Graphic eye-witness accounts of these kinds of activities are legion. One Confederate soldier, from a vantage point high above the Valley, “could see the Yankees out in the valley driving off the horses, cattle, sheep and killing the hogs and burning all the barns and shocks of corn and wheat in the fields and destroying everything that could feed or shelter man or beast. They burnt all the dwelling houses, the valley was soon filled with smoke.”⁴ One unusually vivid reminiscence describes activities such as these that occurred in Rockingham County, a few miles north of Harrisonburg:

Sometime in May [of 1864] the Federal army passed through the valley again, but this time they took nearly all our bacon. I recollect very well seeing a yankee (as we called them) follow mother with a drawn pistol in his hand, and made her show him where she kept her bacon. Father saved a few pieces by throwing them out of the garret window into a patch of weeds. In the fall of this year Sheridan made his raid through the Valley destroying everything as they went. They came to our house and went all through it and took anything that was of any value to them. Some went in the hog pen and killed the hogs and took the best of the meat and left the balance lay. It was bang bang all day shooting hogs, sheep, and chickens, so that it was not safe to go out of doors. ... Sheridan ... ordered his men to burn all the buildings in the neighborhood both barns and houses. I never will forget the evening when they burnt the buildings. It looked like burning a new ground. They came to our house and set the barn on fire then ... put fire in every room of the house and set the outbuildings on fire.⁵

Thus, Sheridan certainly attempted to make good on his claim that he would “make ... [the Valley] so bare that a crow flying over it would have to carry his own rations.” Subsequently, he reported to his superiors that “the whole country from the Blue Ridge to the North Mountain has been made untenable for a rebel army. I have destroyed over a thousand barns filled with flour and wheat, have driven in front of this army over four thousand head of stock, and have killed and issued to the troops over three thousand sheep.”⁶

³Ibid., 99-100.

⁴Ibid., as quoted, 100-101. Chapter 8 of Horst, entitled “Destruction and Famine,” include numerous eye-witness accounts of these kinds of activities. Also, see the sketches and diary in Taylor, *With Sheridan Up the Shenandoah Valley in 1864*, and David Hunter Strother, *A Virginia Yankee in the Civil War: The Diaries of David Hunter Strother*, edited with an introduction by Cecil D. Eby, Jr. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961).

⁵Memoirs of Samuel Blosser, Blosser Family Papers, Special Collections, Menno-Simons Library and Archives, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

⁶Quoted in Horst, *Mennonites in the Confederacy*, 108.

Late in the year 1865, a resident of Winchester, surveying the damage resulting from the Civil War, summarized the calamitous circumstances of farmers in what he called "our once beautiful but now desolated Valley." He wrote of farmers' need for "the means to enable them to resume their farming operations, without which their fertile lands [would be] valueless, for their stock has been killed or taken away, their farm laid waste, their implements destroyed, their labor disorganized, and the only currency within their reach totally without value."⁷ As suggested by this writer's observations, the Civil War profoundly disrupted the lives of ordinary men and women of the Shenandoah Valley.

A sense of the magnitude of this disruption may be understood by comparing indices of agricultural production in 1860 and 1870. In 1870, five years after the Civil War had ended, the numbers of various types of livestock and production of major field crops remained far below their levels of 1860. Production of rye, for example, had fallen 35 percent (229,174 to 149,684 bushels), corn 52 percent (3,160,663 to 1,512,116 bushels), and hay 11 percent (79,125 to 70,553 tons). The number of horses had decreased by 15 percent (36,566 to 31,152), the number of milk cows by 6 percent (28,709 to 27,112) and beef cattle 24 percent (62,113 to 46,964), sheep numbers were reduced by 30 percent (71,648 to 50,336), and the number of swine had fallen 46 percent (147,890 to 80,468).⁸ Also, in many areas of the Valley, "the waste of war" resulted in sharply reduced land values because unattended crop fields had reverted to a "wild" state.⁹

Perhaps it was the collective weight of this kind of evidence that caused one historian to claim that "the Civil War so damaged farming in the Valley that a later generation could scarce believe the area had once been the wheat kingdom of the South."¹⁰ In any case, this assessment is incorrect; wheat

⁷*Report of the Secretary of the Baltimore Agricultural Aid Society, December 1865* (Baltimore: John Murphy and Co., 1865).

⁸Percentages calculated on the basis on data contained in *Eighth Census* and *Ninth Census*.

⁹*Report of the Secretary of the Baltimore Agricultural Aid Society*.

¹⁰ Schlebecker, "Farmers in the Lower Shenandoah Valley," 176.

production in the Valley actually increased 10 percent during the 1860s. Wheat was the only major field crop for which production rose in the Valley during the decade of the Civil War, providing further confirmation of its sustained importance as the principal cash crop of the region. Although a ten percent increase may seem modest, it contrasts sharply with the 40 percent decline in wheat production experienced by the non-Valley portion of Virginia during that decade.¹¹ The Civil War greatly impeded the business of farming but it did not alter the basic pattern of economic activity by which Valley farmers had traditionally earned livelihoods. In a period of severe turmoil and economic dislocation, farmers needing cash to restore their farms to productivity continued to produce wheat as their main source of revenue.

Recovery and Adaptation

During the period from 1870 to 1900, Valley farmers produced wheat in record amounts; indeed, they produced vastly more wheat during these three decades than they had during the three decades prior to 1870. While wheat production in the non-Valley portion of Virginia rose by a paltry 3 percent during the same period, it rose 63 percent in the Shenandoah Valley. After the Civil War, as before it, Valley farmers produced a disproportionate share of Virginia's wheat crop. In each of the four census years from 1870 to 1900, Valley farmers worked 12 to 14 percent of the improved acres of farmland in the Commonwealth, but produced between 29 and 42 percent of the state's wheat crop. In 1900, for example, Valley farmers held 13 percent of the improved farmland in the state but produced almost 40 percent of the wheat produced throughout the state. Valley farmers produced two-to-three bushels per improved acre of farmland while farmers in other regions of Virginia produced under one bushel per improved

¹¹Percentages calculated on the basis of data found in *Eighth Census* and *Ninth Census*.

acre.¹² Thus, if the Shenandoah Valley had been the “great wheat producing region of the state” during the antebellum period, it remained so during the post-bellum period, despite the devastation of agrarian infrastructure resulting from the Civil War.

Rising levels of wheat production in the Shenandoah Valley during the post-Civil War decades of the nineteenth century pose questions: How were farmers able to increase levels of production so dramatically? Why, given that high levels of production were achieved during a period when the trend of wheat prices was steadily downward, did they continue to produce wheat at record levels? By the 1870s, wheat had been the chief staple of Shenandoah Valley farmers for a century. But continuing production of wheat during the final three decades of the nineteenth century involved factors other than simply the preservation of tradition. These included increased use of commercial fertilizers and the adoption of horse-drawn or powered mechanical implements for the production of wheat.

At the close of the Civil War, merchants in the city of Baltimore recognized the difficult circumstances of Virginia farmers and responded by forming an organization called the Baltimore Agricultural Aid Society. The stated purpose of the Society was to supply at cost to farmers “of the neighboring state of Virginia ... stock, agricultural implements and seed to enable them to resume their farming operations and provide bread to their families.” Although the corresponding secretary of the Society described the mission of the organization as essentially humanitarian, Baltimore, as a port city, had traditionally served as a commercial outlet for wheaten flour produced in the Shenandoah Valley. The economic recovery of Virginia’s agricultural sector would financially benefit merchants of Baltimore; as the secretary of the Society noted, the organization’s activities “cannot but have its reflective influence of the future trade of the City [of Baltimore].” Although the organization was formed in order to facilitate the recovery of Virginia farmers in general, the Society devoted a disproportionate share of its largesse to the Shenandoah Valley, and concerned itself mainly with the distribution of seed

¹²All percentages in the paragraph are calculated from data in *Sixth Census*, *Seventh Census*, *Eighth Census*, *Ninth Census*, *Tenth Census*, *Eleventh Census*, and *Twelfth Census*.

wheat and implements for the production of wheat. The Society identified individuals of each county of Virginia they served (such as George F. Hupp in Shenandoah County), to function as a local agent for the distribution of aid.¹³

Charity provided by Baltimore's merchants assisted Valley farmers in their efforts to recover from losses of the Civil War, but other factors were at work as well. One historian, arguing that the enormous losses of livestock occasioned by the Civil War ruined wheat farming in the Valley because of the resulting lack of manure to restore fertility to croplands, has written that "the loss of livestock during the Civil War so damaged farming in the Valley that a later generation could scarce believe the area had once been a wheat kingdom of the South."¹⁴ By 1880, however, numbers of horses, asses and mules, milk cows, beef cattle, and sheep had risen to levels higher than those of 1860.¹⁵ Also, commercially prepared fertilizers, widely available during the last third of the century, were bought and applied in prodigious amounts. Nearly every farmer's diary or account book surviving from this period contains frequent notations relating to the buying, mixing, or application of fertilizer. Similarly, the records of Grange Chapters, the minutes of agricultural improvement societies, and especially the pages of agricultural periodicals, are filled with information relating to fertilizers. Surviving account books reveal fertilizer to have been a major cost of production and some farmers routinely borrowed money in order to purchase it.¹⁶ Data in the manuscript agricultural schedules of 1880, the first census in which census enumerators recorded individual-level data on fertilizer use—suggest that farmers used commercial fertilizers mainly for wheat production. In one minor civil division of Augusta County, for example,

¹³*Report of the Secretary of the Baltimore Agricultural Aid Society*, December 1865.

¹⁴Schlebecker, "Farmers in the Lower Shenandoah Valley," 176.

¹⁵*Eighth Census*; and U.S. Census Office, *Report on the Productions of Agriculture as Returned at the Tenth Census (June 1, 1880)* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1885 (hereafter referred to as *Tenth Census*). Swine were an exception to this generalization; the number of hogs remained lower in 1880 (116,731) than in 1860 (147,890).

¹⁶Examples may be found in Isaac Acker diary; A.H. McCue Diary and Account Book; Jonas Blosser Diary and Account Book, Emanuel Suter Diary, Minutes of the Churchville Farm Club, and Minute Book of Timber Ridge Grange/Account Book of Margaret Hannah (Gibson) McBride Lyle, and Lupton Family Papers.

among 132 farmers, 41 of them (32 percent) had not used fertilizer in the previous crop year. Of these, only 12 raised wheat, and 6 of the 12 grew only 3 or fewer acres of wheat.¹⁷

Many Valley farmers likely continued to raise wheat at increasingly high levels during this period of declining prices because they had invested heavily in expensive mechanical implements for producing it—drills for sowing, reapers for harvesting, and threshers and fans for cleaning the grain.¹⁸ During the post-bellum period, fragmentary evidence suggests that many Valley farmers accelerated their purchases of equipment in order to maximize their capacity to produce wheat. In the 1870s, for example, a Rockingham County dealer in reapers and other horse-drawn agricultural implements recorded brisk sales of such machines in his diary.¹⁹ Other farmers recorded purchases of reapers in their diaries.²⁰ Farmers who purchased equipment for the more efficient production of wheat stayed with wheat farming in order to make a return on their sizeable capital investments. Tied to wheat farming through large capital investment, farmers found it prudent to maximize production by devoting more acres to wheat.

After the Civil War, wheat remained the cash crop of main importance on most Shenandoah Valley farms but its production was no longer as dominant as it had been during the antebellum period. In 1850, 96 percent of all Valley farmers produced wheat. As the century progressed, fewer farmers participated in wheat cultivation; by 1880, only about 77.4 percent of Valley farmers grew wheat (Table 6). Apparently, the high cost of mechanization and the low price of wheat induced some farmers to

¹⁷Manuscript Agricultural Schedules, Augusta County, Virginia, 1880.

¹⁸On declining prices, see Peterson, *Historical Study of Farm Prices*, 25.

¹⁹Emanuel Suter Diary, entries for May and June, 1871. Also, see MacMaster, *Augusta County History, 1865-1950* (Staunton, Virginia: Augusta County Historical Society, 1988), 100-102.

²⁰For example, see Blosser Diary and Account Book, May 22, 1871. Evidence of the gradual mechanization of wheat production during the mid-1870s may be found in the A.H. McCue Diary and Account Book.

abandon production of the crop.²¹ Consequently, the high levels of wheat production in the Shenandoah Valley during the final decades of the nineteenth century were achieved by declining numbers of farmers.

African Americans during the Post-Bellum Era

It is also possible that lower participation in wheat production resulted from uncertainties relating to one observer referred to as the “disorganized” labor that farmers experienced after the Civil War.²² During the post-bellum era, former slave owners and newly freed African Americans alike faced new, albeit very different, opportunities and conditions engendered by emancipation. Former slaves were now free to leave their former masters and go elsewhere in search of economic opportunity, and farmers who had formerly relied on the labor of slaves had to find a reliable alternate source of labor. This section describes the central tendencies that emerged as each group pursued its interests under dramatically changed circumstances.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the population of the Valley increased by 44.5 percent, from 127,159 in 1850 to 183,744 in 1900 (Table 7).²³ In the three decades after that of the Civil

²¹On the price of horse-drawn mechanical implements for producing wheat, see *Annual Catalogue and Price List of labor Saving Agricultural Implements, and Farm Machinery, Manufactured and Sold, Wholesale and Retail*, by H.M. Smith and Company (Richmond: Printing and Publishing House of Fergusson and Rady, 1868) 47, where reaper-mowers are listed as selling for \$155.00 to \$225.00. In the spring of 1871, Suter sold his reapers for \$180.00 (5 June 1871, Suter Diary). On the shortage of labor, see Minutes of the Churchville Farmers Club, June 8, 1865. Interesting descriptions of the conditions of labor from the perspective of farmers in the Valley counties of Augusta, Botetourt, Page, Rockingham, and Shenandoah, in the late 1870s, may be found in Thomas Pollard, *Crop, Stock and Labor Report for June 1, 1878, Compiled from Special Correspondents*, by Thomas Pollard, *Commissioner of Agriculture*, Circular No. 11 (Richmond, Virginia: Superintendent of Public Printing, 1878), 15, 17, 43, 49-50.

²²*Report of the Secretary of the Baltimore Agricultural Aid Society.*

²³Unless noted otherwise, throughout this section, aggregate census data pertaining to 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890, and 1900 are from (or calculated from) the *Seventh Census*; *Eighth Census*; U.S. Census Office, *A Compendium of the Ninth Census (June 1, 1870)* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1872) (hereafter, the *Ninth Census*; U.S. Census Division, *Abstract of the Eleventh Census: 1890* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1896) (hereafter, the *Eleventh Census*; and U.S. Census Office, *Twelfth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1900: Agriculture*, pt. 2: *Crops and Irrigation* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Office, 1902), (hereafter, *Twelfth Census*).

War, from 1870 to 1900, the total population of virtually all Valley counties increased during each decennial period.²⁴ Thus, in the aggregate, the trend of population growth in the Shenandoah Valley during the second half of the nineteenth century was one of steady growth, and this holds as well for most of the region's constituent counties. However, a comparison of the population by race and legal status reveals a number of divergent tendencies.

During the decade of the Civil War, the total population of the Valley increased by 138 persons (0.1 percent). However, African Americans migrated from the Valley in large numbers; their numbers fell from 27,671 in 1860 to 23,965 in 1870, a 13.4 percent decline.²⁵ In the following decade, however, the number of African Americans living in the Valley rebounded; their numbers rose to 31,395, a 31 percent increase, and by 1880 significantly greater numbers of them lived in the Valley than had in 1860. This trend was virtually Valley-wide.²⁶ From 1880 to the turn of the twentieth century, the number of African Americans living in the Valley declined steadily, to 28,644 in 1890 and 25,745 in 1900, and this pattern of decline held in most counties of the Valley. Thus, the white population of the Shenandoah Valley increased without interruption during each decennial period of the second half of the nineteenth century, growing by nearly 45 percent. By contrast, the black population declined from 1850 through 1870, rebounded during the 1870s, and then continued to decline through the remainder of the century. However, despite these fluctuations in the size of the black population, and the continuing decline of their numbers after 1880, at no time did the absolute size of the African American population fall below what it had been on the eve of the Civil War. Still, the proportion of the total population composed of African Americans decreased. In 1900, African Americans formed 14 percent of the Valley's population,

²⁴The one exception to this trend is Clarke County, where the population declined slightly during the 1890s.

²⁵Only two counties, Augusta and Botetourt, experienced modest increase in the black population during that decade.

²⁶Only in Frederick County did the number of blacks decrease slightly during the 1870s (by 177 persons, from 2,733 to 2,556).

whereas on the eve of the Civil War they had accounted for nearly 18 percent. Thus, during the decades after the Civil War and emancipation, African Americans continued to inhabit the Shenandoah Valley but in smaller proportion to the overall population.

What kinds of employment were available to African Americans who lived in the Valley after the Civil War, particularly after 1870 when their numbers increased so dramatically? Shenandoah County evidence shows that whereas before the Civil War a modest degree of occupational diversity prevailed among African Americans, during the post-bellum era the range of occupations held by them narrowed significantly. In 1870, among 266 African Americans living in the county, 120 (46.8 percent) were laborers, 107 (41.8 percent) were domestic servants, and 23 (9.0 percent) were workers on farms. Other occupations were cook (2), seamstress (2), blacksmith (2), shoemaker (2), farmer (2), works on road (2), carpenter (1), tanner (1), and preacher (1).²⁷ Thus, a few African Americans held skilled occupations and the remainder—the overwhelming majority—worked as farm laborers or domestic servants. Moreover, a majority of these African Americans with occupations—150 or 56.6 percent—lived in households headed by whites. In 1880, the same situation prevailed except that occupational diversity narrowed further. Within four minor civil divisions of Shenandoah County, none of the 248 African Americans living there who held jobs worked at a skilled occupation—116 (46.8 percent) were listed as farm laborers, 57 (23.0 percent) as servants, 16 (6.5 percent) as day laborers, and 20 (8.1 percent) as nurses. The remaining occupations held by African Americans included such occupations as porter, waiter, washerwoman, “works where work can be found,” errand boy, gardener, hostler, and wood chopper.²⁸ As in 1870, a majority of African Americans with occupations 156 (62.9 percent) lived in households headed by whites while only 92 (37.1 percent) lived in households headed by members of their own race. Thus, from midcentury to at least 1880, continuity prevailed in the occupational structure among African Americans

²⁷Manuscript population schedules, Shenandoah County, Virginia, 1870.

²⁸Manuscript population schedules, Shenandoah County, Virginia, 1880. The four minor civil divisions are the magisterial districts of Ashby and Lee, and the towns of New Market and Mount Jackson. For details, see Koons, “The Colored Laborers Work as Well as When Slaves,” 248.

except that to the degree that occupational diversity among them had existed at all, it appears to have narrowed during the 1870s. A preponderance of African Americans continued to serve whites as farm laborers and domestic servants, much as they had during antebellum times.

In light of the demise of slavery during the 1860s, it is reasonable to assume that during the post-bellum era many African Americans in the Shenandoah Valley would have become tenant farmers such as they did in large numbers east of the Blue Ridge after the Civil War.²⁹ Former masters with large acreages of land needing to be worked, but lacking the servile labor force that had been available to them during the antebellum era, could have arranged for freed men to take control of their lands as tenant farmers. In Shenandoah County, however, relatively few farm owners resorted to “the tenant system.” In 1880, owners of 1,542 farms (92.7 percent) worked their own land while only 122 owners (7.2 percent) rented their land to others for cash or shares.³⁰ In the 1880 population schedules for the county, only five African Americans are listed as farmers. One owned 17 acres, and the other four rented their land for cash or on shares. Among the four who rented land, three farmed acreages too small for commercially oriented agricultural enterprises. However, one of them rented a farm of 165 acres of improved land on which he grew 28 acres of corn and 32 of wheat, and he owned 30 hogs and 12 head of cattle.³¹ Perhaps farmers of Shenandoah County believed as a farmer of Augusta County did, that “as tenants, the negroes are not good, they lack management,” or as a farmer of Botetourt County did, that “negroes do not make very good tenants.”³² In any case, with rare exceptions, during the post-bellum era the continuing importance of African Americans to Shenandoah County’s rural economy was as agricultural laborers

²⁹Crandall R. Shifflett, *Patronage and Poverty in the Tobacco South: Louisa County, Virginia, 1860-1900* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982), 39-47.

³⁰Manuscript Agricultural Schedules, Shenandoah County, Virginia, 1880. The agricultural schedules of 1880 were the first to include data on farm tenancy.

³¹*Ibid.*

³²Pollard, *Crop, Stock and Labor Report*, 15, 17, 49, 50.

rather than as owner-operators of farms or as farm tenants. When farmers did use the tenant system they contracted with whites rather than African Americans.

Although Valley farmers avoided the practice of having African Americans serve as farm tenants, they expressed a clear desire to hire them, rather than whites, as farm laborers. As a Shenandoah County farm correspondent reported, “[as laborers] Negroes ... are preferred [over] white men when well overlooked.” A farmer of Rockingham County noted similarly that “negro labor is preferred,” and a Botetourt County farmer agreed: “colored laborers are preferred.”³³ In light of these clearly expressed preferences, it is not surprising that so few African American farm tenants, and so many African American farm laborers, appear in Shenandoah County.³⁴ Thus, in the post-bellum era, African Americans living in what had been the breadbasket of the Confederacy were free of bondage but not of servile status.

Alternatives to Wheat

Although wheat continued as the main staple crop for a solid majority of Valley farmers during the last third of the nineteenth century, declining profits in that crop led to the development of markets for alternate crops and products. Diversity of enterprise had always characterized agriculture as practiced in the Valley. General mixed farming minimized the risk associated with reliance on a sole cash crop. In 1880, a correspondent to a Baltimore farm publication captured this idea in a description of “mixed

³³Ibid.

³⁴It is possible that different opinions and practices prevailed in nearby Warren County. In an 1866 listing of the occupations of 116 freed men of Warren County, a strong majority (87, or 75 percent), identified themselves as laborers, which is consistent with the Shenandoah County evidence. However, 25 (21.6 percent) identified themselves as “farmers.” See the Register of Colored Persons of Warren County, State of Virginia, Cohabiting Together as Husband and Wife on 27 February, 1866, Library of Virginia, Richmond. Perhaps the relatively greater proclivity of Warren County farmers to use African American as farm tenants results from their cultural ties to the Piedmont, where this practice became widespread after the Civil War, as discussed in Shifflett, *Patronage and Poverty in the Tobacco South*, 39-47.

husbandry.” Agriculture as practiced in the Shenandoah Valley might well have served as the model for his description of mixed agriculture:

Mixed husbandry consists in the cultivation of various crops, and keeping most kinds of domesticated animals,--in short it embraces all of the other systems, but on a smaller scale. It implies a thorough knowledge of animal and vegetable life in all conditions of soil and climate, every aspect of rural economy at home and abroad, and also an acquaintance with the allied arts and sciences. It possesses one prominent advantage over the other systems, and that is its freedom from risk, and sure returns from money invested. If one crop is a failure, another may be exceptionally good; if pork is low, beef and wool may be high; if fruit is abundant and cheap, vegetables may be scarce and dear. Though mixed husbandry is seldom characterized by as large profits as in grain or pastoral farming, it is not subject to such severe losses by storms and bad weather. If the farm is well stocked and cultivated, it will be continually undergoing improvement, and instead of becoming exhausted, will get more and more productive.³⁵

The Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture for the Year 1867 includes an article entitled “Diversity in Agricultural Productions,” in which the practice of mixed farming in the Shenandoah Valley is recommended to planters and farmers of lower Virginia as a model of sound agriculture because of the freedom it provided from the financial consequences of reliance on a single staple crop. Referencing Shenandoah Valley farmers specifically, the author wrote that farmers who practice this form of agriculture “derive no large income from the sale of any single item; but, gathering something from numerous sources, the aggregate amounts to a handsome sum. ... Moreover, should any one crop fail, disaster cannot be expected to befall all ... under the most unfavorable circumstances, some one or more will succeed.”³⁶

Valley farmers maintained a diverse product mix during the final third of the nineteenth century. During the period from 1880 to 1900, only 18 to 22 percent of the improved acres of farmland in the Valley were devoted to wheat, leaving the remainder for other crops and enterprises. Even in counties where wheat production was most intensive, acres planted to wheat did not exceed 25 percent.³⁷ Farmers’

³⁵*American Agriculturalist for the Farm, Garden, or Household*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 9 (New Series) No. 404 (1880): 339.

³⁶Thomas S. Pleasants, “Diversity in Agricultural Production,” in *Reports of the Commissioner of Agriculture for the Year 1867* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1868), 247-53.

³⁷Percentages calculated from data in *Tenth Census*, *Eleventh Census*, and *Twelfth Census*.

account books from the period reveal the extent of diversity of enterprise as it relates to farm income. In 1878, an Augusta County farmer derived 37 percent of his income from the sale of wheat, while other sources of income were lambs and wool, 22 percent; hay, 16 percent, and corn, 13 percent. The remaining 12 percent of income resulted from the sale of a few cattle, and from small sales of items such as bacon, apples, eggs, and lard.³⁸ Similarly, in 1880, a farmer of western Rockingham County derived 35 percent of his income from wheat in that year. The remainder of his income resulted from sales of livestock, clover seed, eggs, butter, cabbages, and bacon, among others.³⁹

During the last third of the century, Valley farmers continued to produce wheat but they also concentrated more heavily on other agricultural pursuits, namely grass farming, dairying, and apples. Grass farming provided grazing or winter forage for increasing numbers of livestock, but also hay for sale. Hay production increased 20 percent during the 1870s and 110 percent during the 1880s for domestic use as well as for commercial sales.⁴⁰ In most years during the late 1870s and 1880s, A.H. McCue sold tons of baled hay shipped from a rail station near his farm in eastern Augusta County. In 1876, his rail shipment consisted of 227 bales of hay weighing over 16 tons. In 1881, he sold hay for twenty-one dollars per ton and calculated that he had profited 65 dollars on his hay crop for that year.⁴¹

Farmers also gave substantially more attention to dairy farming during the last decades of the century. Historically, dairy cows had played a critical role in the household economies of farm families. Farmers (or, more accurately, usually farmers' wives, daughters, or female servants) converted milk into butter for the consumption of the family and as an additional source of revenue. Country stores served as collection points for this butter, which they then retailed locally to other customers or forwarded to commission merchants in Baltimore and other Eastern seaboard cities. Farm butter production, quite

³⁸Percentages calculated from data in A.H. McCue Diary and Account Books, 1878.

³⁹Percentages calculated from data in Jonas Blosser, Diary and Account Book, 1880.

⁴⁰*Ninth Census, Tenth Census, and Eleventh Census.*

⁴¹A.H. McCue Diary and Account Books, 1876, 1878, and 1881.

lucrative for farm families, continued through the nineteenth and into the early decades of the twentieth centuries, gaining importance during the decades after the Civil War. During the period from 1870 to 1890, production of butter on farms rose by almost 120 percent.⁴² In an 1873 letter to his brother in the Midwest, farmer Anderson Bushong of Shenandoah County, near the town of New Market, discussed the new ice house he had built the previous year, and its role in his increased production of butter: “I would not do without my ice house for one thousand dollars. ... We made 200 lbs. butter last summer and 200 lbs. this summer, that makes 400 lbs. I am satisfied the ice house increased the butter 200 lbs.”⁴³

During the final decades of the nineteenth century, farm production of butter began to be supplanted by larger-scale, centralized production facilities such as creameries, which served as collection points for milk produced on farms. In the late 1880s, for example, Jonas Blosser of Rockingham County, contracted with a milk company to procure the milk of one hundred cows in this neighborhood for the operation of a creamery built on his property. Similarly, in 1887, David Lupton of Frederick County corresponded with the owners of a creamery about supplying them with milk. Creameries operated under similar arrangements elsewhere in the Valley. Beginning in the 1890s, the morning routine of farmer Isaac Acker, of northern Rockingham County, included hauling his milk to the local creamery.⁴⁴

Creameries fundamentally changed the nature of the rural economy as farmers began to reallocate resources to meet the new demand for milk, increasing numbers of dairy cows and producing larger quantities of milk in order to supply growing numbers of creameries in the region. The number of dairy cows in the Valley rose from over 27,000 in 1870 to nearly 47,000 in 1900, and production of fluid milk

⁴²*Ninth Census, and Eleventh Census.*

⁴³Anderson Bushong, New Market, Virginia, to Frank Bushong, Clinton Iowa?, 18 December 1873, Bushong Collection, VMI Archives, Preston Library, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia; manuscript Agricultural Schedules, Shenandoah County, 1880.

⁴⁴Jonas Blosser Diary and Account Book, 1887; David P. Lupton, Letters and Accounts, Lupton Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia; Isaac Acker Diary. Similar examples in Augusta County are documented in MacMaster, *Augusta County History, 1865-1950* (Staunton, Virginia: Augusta County Historical Society, 1988), 101-102.

increased spectacularly, from almost 9,000 pounds in 1870 to just under 13.5 million pounds in 1890.⁴⁵

In a period when the secular trend of prices for wheat was downward, farmers began to look to dairying as an alternative source of income. As one Augusta County farmer stated in an 1887 letter to his brother:

The prospect for wheat is very gloomy ... Wheat raising in this country will doubtless sooner or later come to an end and people will get at something else. But what remains to be seen. The creamery at Waynesboro seems to be an assured success. They are receiving a ton of milk per day. Some who started with six cows are making arrangements to increase to twenty and more. Others are going into it and will start with twenty. If they can keep up the price at an average of \$100 per 100 lbs of milk, which is 25 cents per lb. for butter, it is the best paying business for farmers started in this section as yet.⁴⁶

Thus, as a response to deteriorating prospects for wheat-raising, dairying rose to prominence as a major economic activity on Valley farms.

Production of orchard fruit, especially apples, became increasingly important on Valley farms during the latter third of the nineteenth century. Apples had always been an important component of the household economy of Valley farm families, consumed as raw fruit or converted to apple butter or brandy. Also, they were sold locally as well as outside the region, and at least some farmers used them for fattening hogs. The diary of Henry B. Jones—who produced large quantities of wheat all during the middle decades of the nineteenth century—includes extensive details of his fruit-growing activities. In 1858, at a fair in Richmond sponsored by the U.S. Agricultural Society, he exhibited 86 varieties of apples.⁴⁷ Similarly, the commonplace book of John Whelan Luke, a farmer of Clarke County, contains extensive notes on his fruit-growing activities. In 1875, for example, he planted 50 apple trees representing 23 different varieties.⁴⁸ In the Valley as a whole, the dollar value of orchard production

⁴⁵*Ninth Census, Eleventh Census, and Twelfth Census.*

⁴⁶[?], Waynesboro, Virginia, 15 January 1887, to W. L. Martin, Moffatts Creek, Virginia, in Martin Family Papers, held privately, photocopies in the author's possession.

⁴⁷Turner, ed., *Henry Boswell Jones Diary*; Henry B. Jones, "List of Apples," *The American Farmer* (December 1858), 172.

⁴⁸John Whelan Luke, *Commonplace Book, 1875-1892*, Virginia Historical Society.

increased from nearly 72,000 in 1860 to over 270,000 in 1880.⁴⁹ By the turn of the century, apple production began to emerge as a major agricultural enterprise in the Valley, especially its lower portion. At least by 1930, apples had surpassed wheat as the dominant crop in Frederick County.⁵⁰

Despite increased attention by farmers to grass, dairy, and apple production, wheat remained dominant elsewhere in the Valley. Historian Jack Temple Kirby has asserted that Virginia's age of grain "ended quietly and with little notice by 1900."⁵¹ But in the Shenandoah Valley, the age of grain persisted until the 1940s. Wheat production reached an all-time high in 1920, as a result of farmers meeting the heightened demand for flour created by the Great War. After 1920 wheat production in the Valley declined steadily until 1940. By the mid-twentieth century, production of wheat in the Valley had fallen to only about one-half of 1940 levels, signaling that wheat farming in the Shenandoah Valley was no longer commercially important (Table 8).

Popularly as well as among professional historians, the Civil War is widely recognized as the greatest discontinuity in the history of the nineteenth-century Shenandoah Valley. Despite this, the Civil War did not alter the basic pattern of economic activity by which farmers of the Valley earned livelihoods. Armies destroyed their crops and capital infrastructure, but farmers returned to their fields to plow, sow, reap, and harvest. They did so under altered circumstances, to be sure, but the overriding fact is that for over 170 years, from the era of the American Revolution until the decade of the World War II—"from backcountry to breadbasket -- and beyond"—wheat farming endured as a major element of continuity in the agricultural history of the Shenandoah Valley.

⁴⁹*Eighth Census and Tenth Census.*

⁵⁰Charles S. Johnson et al., *Statistical Atlas of Southern Counties: Listing and Analysis of Socio-Economic Indices of 1104 Southern Counties* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 245-250. Documentation of the rise of apple production as a major commercial activity among Shenandoah-Valley farmers during the second half of the nineteenth century may be found in S. W. Fletcher, "A History of Fruit Growing in Virginia," in University of Virginia, *Virginia Pamphlet Reprints* (48), 15, 24-37.

⁵¹Kirby, "Virginia's Environmental History," 461.

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Bibliographic Essay, Part I

In 1977, Robert D. Mitchell launched the modern scholarly study of the Shenandoah Valley as an eighteenth-century backcountry of colonial Virginia with the publication of his landmark book, *Commercialism and Frontier: Perspectives on the Early Shenandoah Valley*. Mitchell, a historical geographer by training, employs socio-historical methods as well as the conceptual underpinnings of geographic inquiry to examine, carefully and in great detail, spatial aspects of the processes by which Euro-Americans migrated to and settled in the Shenandoah Valley. He describes and analyzes the socio-economic changes that transpired as members of the pioneer generation and their descendants occupied the land and developed a settlement continuum that included open country neighborhoods, hamlets, villages, and towns. Throughout (as suggested by the title of his book), Mitchell emphasizes the commercial orientation of the Euro-American peoples who settled in the Valley. Farmers' production of crops for the market—tobacco and hemp first but later wheat—resulted in the establishment of commercial linkages between Valley towns and extra-regional market cities. Mitchell documents the emergence of a distinctive regional economy based heavily upon commercial wheat farming and flour production.

Commercialism and Frontier is the volume to read first for anyone interested in the initial settlement of the Shenandoah Valley and subsequent social and economic development of the region during the eighteenth century. However, two other volumes complement Mitchell's analyses, albeit in quite different ways. In *The Valley of Virginia in the American Revolution, 1763-1789*, Freeman H. Hart provides broad coverage of political and cultural life as well as socio-cultural, and economic development in the region from the era of the revolution to the beginning of the early national period. The temporal

span of Hart's volume is significantly shorter than that of Mitchell's, but his coverage gives greater attention to political issues. James T. Lemon's, *The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania*, is a historical-geographic interpretation of society and economy in the region of Pennsylvania where most settlers of the Shenandoah Valley lived prior to their migration to Virginia. Thus, in his examination of colonial Pennsylvania, Lemon describes and analyzes many antecedents of social and economic development in the Shenandoah Valley.

Foremost among historians following in the path of scholarship established by Mitchell, and blazing many fresh trails of his own, has been Warren R. Hofstra, a prolific scholar who has devoted his professional career to writing books and articles on aspects of the eighteenth-century history of the Shenandoah Valley. Hofstra has authored a host of important studies on aspects of the Valley's settlement history (and co-authored numerous ones with Mitchell). These include Hofstra, "Land, Ethnicity, and Community in the Opequon Settlement, Virginia, 1730-1800," (in *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*); Hofstra, "Adaptation or Survival? Folk Housing at Opequon Settlement, Virginia," (in *Ulster Folklife*); Hofstra and Mitchell, "Town and Country in Backcountry Virginia: Winchester and the Shenandoah Valley, 1730-1800 (in *Journal of Southern History*); and Mitchell and Hofstra, "How Do Settlement Systems Originate? The Virginia Backcountry during the Eighteenth Century," (in *Journal of Historical Geography*). Hofstra's most seminal work, however, is *The Planting of New Virginia: Settlement and Landscape in the Shenandoah Valley*. This volume builds upon Mitchell's work by providing in-depth examination of the settlement process in the Shenandoah Valley, using settlements on the Opequon Creek, located immediately north-northeast of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, as a case-study to illustrate central tendencies in the larger region. A particular strength of *The Planting of New Virginia* is that it provides Atlantic and even global context for events and processes of change relating to settlement and economic development in the Shenandoah Valley. Also noteworthy is the extent to which Hofstra incorporates coverage of the experiences of Native Americans as Euro-Americans began to settle in the Shenandoah Valley in the 1730s.

Another recent treatment of the dynamics of settlement and subsequent development in the broader region that includes the eighteenth-century Shenandoah Valley is James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson*. Because Rice writes from the perspective of an environmental historian and is especially sensitive to the ways Native Americans helped to shape the history of the region, his book makes a valuable contribution to the large and growing body of work on the Shenandoah Valley during its eighteenth-century phase of development. Hofstra and Rice are extraordinarily helpful for understanding the cultural encounter between Native Americans and Euro-Americans, but an excellent starting place for learning about Indians in the Shenandoah Valley is William H. Gardner, *Lost Arrowheads and Broken Pottery: Traces of Indians in the Shenandoah Valley*. Gardner's coverage begins with pre-historic times, ca. 9000 B.C., and carries forward to the period of contact with Euro-Americans during the colonial period of American history. Archaeological work in areas of the Lower Shenandoah Valley near Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park is reported in Warren R. Hofstra and Clarence R. Geier, "Native American Settlement within the Middle and Upper Drainage of Opequon Creek, Frederick County, Virginia," which appears in the *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia*. Also helpful for understanding the early presence of Native Americans in the Shenandoah Valley and their role in the establishment of networks of travel through the region, is Michael McConnell, "Before the Great Road: Indian Travels on the Great Warrior's Path," in *The Great Valley Road of Virginia: Shenandoah Landscapes from Prehistory to the Present*, edited by Warren R. Hofstra and Karl Raitz. For broader accounts of the experiences of Native Americans in their interactions with Euro-American populations as well as political authorities of British North America, readers should consult works by James Axtell (*The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America*), and Daniel K. Richter (*The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization*). Excellent coverage of the Seven Years' War may be found in Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crowns,*

Colonies and Tribes in the Seven Years' War in America, and Matthew C. Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania*.

Most volumes on the history of the eighteenth-century Shenandoah Valley begin with a chapter on the region as a physical setting, including discussion of the natural environment. Such studies usually include commentary on the observations of eighteenth-century travelers through the region—Mitchell's *Commercialism and Frontier*, Hofstra's *The Planting of New Virginia*, and Rice's *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, are good examples. A volume that includes a large and rich collection of the writings of eighteenth and nineteenth-century observers who traveled through the Shenandoah Valley is Michael P. Branch and Daniel J. Philippon, ed., *The Height of Our Mountains: Nature Writing from Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains and Shenandoah Valley*. Here, one finds excerpts from the writings of Andrew Burnaby (*Travels through the Middle Settlements*), Philip Vickers Fithian, (*The Journal of Philip Vickers Fithian*), Luigi Castiglioni, (*Voyage into the United States of America*), Isaac Weld, (*Travels through the States of North America and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada*), and many others. An excellent recent description and analysis of the Shenandoah Valley as a physical setting is Karl Raitz, "The Lay of the Land," which appears in *The Great Valley Road of Virginia: Shenandoah Landscapes from Prehistory to the Present*, the collection of essays he co-edited with Warren R. Hofstra. Also useful for its broad interpretive sweep and the manner in which the environmental history of the Shenandoah Valley is fit into that of the Commonwealth of Virginia as a whole, is Jack Temple Kirby, "Virginia's Environmental History: A Prospectus," published in the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (it was Kirby who first-used the phrase "age of grain" to describe the period in the history of Virginia when wheat production dominated the rural economy in many areas of the state). A volume useful for its discussions of the Shenandoah Valley as an environment naturally well suited for high levels of agricultural production, is Avery Odelle Craven, *Soil Exhaustion as a Factor in the Agricultural History of Virginia and Maryland, 1606-1860*. Other more broadly conceived environmental histories that include some coverage of the Shenandoah Valley include Albert E. Cowdrey, *This Land, This South: An*

Environmental History, and Timothy Silver, *A New Face on the Countryside: Indians, Colonists, and Slaves in South Atlantic Forests, 1500-1800*.

Mitchell (*Commercialism and Frontier*), Hofstra (*The Planting of New Virginia*), and Rice (*Nature and History in the Potomac County*), provide richly detailed and nuanced accounts of the process of settlement and subsequent development in the eighteenth-century Shenandoah Valley. Several works by Jack P. Greene provide broader perspectives for understanding the long term development of society and culture in the larger region of which the Shenandoah formed a part: "Independence, Improvement, and Authority: Toward a Framework for Understanding the Histories of the Southern Backcountry during the Era of the American Revolution," in *An Uncivil War: The Southern Backcountry during the American Revolution*, edited by Ronald Hoffman, Thad W. Tate, and Peter J. Albert, and *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture*. Other studies are helpful for their detailed analyses of particular aspects of Shenandoah Valley history. An extended analysis of ethnic heterogeneity and pluralism in the eighteenth and nineteenth-century Shenandoah Valley is included in *Bound Away: Virginia and the Westward Movement*, by David Hackett Fischer and James C. Kelly. Fischer and Kelly document in broad outline the cultural contributions of each race or major ethnic group who settled in the Valley, i.e., Germans, Scots-Irish, English, and African Americans. Also, the experiences of peoples who settled in the Valley are placed into the larger context of the historical development of Virginia and colonial America (including the westward movement within the United States during the nineteenth century). This volume is particularly useful for its analysis of the cultural contributions to the Shenandoah Valley of Tidewater and Piedmont peoples who entered the region via the Northern Neck Proprietary, and settled in the vicinity of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park. Other excellent studies of the cultural encounter of these peoples with those who migrated from Pennsylvania include Warren R. Hofstra, *A Separate Place: The Formation of Clarke County, Virginia*, and Willard F. Bliss, "The Tuckahoe in New Virginia," published in the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*. Examination of one particular expression

of acculturation by peoples of English, Scots-Irish, and German background is found in Anne McCleary, “Forging a Regional Identity: Development of Rural Vernacular Architecture in the Central Shenandoah Valley, 1790-1850,” in *After the Backcountry*. Also, in *Shenandoah Valley Folklife*, Scott Suter provides a useful synthesis of the historical dynamics of cultural pluralism and acculturation in the Shenandoah Valley.

A multitude of works are devoted to the study of specific ethnic groups whose members peopled the eighteenth-century Valley in large numbers. On Germans, the best books to begin with are Klaus Wust, *The Virginia Germans* and John W. Wayland, *The German Element of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia*. Also, *The Pennsylvania Germans of the Shenandoah Valley*, by Elmer Lewis Smith, John G. Stewart, and M. Ellsworth Kyger is especially helpful for its descriptions of social mores and material culture among German peoples living in the Valley. Kenneth W. Keller has written numerous articles on topics relating to peoples of German descent who migrated to the eighteenth-Shenandoah Valley but the best among them is “The Outlook of Rhinelanders on the Virginia Frontier,” which appears in *Diversity and Accommodation: Essays on the Cultural Composition of the Virginia Frontier*, edited by Michael J. Puglisi. Broader treatment of the topic of the migration of Germanic peoples to North America is provided by A. G. Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property: German Lutherans in Colonial British America*.

On the Scots-Irish, the standard work is James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History*. A more recent article-length treatment of the subject may be found in Kenneth W. Keller, “What is Distinctive about the Scotch-Irish,” in *Appalachian Frontiers: Settlement, Society, & Development in the Preindustrial Era*, a collection of essays edited by Robert D. Mitchell. In *Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America*, David Hackett Fischer provides broader coverage of British migration to North America. This volume includes detailed treatment of the migration to the Shenandoah Valley—and other backcountry regions of North America—of large numbers of Irish, Scots, and “borderland peoples.”

Specialized studies incorporating coverage of African Americans in the Shenandoah Valley include Fischer and Kelly, *Bound Away*, and Stephen L. Longenecker, *Shenandoah Religion: Outsiders and the Mainstream, 1716-1865*. Longenecker's examination of religion in the Valley includes helpful analyses of the attitudes of various religious groups and denominations on the issue of slavery. Ellen Eslinger examines the experiences of free blacks in the upper Shenandoah Valley in her article entitled "'Sable Spectres on Missions of Evil': Free Blacks of Antebellum Rockbridge County, Virginia," which appears in *After the Backcountry: Rural Life in the Great Valley of Virginia, 1800-1900*, edited by Kenneth E. Koons, and Warren R. Hofstra. In "Slave Hire and the Development of Slavery in Augusta, County, Virginia" (also in *After the Backcountry*), J. Susanne Simmons and Nancy T. Sorrells explore how slave-hire functioned in the upper Valley but their findings apply broadly to the entire Valley. An analysis of slavery and its aftermath in the Shenandoah Valley, with particular attention to Shenandoah County, is available in Kenneth E. Koons, "'The Colored Laborers Work as Well as When Slaves': African Americans in the Breadbasket of the Confederacy, 1850 to 1880," in *Archaeological Perspectives on the American Civil War*, edited by Clarence R. Geier and Stephen R. Potter. A superb study of an upper-Valley slave community that arose at a large iron furnace is Charles B. Dew, *Bond of Iron: Master and Slave at Buffalo Forge*. Dew's analyses provide many useful insights into how the institution of slavery functioned in an industrial setting located in a rural district of Rockbridge County. This study is especially informative on the practice of slave-hire. Also informative is Charles C. Ballard, *Dismissing the Peculiar Institution: Assessing Slavery in Page and Rockingham Counties, Virginia*.

Readers who consult local or regional-level studies such as these will want to understand how the experiences of African Americans, as revealed by these studies, fit into the broader context of Virginia and the South. Historical literature on the study of slavery in the British colonial America and the United States is voluminous and it continues to grow rapidly. Unfortunately, however, most of this literature pertains to slavery as it was practiced in the plantation South, where tobacco, rice, or cotton was grown as monocultural staple crops. This notwithstanding, readers looking for broader context in which to interpret

slavery in the Shenandoah Valley could profitably consult two relatively recent works by Wilma A. Dunaway, *The African-American Family in Slavery and Emancipation*, and *Slavery in the American Mountain South*, as well as Mechal Sobel, *The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth-Century Virginia*. A number of classic studies should also be consulted: Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, and Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*. On free blacks, see Ira Berlin: *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South*. Finally, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century*, is useful because slavery in the “middle ground” of Maryland was in many respects similar to the institution as it was practiced in the Shenandoah Valley.

Commercial wheat farming in the nineteenth-century Shenandoah Valley, and farmers’ pursuit of it within a context of general mixed agriculture, received its first scholarly description from John T. Schlebecker, in “Farmers in the Lower Shenandoah Valley, 1850,” published in the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* in 1971. Though useful as an introduction to the nature of agrarian enterprise in the Valley ca. 1850, this article must be used with caution because it contains numerous inaccurate generalizations (he describes wheat harvests as occurring in May, when they occurred in late June and early July; he claims that the Civil War ruined wheat farming in the Valley, when most clearly it did not; he asserts that agriculture generally experienced long-term ruination because of the wholesale slaughter or destruction of Valley farmers’ livestock, when in fact by 1880 the numbers of most types of livestock on valley farms exceeded antebellum numbers). More reliable is Kenneth E. Koons, “‘The Staple of Our Country’: Wheat in the Regional Farm Economy of the Nineteenth-Century Valley of Virginia,” and Kenneth W. Keller, “The Wheat Trade on the Upper Potomac, 1800-1860, both of which appear in *After the Backcountry*, edited by Koons and Hofstra. Both of these articles provide detailed accounts of wheat farming as well as flour production and its transportation to extra-regional markets. An older and more general account of the historical development of agriculture in the southern United States is Lewis Cecil Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860* (two volumes). This work includes

much useful information on the origins and changing character of farming (and allied economic activities, e.g., grist-milling and distilling of grains) in the Valley but it is also useful because trends relating to agriculture as practiced in the Shenandoah Valley through the antebellum period may be seen in light of the agricultural development in the Southern United States as a whole. Data on wheat prices and a historical analysis of them are available in Arthur G. Peterson, *Historical Study of Prices Received by Producers of Farm Products in Virginia, 1801-1927*. On the role of wheat in shaping the nature of society, economy, and culture of the Shenandoah Valley over the course of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, see Kenneth E. Koons and Warren R. Hofstra, "Introduction: The World Wheat Made," in *After the Backcountry*.

Visual representations of agricultural practices as well as artistic depictions of topography, rural landscapes and built environments, including farm houses, barns, and other outbuildings, as well as fields, fences, and the like, may be found in the works of David Hunter Strother, who published his drawings and accompanying narratives under the pen name of Porte Crayon, and James E. Taylor, a sketch artist who accompanied General Philip Sheridan's troops in the Shenandoah Valley during the late summer and autumn of 1864. A representative sampling of Porte Crayon's work may be found in his *Virginia Illustrated: Containing a Visit to the Virginian Canaan, and the Adventures of Porte Crayon and His Cousins, Illustrated From Drawings by Porte Crayon*. Also useful because they contain further examples of his work and serve as aids for its contextualization, are *A Virginia Yankee in the Civil War: The Diaries of David Hunter Strother*, ed. Cecil D. Eby, Jr., and Eby's "*Porte Crayon*": *The Life of David Hunter Strother*. A large collection of Porte Crayon's drawings may be viewed online at the West Virginia History Online Digital Collections: <http://www.libraries.wvu.edu/wvonline/strother.htm>. Taylor's many sketches have been conveniently brought together and published, along with his diary describing the events or scenes depicted in the sketches, in James E. Taylor, *With Sheridan Up the Shenandoah Valley in 1864: Leaves From a Special Artists Sketch Book and Diary*. Strother and Taylor both, but especially the latter, include scenes of burning and destruction of crops and agrarian

infrastructure during the Civil War. Scholarly treatment of the subject may be found in Michael G. Mahon, *The Shenandoah Valley, 1861-1865: The Destruction of the Granary of the Confederacy*. In *The Burning, Sheridan's Devastation of the Shenandoah Valley*, John L. Heatwole treats thoroughly and in great detail the federal campaign of burning and destruction in the fall of 1864, undertaken in order to destroy the capacity of Shenandoah Valley farmers to provide foodstuffs in support of the Confederate war effort.

The historical renown of the Shenandoah Valley as a region of extraordinarily high levels of agricultural production has led historians to under-appreciate the significance of manufacturing activity there. Part I of this study makes a signal contribution to historians' understanding of the role of manufacturing in the regional economy by demonstrating that, among rural regions of Virginia at least, the Valley's manufacturing sector was comparatively large and robust during the late antebellum period and for much of the remainder of the nineteenth century. Although historians have generally neglected the role of manufacturing in the development of the regional economy of the Shenandoah Valley, a number of volumes provide useful perspectives. Wilma A. Dunaway, *The First American Frontier: Transition to Capitalism in Southern Appalachia, 1700-1860*, includes much material that is helpful for placing manufacturing in the Shenandoah Valley into a broader context. Her analysis of the rise of "agrarian capitalism" is especially useful. Also, a number of specialized books and articles have appeared on particular industries such as iron production. Charles B. Dew, *Bond of Iron: Master and Slave at Buffalo Forge*, offers an excellent account of the manufacture of iron in the Valley and its importance to the regional economy. Also helpful on the topic of iron manufacture is Kurt C. Russ, John M. McDaniel, and Katherine T. Wood, "Archaeology of Nineteenth-Century Iron Manufacturing in Southwest Virginia: Longdale Iron Mining Complex," in *After the Backcountry*, and *From Iron Plantation to Company Town: The Shenandoah Iron Works, 1836-1907*, by Charles Ballard. An older work that remains valuable is Kathleen Bruce, *Virginia Iron Manufacture in the Slave Era*. On grist milling, Arthur G. Peterson, "Flour and Grist Milling in Virginia," published in the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, includes

material on the Shenandoah Valley. An article that is especially informative because its geographic scope is set in the lower Shenandoah Valley is “Farm to Mill to Market: Historical Archaeology of an Emerging Grain Economy in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia,” by Clarence R. Geier and Warren R. Hofstra, which also appears in *After the Backcountry*.

An excellent recently published collection of essays on the history of transportation in the Shenandoah Valley is Warren R. Hofstra and Karl Raitz, eds., *The Great Valley Road of Virginia: Shenandoah Landscapes from Prehistory to the Present*. Without exception, each essay in this volume makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the history of transportation in the Shenandoah Valley. Especially insightful are “The Colonial Road,” by Warren Hofstra; “An Early Road to the Old West, 1780-1837,” by Gabrielle Lanier; and “The Best Thoroughfare in the South,” by Kenneth W. Keller. An older work that remains helpful is Rouse Parke, Jr., *The Great Wagon Road: From Philadelphia to the South*. For an excellent recent analysis and discussion of gundalow transportation on the Shenandoah River, see Seth C. Bruggeman, “The Shenandoah River Gundalow: Reusable Boats in Virginia’s Nineteenth-Century River Trade,” in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*. Also instructive on the Shenandoah River as a waterway used for commercial transport, is William E. Trout, III, *The Shenandoah River Atlas: Rediscovering the History of the Shenandoah and its Branches*.

In this essay I have focused mainly on relatively recent scholarship. However, modern historians of the Shenandoah Valley have all benefitted from the work of earlier generations of scholars. One of the earliest chroniclers of the region’s history is Samuel Kercheval whose book, *A History of the Valley of Virginia*, is widely cited by modern historians. Because of the book’s vintage, however—it first appeared in 1833—its main value lies in the fact that Kercheval lived during much of the era he writes about. The book is a trove of information and perspectives on the history of the region during the first century or so after its initial occupation by Euro-Americans. Foremost among historians of the region who wrote in the early decades of the twentieth century, both for his prolificacy as a writer and for the insights that abound in his works, is John W. Wayland, who produced a voluminous body of work on the history of the

Shenandoah Valley. A number of his books should be consulted for an improved understanding of the history of its lower section, where Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park is located. Most helpful among them are *A History of Rockingham County, Virginia*; *History of Shenandoah County, Virginia*; *Stonewall Jackson's Way: Route, Method, Achievement*; and *Twenty-Five Chapters on the Shenandoah Valley*. Other older works of local history that might be consulted for the information they contain on the lower Shenandoah Valley include J.E. Norris, ed., *History of the Lower Shenandoah Valley Counties of Frederick, Berkeley, Jefferson, and Clarke*, and T. K. Cartmell, *Shenandoah Pioneers and Their Descendants: Frederick County, Virginia, from Its Formation in 1738 to 1908*.

Suggestions for Further Research, Part I

- 1) Investigate the issue of ethnicity as a correlate of slave ownership. To what degree were Valley inhabitants of German descent more likely than members of other ethnic groups to own slaves?
- 2) Investigate the role of railroads in stimulating the areal concentration of grist mills, and thus building and reinforcing linkages between commercial flour production and urbanization.
- 3) Assess the degree to which the propensity of white farmers to utilize the tenant system and contract with African Americans as tenants during the post-bellum era, results from their having relatively strong cultural ties to areas east of the Blue Ridge (rather than Pennsylvania).
- 4) Compare the characteristics of farms where wheat production was abandoned during the latter half of the nineteenth century to those where wheat production increased during the same period.

PART II
THE CIVIL WAR ERA AT CEDAR CREEK

Chapter Four

Caught Between the Lines: Middletown as a Border Community

Introduction

For much of the Civil War, Middletown, Virginia—located in the lower Shenandoah Valley where nearly 75% of the major battles that occurred in the region were fought—found itself caught between the lines of opposing armies. Due to its location along the Valley Pike and its close proximity to Strasburg, which served as a depot along the Manassas Gap Railroad, Middletown became a thoroughfare for both armies. Due to its strategic position the community experienced seven discernable military actions—aside from the Battle of Cedar Creek—which caused Middletown’s population of approximately 440 residents, including a small free black population of nineteen, to experience much of the war as a border community.¹

Secession Crisis

After Abraham Lincoln’s presidential victory at the polls in November 1860, residents of Frederick County, Virginia wondered, as did most people in the country, what ramifications his election would have

¹The category of analysis of Middletown’s status as a border community, caught between the lines of opposing armies is based on Ash, *When the Yankees Came*, x. Middletown’s population in 1860 consisted primarily of farmers or laborers, however, based on the 1860 census the town did have one cooper, two blacksmiths, seven stone masons, one wagon maker, four carpenters, three shoemakers, one store clerk, two coach makers, one tailor, two physicians and two innkeepers; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States*, Manuscript Census for 1860, Frederick County, Middletown, Virginia; For a brief historical sketch of Middletown’s history see James V. Hutton, Jr. *Local History Articles* (Frederick County, Va.: N.p., 1971), 72-75. The number of military actions in Middletown, Virginia, is based on the accounting in *O.R., Index*, 641.

on the Union's stability. Virginia Senator James Mason, the author of the controversial 1850 Fugitive Slave Law and a resident of Frederick County—wrote from his home in Winchester on November 29, 1860, to his sister Anne that with Lincoln's election "the dissolution of the Union is a *fixed fact*. As certain as the sun rises, South Carolina goes out as soon as the *Act of Separation* can be reduced to form, after the 17th of December."² With South Carolina's secession imminent, Valley residents next wondered what this meant for them and the Old Dominion.

Most residents of the Shenandoah Valley believed that South Carolina's secession was an overreaction caused by unsubstantiated fears of what Lincoln might do with the institution of slavery once he assumed office in March 1861. For the most part, after South Carolina's secession Frederick County residents—as did most residents throughout the Valley—condemned the measure and issued resolutions in support of union and pragmatism. Citizens from throughout the county gathered at the county courthouse in Winchester on December 14, 1860, and supported a resolution of censure drafted by Winchester's Robert Conrad, which urged that all avenues be pursued to keep the union intact. "We should regard the dissolution of the American Union as the final and fatal catastrophe of the sectional controversy," Conrad stated in the resolution, and he stated that "we, Virginians, owe true allegiance to our Federal government ... Virginia should gravely deliberate before deciding upon her future position."³ Despite the resolution's tone of Unionism it also condemned any measure to abolish slavery. "Slavery is so interwoven in our social, domestic, and industrial life," Conrad argued, "that any sudden change would be destructive to us...abolition is in direct violation of the letter and spirit of the Constitution."⁴

²Senator James M. Mason to Sister, November 29, 1860, quoted in Virginia Mason, *The Public Life and Diplomatic Correspondence of James M. Mason: With Some Personal History* (New York: The Neale Publishing Co., 1906), 160. It should be noted that although Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park has parcels of land in three counties—Frederick, Shenandoah, and Warren—the discussion of the secession crisis is limited to Frederick County as Middletown (which sits solely in Frederick County) is the only town that has parcels within the park and provides the only opportunity to cogently examine how people within CEBE dealt with the secession crisis.

³*Winchester Republican*, Feb. 1, 1861; *Winchester Virginian*, Jan. 30, 1861.

⁴*Winchester Republican*, Feb. 1, 1861; *Winchester Virginian*, Jan. 30, 1861.

Despite the predominantly unionist attitudes of Valley inhabitants following Lincoln's election, pressure on Virginia to call a secession convention mounted. Virginia's Governor John Letcher—resident of the lower-valley County of Rockbridge—also urged caution. The demands of the Virginia legislature to have a secession convention became stronger than Letcher's pragmatism and the legislature summoned a convention. Legislators from east of the Blue Ridge seemed gripped by the same paranoia that struck in South Carolina after Lincoln's election and they demanded action. In the secessionists' view, secession protected slavery.⁵ Many Valley residents, however, believed that secession spelled slavery's imminent demise and would only quicken abolition.⁶

With the call for a secession convention to meet in Richmond on February 13, 1861, a special election for delegates took place on February 4 throughout the Commonwealth. In Frederick County, in the weeks leading up to the election, candidates campaigned earnestly. The pro-Union candidates Robert Conrad and James Marshall and the pro-secession candidates F.W.M. Holliday and Peyton Clark toured throughout the county to make their voices heard.⁷ In addition to campaign gatherings in Winchester, the candidates held campaign rallies in Newtown (present day Stephens City) and Middletown.⁸ With their messages and positions clear, Frederick's citizens—despite the presence of some secessionists—

⁵For further discussion of the division over the secession question in Virginia in the immediate wake of Lincoln's election see William A. Link, *Roots of Secession: Slavery and Politics in Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 217-219; Some of the pragmatism in the Valley was also a result of the Valley's experience during John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry in October 1859 which in the estimation of many Valley civilians portended the Valley's future fate. For further discussion see Jonathan A. Noyalas "The effect was immediate": John Brown's Raid and its Impact on Warren County, Virginia" *Warren's Heritage: Journal of the Warren Heritage Society* 4 (2009): 1-14.

⁶For an example of this attitude see Andrew J. Torget, "Unions of Slavery: Slavery, Politics, and Secession in the Valley of Virginia" in Edward L. Ayers, Gary W. Gallagher, & Andrew J. Torget, eds., *Crucible of the Civil War: Virginia From Secession to Commemoration* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 22; For additional attitudes among Valley residents toward secession see Edward L. Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies: War in the Heart of America, 1859-1863* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2003), 95-142.

⁷Jonathan A. Noyalas, *Plagued by War: Winchester, Virginia, During the Civil War* (Leesburg, Va.: Gauley Mount Press, 2003), 8.

⁸Richard R. Duncan, *Beleaguered Winchester: A Virginia Community at War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 11.

voted for the Unionist candidates Conrad and Marshall. People living in other Valley counties also voiced their opinion to remain firmly in the Union—at least for the moment. Fifteen of the nineteen Shenandoah Valley delegates elected to the secession convention favored union.⁹

While the secession convention met in Richmond the divisions over secession in the Valley continued to grow. Towns, friends, and families seemed divided over which course to pursue. Middletown's citizens debated the issue heavily. Among the Middletown residents who argued about secession's merits were Solomon and Caroline Heater—whose home and 540 acre farm would find itself caught in the middle of one of the most decisive battles of the Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley—the Battle of Cedar Creek.¹⁰ Alfred Ashby, a free black who worked for the Heaters, noted that during the time of the secession convention election he heard “Mr. and Mrs. Heater having a strong argument” about secession and the fact that it would mean war. Ashby heard Caroline Heater warn her husband that if secession passed “we shall have graveyards at every door.”¹¹ Caroline Heater did not deny that she disagreed with her husband on the matter. “My husband and I had some discussion in regard to the merits of the war at the beginning. He was a Virginian,” Caroline noted of her husband Solomon, “and perhaps his sympathies were more for Virginia than for the North but he never voted for the ordinance of secession. I was not a Virginian and opposed to secession.”¹² Disagreements over secession such as those between Caroline and Solomon Heater were commonplace in the Valley and throughout the South with women usually arguing against secession. As historians such as George Rable have noted, women

⁹Michael Mahon, “The Shenandoah Valley of Virginia,” in William C. Davis and James I. Robertson, Jr., eds., *Virginia at War: 1861* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2005), 132.

¹⁰The size of the Heater farm is based on evidence from the National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form for Cedar Grove Farm; Heater House, in Belle Grove Collection, Box 13, Stewart Bell, Jr. Archives Room, Handley Regional Library, Winchester, Va. (all future references to items in collections at the Handley Library will be abbreviated as HL). The Heater Farm is currently owned by the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation and sits within the NPS park boundary.

¹¹Testimony of Alfred Ashby, Heater Claim Brief on Loyalty, Belle Grove Collection, Box 13, HL.

¹²Testimony of Caroline Heater, in Heater Claim Brief on Loyalty, Belle Grove Collection, Box 13, HL.

opposed secession not necessarily on political grounds, but because they believed the dissolution of the Union would negatively impact their families.¹³

As families and friends debated secession in early 1861 the Virginia secession convention also deliberated the Old Dominion's future. Robert Conrad led the Unionists and urged restraint. When the first vote occurred on April 4, 1861, Conrad appeared successful as secession fell by a vote of ninety to forty-five.¹⁴ Despite the Unionist successes, secession sentiment gradually changed over the next two weeks in Frederick County.¹⁵ After the opening shots of war echoed in Charleston Harbor, President Lincoln had no other alternative than to raise an army to quell the rebellion of the already seceded seven Deep-South states. On April 15, Senator Mason, who watched events unfold from his home in Winchester, noted that Lincoln's declaration for troops from each of the non-seceded states made Virginia's secession a forgone conclusion: "This ends the question, Virginia will at once secede."¹⁶ Mason's assessment proved correct. During the secession convention's second vote on April 17 the ordinance passed by a vote of eighty-eight to fifty-five.¹⁷ Still the Valley delegation overwhelmingly opposed secession. Twelve of the nineteen delegates voted against secession the second time, including the representatives from Frederick County.¹⁸ Despite their desire for Virginia to remain with the Union,

¹³George C. Rable, *Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 46.

¹⁴Link, *Roots of Secession*, 235.

¹⁵Noyalas, *Plagued by War*, 10-11. While most historians assert that secession sentiment did not change in the Valley until after Fort Sumter and Lincoln's subsequent call for 75,000 volunteers secession sentiment in the lower Valley seemed to change in the time between the first secession convention vote on April 4 and Fort Sumter on April 12. After the first vote of the secession convention Rev. Benjamin F. Brooke of Winchester's Market Street Methodist Church noted that he "heard some secession speeches at the court house, now believe Virginia will cut her own throat." See Rev. Benjamin F. Brooke Journal, April 6, 1861, Brooke Collection, HL.

¹⁶Mason, *The Public Life and Diplomatic Correspondence of James M. Mason*, 191.

¹⁷Link, *Roots of Secession*, 242.

¹⁸Mahon, "The Shenandoah Valley of Virginia," 134.

however, they put aside their conditional Unionist beliefs, and signed the ordinance. Conrad, for example, sent five of his sons to serve in the Confederacy.¹⁹

With the secession ordinance a reality, citizens still had the final say in a statewide referendum on secession, but despite pockets of Unionism, few thought that secession would suffer defeat during the vote scheduled for May 23. As the referendum date approached many residents of Frederick County and Middletown showed that their Unionism was conditional—they now believed they owed their allegiance to the Commonwealth.²⁰

In Middletown some conditional Unionists changed their allegiance from the Federal government to the state quickly after the ordinance of secession passed. Among Middletown's conditional Unionists to alter his position was John M. Miller (Miller's farm of course would see heavy fighting at the battle of Cedar Creek and it would be upon his farm that Confederate Maj. Gen. Stephen D. Ramseur was mortally wounded). Miller, a forty-two year old farmer when Virginia seceded in April 1861, owned thirteen slaves in 1860, and like many Valley slave owners he opted to support secession after Virginia voted to secede. "I gave my first vote for the Union candidates as delegates to the convention," Miller noted after the Civil War, but "I next voted for the ordinance of secession."²¹

While men such as Miller changed their vote on the grounds that they could not go against their native state, evidence suggests that some in Middletown might have been threatened with violence in an effort to ensure that they voted in favor of secession during the referendum. According to Middletown's Dr. Henry C. Shipley, who served as a clerk at the referendum vote in Middletown, some people's votes appeared to have been swayed by secessionists. Although Shipley noted that he "witnessed no violence"

¹⁹Noyalas, *Plagued by War*, 12.

²⁰For a study of conditional Unionists in the Shenandoah Valley see Jonathan M. Berkey, "War in the Borderland: The Civilians' Civil War in Virginia's Lower Shenandoah Valley." Ph.D. diss. Pennsylvania State University, 2003, 68.

²¹Testimony of John M. Miller, Heater Claim Brief on Loyalty, Belle Grove Collection, Box 13, HL; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States*, Manuscript Census for 1860, Frederick County; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States*, Slave Schedule for 1860, Frederick County.

during the referendum, he remembered that “three illiterate men came in from the country and were going to vote against the ordinance of secession. They were threatened and in order to prevent personal or body injury they had their tickets changed and voted for secession.”²² Another Middletown resident, Benjamin Brinker, recalled that members of the Cooley family—who resided in the grand Belle Grove mansion—encountered similar opposition when at least one member of that family, more than likely Benjamin F. Cooley, noted that he wanted “to vote the Union ticket.”²³ According to Brinker, when Cooley stepped up to cast his vote against secession one of the officials informed him that Cooley’s “was the only vote cast on that side.” After a period of several hours Cooley reportedly came back to the polling place and informed the officials that he wanted to change his vote. “I understand that you put my vote down for Union,” Cooley stated later to the officials. Cooley informed them that now “he wanted to vote for the ordinance of secession and they changed his vote.” While nothing positively indicates what caused Cooley to alter his vote, Brinker believed that he might have been threatened. Brinker noted “I do not know whether any threats were used, it might not have been safe so far as I know.” Whether prompted to vote for secession because they believed in it or because they were forced to do so, Middletown’s residents voted unanimously in favor of the ordinance of secession.²⁴

The use of threats to prompt individuals to change their votes was not a unique strategy of pro-secessionist factions. Although it might have helped to secure unanimous consent for secession in Middletown, it did not throughout the rest of Frederick County. While 1,503 residents of Frederick County approved the secession measure, 360 did not.²⁵

²²Testimony of Dr. Henry C. Shipley, Heater Claim Brief on Loyalty, Belle Grove Collection, Box 13, HL.

²³Testimony of Benjamin Brinker, in Heater Claim Brief on Loyalty, Belle Grove Collection, Box 13, HL. Although Brinker does not identify a particular member of the Cooley family it is reasonable to assert that it must have been the head of household Benjamin F. Cooley, listed age thirty-six in the 1860 Frederick County census. There were only two other Cooley’s that resided in Middletown, both of them female.

²⁴Testimony of Benjamin Brinker, Heater Claim Brief on Loyalty, Belle Grove Collection, Box 13, HL.

²⁵Berkey, “War in the Borderland,” 70.

Enlistment in the Confederacy

As Virginia pursued its course of secession in the spring of 1861, amid the euphoria of war and enlistment came voices of concern who still continued to challenge secession's merits. Caroline Heater, an ardent Unionist supporter, continued to condemn secession even after it passed. During a conversation with Lewis T. Moore, an attorney and when the war broke out, a lieutenant colonel in the 4th Virginia Infantry, Caroline noted that Virginia's separation from the national government was unconscionable. In a heated discussion with Moore, Heater noted that "it was our duty to stand to the Union and the Federal government ... we were doing wrong to do this thing."²⁶ Fervently believing in the right of secession, Moore retorted that it was their "duty to stand by our state...we were doing wrong not to obey the mandate of our State."²⁷

Heater's concerns, however, could not match the excitement that many young men felt after Virginia seceded. The idea of adventure led many men throughout the South to fight for Confederacy.²⁸ Among those caught up in the prospect of adventure and glory was Caroline Heater's seventeen year old son Henry. At the time of the secession convention, Henry did not live in Middletown, but rather in Front Royal where he attended the Front Royal Academy. When the war broke out, Robert H. Simpson, the head of the school and a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute, recruited eager men for the Warren

²⁶Testimony of Lewis T. Moore, Heater Claim Brief on Loyalty, Belle Grove Collection, Box 13, HL; James I. Robertson, Jr., *Stonewall Jackson: The Man, The Soldier, The Legend* (New York: Macmillan, 1997), 240.

²⁷Testimony of Lewis T. Moore, Heater Claim Brief on Loyalty, Belle Grove Collection, Box 13, HL

²⁸For a general discussion of the excitement of adventure as a motivation for enlistment see James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971), 17. For a specific discussion of the sense of adventure prevalent among Confederate recruits in Frederick County, Virginia, see Jonathan A. Noyolas, "Portrait of a Soldier: The Confederate Military Service of Private Robert T. Barton, 1861-1862" *Winchester Frederick County Historical Society Journal* 16 (2004): 73-74; Aaron Sheehan-Dean, *Why Confederates Fought: Family and Nation in Civil War Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 23-24. Sheehan-Dean notes that virtually all of the Valley's population of men eligible to enlist did so in the spring of 1861.

Rifles, a militia company recruited in 1859 in response to John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry. The militia unit would eventually become Co. B, 17th Virginia Infantry.²⁹ Without his mother's permission, Henry ran off with Simpson's company to Harpers Ferry. Like so many, he enlisted because he "thought it was all fun and did not know all of the hardships he would have to undergo."³⁰ Caroline informed Henry that she "did not want him to go into the army."³¹ When she found out he had gone into the Warren Rifles she, along with her father, attempted to get Henry out of the 17th Virginia on the claim that he was not of military age. Still, Henry resisted. In the spring of 1861 before any major battles had yet been fought Henry wrote his mother asking if she could sew him a uniform as so many mothers were doing at that time. Promptly and sternly Caroline Heater replied to her son and told him that "it was his business not to have a uniform ... I would not furnish it." Henry pressed his mother further and asked if she would provide money to purchase a uniform. Again she refused to pay for it even after apparently Henry purchased it on credit.³² Although she secured his release, Henry left home when he turned eighteen and joined Co. E, 7th Virginia Cavalry—part of Turner Ashby's cavalry command in the Valley.³³

John, another of the Heater's sons, who belonged to a militia company prior to the war and who did not live with them, joined the Confederate service at the war's outset. "He went into the confederate army against my consent and wishes," recalled Caroline Heater after the war, "I told him that I did not wish him to go in and that he had better give up and not go at all."³⁴ She lamented John's volunteering to

²⁹George Wise, *History of the Seventeenth Virginia C.S.A.* (Baltimore, Md.: Kelly, Piet, & Co., 1870), 267.

³⁰Testimony of Caroline Heater, Heater Claim Brief on Loyalty, Belle Grove Collection, Box 13, HL.

³¹Testimony of Caroline Heater, Heater Claim Brief on Loyalty, Belle Grove Collection, Box 13, HL.

³²Testimony of Caroline Heater, Heater Claim Brief on Loyalty, Belle Grove Collection, Box 13, HL.

³³Although he is not listed in the regimental roster published in William N. McDonald, *A History of the Laurel Brigade: Originally the Ashby Cavalry of the Army of Northern Virginia and Chew's Battery* (n.p.: Mrs. Kate S. McDonald, 1907), 397. He is listed in the soldiers and sailors system as having served in Co. E, 7th Virginia Cavalry.

³⁴Testimony of Caroline Heater, Heater Claim Brief on Loyalty, Belle Grove Collection, Box 13, HL.

Dr. Shipley. He recalled: “she was regretting it very much to me that her son had volunteered, and she made this remark to me: ‘Doctor he has acted contrary to my judgment and my feelings and sympathies in this matter, but I cannot control him, he is of age and has a right to do as he please[s].’” Nonetheless as another of Middletown’s residents remembered: “Mrs. Heater grieved a great deal about her sons being in the army.”³⁵ Despite Caroline Heater’s regret over her sons serving the Confederacy, Solomon Heater, at least according to Lewis Moore, approved of his sons’ enlistment.³⁶

War Comes to Middletown

While secession had an immediate impact on the residents of Middletown as men enlisted and families, such as the Heaters, were divided over issues of loyalty, those citizens that remained behind would soon learn that the war would come to impact them in additional ways. As a border community caught between the lines of Union and Confederate armies, they would experience the conflict on an incessant basis

In the war’s early months Shenandoah Valley residents came to realize that although their region seemed isolated—nestled between the Blue Ridge on the east and the Allegheny Mountains on the west—it would become a constant battleground. The Valley, due to its agricultural productivity, offered numerous attractions for armies of both sides during the conflict.³⁷ As a rich agricultural region that earned the nickname “Breadbasket of the Confederacy”, the Valley provided important resources to Confederate forces, particularly those operating in Virginia. Additionally, the Valley served as an avenue

³⁵Testimony of Fanny Robinson, Heater Claim Brief on Loyalty, Belle Grove Collection, Box 13, HL.

³⁶Testimony of Lewis T. Moore, Heater Claim Brief on Loyalty, Belle Grove Collection, Box 13, HL; For additional discussions on how the war divided families see Amy Murrell, “Union Father, Rebel Son: Families and the Question of Civil War Loyalty” in Joan E. Cashin, ed., *The War Was You and Me: Civilians in the American Civil War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 358-384.

³⁷Michael G. Mahon, *The Shenandoah Valley 1861-1865: The Destruction of the Granary of the Confederacy* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1999), 4-6.

of invasion for Confederate armies into the north and also served as a point from which Confederate forces could threaten Washington D.C. Due to its geographic location Confederate war planners also utilized the Valley as a place from which to create a strategic diversion and alleviate pressure against Richmond. On the other hand Union forces looked to the Valley as a point from which they could protect the capital, disrupt invasion, and diminish the Valley's capacity to supply food and material to the Confederate war effort. Union soldier James F. Fitts succinctly captured the Valley's strategic importance as he noted after the war that the Shenandoah Valley "was one continuous theatre of war while the strife lasted. It was always a favorite battle-ground for the South ... It was the broad highway for Northern invasion."³⁸

Until March 1862 most of the military activity in the lower Shenandoah Valley centered around Winchester, with occasional expeditions from Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson's command to points north of Winchester.³⁹ Middletown escaped the war during the conflict's early months but by March 1862 it found the residents of the sleepy community. Around 9:00 a.m. on March 12 of that year, Union forces of Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks V Corps marched into Frederick County and established headquarters around Winchester (Insert Image 001N). Throughout the next week Banks sent a number of expeditions to various places in Frederick County, including Middletown.⁴⁰ On March 18 Banks sent Gen. James Shields' division of approximately 8,000 men south along the Valley Pike toward Strasburg to determine the whereabouts of Stonewall Jackson's army. As Shields' men marched through Middletown the residents caught a glimpse of Union soldiers for the first time (Insert Image 002N). With pre-conceived images of the barbarity of Union troops some Middletown residents recorded their surprise at the "human" qualities of the Federals. "At first we thought the Yankees were a set of scoundrels,"

³⁸James F. Fitts, "The Last Battle of Winchester" in *The Galaxy* (New York: W.C. & F.P. Church, 1866), 322.

³⁹Noyalas, *Plagued by War*, 16-36.

⁴⁰Noyalas, *Plagued by War*, 36-37.

remembered a fourteen year old boy in Middletown, “and we were dreading ‘em. We didn’t know what they looked like until Banks raided through here. But when we got acquainted we found they were human with about the same faults and virtues as our own men.”⁴¹ For some Union soldiers the area did not make that much of an impression. A soldier in the 3rd Wisconsin noted simply that Middletown was “a village of but few inhabitants.”⁴²

Shields’ expedition on the 18th ended along the banks of Cedar Creek. In anticipation of being pursued by Union cavalry, troops from Col. Turner Ashby’s command burned the bridge over Cedar Creek (Insert Image 003N). Although Shields’ troops fabricated a “temporary” bridge across Cedar Creek and several regiments moved to the south side of Cedar Creek, much of Shields’ division camped just south of Middletown on the Heater Farm.⁴³ According to Jacob Larrick—who owned a hotel in Middletown (present day Wayside Inn)—Shields’ troops camped within one hundred yards of the Heater home, on the west side of the Valley Pike, on the evening of March 18. Soon the Union soldiers discovered that two of the Heater’s sons served in the Confederate army. The initial reaction of two unidentified Union officers was to arrest Solomon Heater, but Shields would not allow it. Larrick recalled that “Gen. Shields told them to let Mr. Heater alone,” and, “that his wife was a Union woman.”⁴⁴ Heater’s notoriety as a Unionist went beyond Middletown. In nearby Newtown Dr. John W. Owen recalled after the war that he “frequently heard her spoken of while the war was going on as [a] Union

⁴¹Postwar interview with unidentified boy who was sixteen at the time of the Battle of Cedar Creek, quoted in Clifton Johnson, *Battleground Adventures: The Stories of Dwellers on the Scenes of Conflict in Some of the Most Notable Battles of the Civil War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1915), 396.

⁴²Steven S. Raab, ed., *With the 3rd Wisconsin Badgers: The Living Experience of the Civil War through the Journals of Van R. Willard* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1999), 55.

⁴³Raab, ed., *With the 3rd Wisconsin Badgers*, 55; U.S. War Department, comp., *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, ser. 1, vol. 12, pt. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), 6. Cited hereafter as *O.R.*

⁴⁴Testimony of Jacob F. Larrick, Heater Claim on Loyalty, Belle Grove Collection, Box 13, HL.

woman.”⁴⁵ By March 20, Shields’ forces departed Middletown and moved north to the vicinity of Winchester.

The small affair between Shields’ and Ashby’s commands portended a future fraught with battle and uncertainty for the small community. Less than one week later, on March 24, Union forces under Col. Nathan Kimball pursued Stonewall Jackson’s army after Kimball’s men (Shields’ division) defeated Jackson the previous day at Kernstown. With the bridge destroyed, Kimball’s troops utilized the many fords along Cedar Creek to cross and pursue the Confederates. (Insert Image 004N).⁴⁶

Two months later, on May 24, Middletown residents witnessed a flurry of military activity as approximately 17,000 Confederates under Stonewall Jackson pushed north, down the Valley and aimed to crush the Union troops from Gen. Banks’ command. After Jackson defeated a small Union garrison at Front Royal on May 23, he set his sights on Banks’ main force, which stood at Strasburg. When Banks received confirmation of Jackson’s success at Front Royal he decided to pull his army back to Winchester, where he could have the advantage of additional infantry support from the 10th Maine and four cavalry companies that were en route to Winchester from Harpers Ferry.⁴⁷

As Federal troops prepared to march out of Strasburg, Banks ordered that the Cedar Creek commissary stores and quartermaster depot be loaded up and that any supplies that could not be taken be destroyed.⁴⁸ The column of approximately 5,000 troops and 500 wagons started out around 9 a.m. on May 24. As the column moved north, Banks and his staff stood near the Cedar Creek Bridge. Hoping that his column could move to Winchester quickly, and before Jackson spied it, Banks received an alarming piece of news late that morning—that Confederate cavalry had blocked the Valley Pike and had Banks’ column stopped at Newtown. While he might initially have wanted to shrug off the report, the

⁴⁵Testimony of Dr. John W. Owen, in Heater Claim Brief on Loyalty, Belle Grove Collection, Box 13, HL.

⁴⁶Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862*, 215-216.

⁴⁷Noyalas, *Plagued by War*, 50-51.

⁴⁸Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862*, 316.

sight of “fugitives, refugees, and wagons ... tumbling to the rear in confusion” confirmed the intelligence. Sensing that Jackson might be pursuing from the north and the possibility that he might have to return to Strasburg to establish a defense, Banks ordered Captain James W. Abert, of the topographical corps to work in concert with Captain Charles H.T. Collis’ Zouaves d’Afrique (this company would later become the 114th Pennsylvania Infantry) to prepare a fire to burn the bridge over Cedar Creek so that Jackson would not be able to pursue (Insert Image 005N).⁴⁹ Abert went to a neighboring barn to acquire the necessary materials. Although Abert did not explicitly mention which barn he went to, it was probably the one owned by Daniel F. Stickley, whose farm sat only several hundred yards from the Cedar Creek bridge on the west side of the Valley Pike. In the barn Abert recalled that he “procured a tar-barrel, some straw, some commissary pork, and other flammable materials.” Abert built the fire near the bridge and awaited Banks’ order to burn it.⁵⁰

In fact what had caused so much pandemonium was not Jackson’s entire force, but rather a small contingent of Confederate cavalry under command of Brig. Gen. George Steuart. In anticipation of Banks’ withdrawal from Strasburg Jackson sent Steuart from Front Royal to Newtown, several miles north of Middletown, in an effort to block Banks before he could reach Winchester. When the wagons reached Newtown panic set in among the teamsters, a number of whom were contraband slaves hired by Banks to drive the wagons. Some of these contraband slaves, many of whom came from the lower Valley, left their wagons on the Valley Pike and dashed toward Middletown. While some regarded their flight as cowardly, their fears were warranted as capture by Confederate troops meant a return to slavery or even death.

When Banks came to the Valley in the spring of 1862 he was the first to aggressively pursue a plan to help Valley slaves to attain their freedom. Regularly, Banks’ men encouraged slaves to run away from their masters. Some did not, as they understood that any “freedom” Banks’ army provided existed

⁴⁹*O.R.* ser. 1, vol. 12, pt. 1, 547.

⁵⁰*O.R.*, ser. 1, vol. 12, pt. 1, 568.

only so long as Banks occupied the Valley or they remained with the Union force. A slave owned by Middletown's Cooley family noted: "A great many of the slaves run off North ... [but] none of us went away from Belle Grove."⁵¹ Those slaves who did not leave their masters during Banks' occupation, were subjected to psychological warfare, as Union soldiers told them that if they remained with their masters Stonewall Jackson would murder them.⁵² As thoughts of being murdered, or being returned to slavery, raced through the contraband teamsters' heads, flight seemed like the only option. Lt. Charles W. Boyce, who served in a New York regiment, watched the pandemonium and understood their anxieties: "They...knew that they had everything to lose in being captured. There was some excuse for them to act as they did."⁵³

Still, the scene shocked Banks' column. David Hunter Strother, a resident of Martinsburg who served on Banks' staff, recorded that: "At Cedar Creek bridge we were met by a wagon master at full speed and apparently terrified ... We met the wagons and mounted teamsters rushing furiously back." (Insert Image 006N)⁵⁴ As Banks looked for confirmation, Col. Dudley Donnelly's brigade—the 46th Pennsylvania, 28th New York, and 5th Connecticut—prepared to meet the impending threat. Donnelly ordered the wagons south of Middletown moved into the fields on each side of the Pike so that his brigade could advance through Middletown and attack the Confederates. Donnelly's men "advanced rapidly through the village" of Middletown and met five companies of Confederate cavalry. With the support of

⁵¹Interview with former wartime servant at Belle Grove, quoted in Johnson, *Battleground Adventures*, 392. For additional discussions of Banks' policies regarding slaves see Jonathan A. Noyalas, *Two Peoples, One Community: The African American Experience in Newtown (Stephens City), Virginia, 1850-1870* (Stephens City, Va.: Stone House Foundation, 2007), 29.

⁵²Jonathan M. Berkey, "In the Very Midst of the War Track: The Valley's Civilians and the Shenandoah Campaign," in Gary W. Gallagher, ed., *The Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1862* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 101.

⁵³Charles W. Boyce Journal, 75, Boyce Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

⁵⁴Cecil D. Eby, Jr., ed., *A Virginia Yankee in the Civil War: The Diaries of David Hunter Strother* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 39-40. For biographical information on Strother see Jonathan M. Berkey, "Fighting the Devil with Fire: David Hunter Strother's Private Civil War" in John C. Inscoe and Robert C. Kenzer, eds., *Enemies of the Country: New Perspectives on Unionists in the Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 18-36.

artillery Donnelly's brigade drove the Confederates into fields east of the Valley Pike and, after a heroic push, drove the Confederates two miles to the east, allowing Banks to place his column on the road once again to Winchester.⁵⁵

Although Stuart only caused a panic among Banks' command and he did not aggressively engage the Union troops, his action confirmed Jackson's suspicions about Banks' withdrawal. Now Jackson decided to race toward Middletown via the Chapel Road (present-day Reliance Road) from Cedarville and strike Banks' column. Unfortunately for Jackson, by the time his forces arrived in Middletown only the rearguard remained. Around 2:30 p.m., Turner Ashby's cavalry turned off the Chapel Road and headed south into Middletown. When Gen. John P. Hatch, commander of the cavalry rear guard, discovered Ashby's presence he immediately sent his men to seek cover in the fields and streets east of the Valley Pike (Insert Image 007N). As additional Confederate troops entered Middletown that afternoon, the anxieties of the Union troops left behind increased and the spirits of Middletown's Confederate sympathizers soared. Robert Barton, a Confederate soldier from Winchester, noted: "When we arrived at Middletown, our column was turned to the left towards Strasburg, down the street on which the Episcopal Church stands, and we marched with our colors all uncovered, and the band of every regiment going at full blast." This martial affair excited many of Middletown's Confederate civilians. "Everything in Middletown turned out to greet us, men, women, girls, children, dogs, cats, and chickens," Barton recalled.⁵⁶

With the Confederate presence increasing Gen. Hatch turned to Lt. Col. Calvin Douty of the 1st Maine Cavalry and stated simply: "We must cut our way through."⁵⁷ Hatch's command lined up four abreast across the Valley Pike and charged north through Middletown. The Union horsemen met not only

⁵⁵Report of Col. Dudley Donnelly, *O.R.* ser. 1, vol. 12, pt. 1, 605.

⁵⁶Robert T. Barton, "The Battle at Winchester," Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va.

⁵⁷Edward P. Tobie, *History of the First Maine Cavalry: 1861-1865* (Boston: Press of Emery and Hughes, 1887), 36.

with fire from the Louisiana soldiers of Gen. Richard Taylor's brigade, but suffered a terrible fate when Turner Ashby's cavalry command charged into the Union ranks and then Capt. R. Preston Chew's and Capt. William Poague's artillery opened fire and wreaked devastation and chaos in the Union ranks. "Soon the road was so blockaded with dead men and horses that those in the rear could not pass," recalled a member of Ashby's command of the scene on the northern edge of Middletown, "and an indescribable scene of carnage and confusion ensued."⁵⁸ Additionally Hatch's men were slowed by wagons in his front that got a late start out of Strasburg. This, coupled with the walls along the Valley Pike, created a juggernaut. For Confederate artillerymen it became target practice which resulted in a scene of carnage even repulsive to some Confederates who witnessed it (Insert Image 008N). Henry Kyd Douglas remembered that the Valley Pike just north of Middletown had become a "bleeding pile, a roaring, shrieking, struggling mass of men and horses, crushed, wounded and dying. It was a sickening sight ... and for a moment I felt a twinge of regret."⁵⁹ Stonewall Jackson even described it as "a most appalling spectacle of carnage and destruction."⁶⁰ Eventually some of the Union troopers retreated south, others to the fields on the west side of the pike where the final Confederate stand would take place at the Battle of Cedar Creek in October 1864, or to the homes of Middletown's civilians who might give them aid and comfort. Among those to aid the Union soldiers was Caroline Heater who confessed after the war that at "the time of Banks' retreat I secreted some Union men and gave them provisions and sent them on to Winchester."⁶¹

While Hatch's cavalry succumbed to the Confederate onslaught Abert and Collis still stood near the Cedar Creek bridge awaiting orders to fire it. Collis could clearly see the troopers' fate and now knew

⁵⁸McDonald, *A History of the Laurel Brigade*, 61.

⁵⁹Henry Kyd Douglas, *I Rode with Stonewall* (Marietta, Ga.: Mockingbird Books, 1995), 61.

⁶⁰Thomas Jonathan Jackson report of 1862 Valley Campaign, April 10, 1863, *O.R.* ser. 1, vol. 12, pt. 1, 703.

⁶¹Testimony of Caroline Heater, Heater Claim Brief on Loyalty, Belle Grove Collection, Box 13, HL.

that he was “effectually cut off from the main body” of the army. As Confederate fire cut down Hatch’s troops, Collis noticed the 9th Louisiana Infantry marching down Main Street.⁶² Collis moved his men—approximately 150 soldiers—to the cover of a stone wall on the east side of the Valley Pike on a ridge almost in line with Belle Grove. It is possible, based on a map of Collis’ action published in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* on May 31, 1862, that Collis’ took position on the southern outskirts of town in the general area of where the 8th Vermont monument is presently located. The map’s reliability, however, should be questioned as it incorrectly places Winchester to the south of Middletown. Collis’ men delivered well-aimed volleys into the Louisiana troops. “A vicious volley of bullets whistled through our disordered ranks,” recalled a Louisiana soldier, “splintering rails of neighboring fences and wounding several...I saw a company of Zouaves firing vigorously upon our advance.”⁶³ The Louisiana soldiers then opened fire. A reporter from *The Philadelphia Inquirer* noted that the Confederates “gave the Zouaves a volley which made their stone breastworks literally shake.” Collis’ men returned fire “with terrible effect.”⁶⁴ As the pressure mounted Collis pulled his men back to a ridge behind Belle Grove (this could be the ridge upon which the XIX Corps trenches were dug) and then eventually the Pennsylvanians fell back to Hupp’s Hill. Collis lost three men killed in the skirmish and one man captured (Insert Image 009N).⁶⁵ As the Zoauves d’Afrique pulled back across the Cedar Creek bridge, Abert finally set fire to it. The Confederates halted their pursuit at Cedar Creek and turned north to focus on Banks’ army, which had escaped to Winchester.⁶⁶

⁶²Edward J. Hagerty, *Collis’ Zouaves: The 114th Pennsylvania Volunteers in the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 47; Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862*, 327.

⁶³Louisiana soldier quoted in Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862*, 327.

⁶⁴*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 31, 1862.

⁶⁵*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 31, 1862. According to the *Inquirer* William McClane, James Britton, and Jacques Laurier were killed and Charles Fedalen wounded and captured.

⁶⁶Hagerty, *Collis’ Zouaves*, 47-51.

Confederate residents of Middletown expressed joy over the Confederate victory in Middletown and Jackson's subsequent success at Winchester on May 25. Despite the successes, however, Jackson pulled his troops out of the lower Valley one week after the fight at Middletown. The door again opened for Union occupation. Until mid-September 1862, Union forces occupied the lower Valley, and although the main body of Union troops camped around Winchester, regiments were sent south to the Middletown area as an advance outpost. In the late spring and early summer of 1862 a variety of Union forces camped in the vicinity of Middletown. For example, Gen. John White Geary wrote his wife from "Camp 'Hammar'" on June 30, 1862, and several weeks later soldiers from the 60th New York recorded camping at "Camp Tait" which was set up on the Heater Farm.⁶⁷ Soldiers who camped around Middletown in the spring and summer of 1862 relied upon foraging from the locals for supplies. While this placed a hardship on area residents, some seemed not to mind the loss of property so long as they were not threatened. The daughter of Abe Spencer, a free black in Middletown, noted that the Union soldiers "would take every bit of cabbage we had grown ... They'd come right into the garden when we was workin' ... and take things. They'd come into the house, too, and carry off whatever they could find to eat."⁶⁸ While some simply wanted to be left alone, other inhabitants of the area did not shy away from conflict with Union soldiers. During a foraging expedition in the summer of 1862, soldiers from the 60th New York went to the home of an unidentified resident of Middletown who, remembered a member of the regiment, "took occasion to lecture us on our sins, and on the fate that awaited us, and the Federal soldiers generally, at the day of judgment."⁶⁹

Among the most feared of the Union soldiers were men from General Louis Blenker's division. Primarily comprised of German immigrants Blenker's men earned a reputation as brutes. They pillaged

⁶⁷William Alan Blair, ed., *A Politician Goes to War: The Civil War Letters of John White Geary* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 50; Richard Eddy, *History of the Sixtieth Regiment New York State Volunteers* (Philadelphia: self-published, 1864), 114.

⁶⁸Johnson, *Battleground Adventures*, 406.

⁶⁹Eddy, *History of the Sixtieth Regiment*, 116.

and ransacked indiscriminately. Gen. Robert H. Milroy, notorious for his treatment of Confederate civilians in late 1862 and 1863, even condemned the actions of these soldiers in the Valley in the spring of 1862. “The dutch brigades are composed of the most infernal robbers, plunderers, and thieves I have ever seen [and] our army is disgraced by them ... the name of Blenker’s dutch will be celebrated in history as the vandals.”⁷⁰ Some Middletown area residents agreed. “When those Dutch came through the valley in ’62 they ransacked houses and treated the people cruelly,” recalled a young female resident of the area (probably Mary Stickley), “I know we had great fear of them. They’d tear up quilts and the homemade counterpanes and coverlids and such things.”⁷¹ Blenker, or one of his officers, made their headquarters at the Stickley home which sat just south of Cedar Creek on the west side of the Valley Pike, and hung a U.S. flag on a pole near the gate. In an effort to exhibit their disdain for these soldiers, the Stickleys refused to walk under the shadow of the flag. “When the wind blew from the right direction the flag would wave over the path. The older people of our household wouldn’t go under it,” recalled the young girl, “and we children patterned after them and turned aside, too.”⁷²

While the actions of some Union soldiers might have shocked area inhabitants, so too were Union soldiers shocked at what they witnessed—most notably the boorish treatment of slaves in the area. When Union General John P. Slough’s brigade set up camp on the Heater Farm in July 1862, he utilized the Heater House as his headquarters (Insert Image 010N). At the time, the Heater’s eldest son’s wife

⁷⁰Gen. Robert H. Milroy to Mary Milroy, June 15, 1862, General Robert H. Milroy Papers, Jasper County Public Library, Rensselaer, Ind.

⁷¹It is not entirely clear who made this remark. It is derived from a postwar oral history interview where the interviewee is not clearly identified. She is simply referred to by the interviewer Clifton Johnson as “A Girl in the Shenandoah Valley.” Based on her discussions of her age, mentioning her proximity to the creek and the bridge over Cedar Creek, coupled with her discussion of the family mills, it is reasonable to surmise that this girl was the daughter of Daniel Stickley whose farm sat on the west side of the Valley Pike near the bridge. More than likely it would have been Mary Stickley, who was listed as seven years old in the 1860 census. In writing about the mills she noted that “one day we looked out and saw that the flouring mill was on fire. It had stone walls.” The remains of the Stickley mill survive today. To further bolster this claim this interviewee noted that at one point during the war the Union soldiers “wanted the material for building a bridge across the creek.” With the Stickley Farm being closest to the bridge it is again reasonable to believe that Union soldiers would have gone to the Stickley Farm first. See Johnson, *Battleground Adventures*, 385.

⁷²Johnson, *Battleground Adventures*, 385.

boarded with Solomon and Caroline Heater. The regimental chaplain of the 60th New York Infantry noted that he witnessed, on more than one occasion, the daughter-in-law beating her slave. “Frequently the wife beat the slave and while [we] were there she had been most shamefully whipped” recalled Chaplain Richard Eddy.⁷³

The treatment of area slaves caused some Union troops to enact plans of their own to free slaves around Middletown. During a foraging expedition troops from the 60th New York came to the Stickley Farm. While the New Yorkers gathered up twenty-eight bushels of wheat, the regimental chaplain struck up a conversation with a young boy whom he initially thought was Daniel Stickley’s son. The boy informed Chaplain Eddy that he was not Stickley’s son, but rather a slave. Eddy was astonished as he “could hardly believe the story, as the boy was whiter than many we had in our regiment, had straight hair, and little or nothing of the negro in his features.”⁷⁴ Amazed by this, Eddy asked him if he would like his freedom. The young boy acknowledged that he would, however, he did not want to attempt to flee “for fear of consequences if he should be caught.”⁷⁵

Deeply moved by this young boy’s fate, the New Yorkers walked away from the Stickley farm in the hopes of developing a plan to free him when they encountered another slave in a body of woods who told horror stories about life as a slave. At the New Yorker’s request the slave took off his shirt and showed slavery’s barbarity. “We had all read of scarred backs,” recalled one New Yorker, “but this surpassed all description. It was one continuous scar, and the ridges, thick as our fingers, which the whip had made, crossed it in all directions.”⁷⁶ The contingent from the 60th New York offered freedom to this slave. He agreed to go with the New Yorkers and bring the other boy along with him, but only after dark so as to protect the secrecy of his mission. The New Yorkers secured freedom for the two, but what

⁷³Eddy, *History of the Sixtieth Regiment*, 116.

⁷⁴Eddy, *History of the Sixtieth Regiment*, 119.

⁷⁵Eddy, *History of the Sixtieth Regiment*, 119.

⁷⁶Eddy, *History of the Sixtieth Regiment*, 120.

happened to both remains a mystery. Chaplain Eddy noted that the young boy became sick in August and was sent out of Virginia for medical care.⁷⁷ The actions of Chaplain Eddy portended emancipation in the lower Shenandoah Valley.

The Enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation

When Union General Robert H. Milroy came to the lower Shenandoah Valley on January 1, 1863, with his division of 8,000 men as part of Gen. Robert Schenck's Middle Department, he intended to enforce the Emancipation Proclamation. An Indiana native, fervent abolitionist, and devout Presbyterian, Milroy believed that until slavery was abolished Union forces would continue to suffer setbacks in Virginia (Insert Image 011N). He regarded Lincoln's Proclamation as "the most important event in the history of the world since Christ was born."⁷⁸ Four days after he established his headquarters in Winchester, Milroy issued his own proclamation to the citizens of Frederick County—"Freedom to Slaves." "Whereas, the county of Frederick, is included in the territory designated by the Proclamation of the President, in which the *Slaves should become free*," Milroy proclaimed, "I therefore hereby notify the citizens of the city of Winchester, and of said County of said Proclamation, and of my intention to maintain and enforce the same." (Insert Image 012N)⁷⁹

Once Virginia Governor John Letcher received news of Milroy's emancipation policy he was outraged. Letcher believed that Milroy's policy attempted to incite insurrection. Milroy's policy, Letcher explained to the Virginia legislature, "violates in the most positive manner, the provisions of our act of

⁷⁷Eddy, *History of the Sixtieth Regiment*, 120.

⁷⁸Gen. Robert H. Milroy's address to men as they entered Winchester, January 1, 1863, quoted in Joseph Warren Kiefer, *Slavery and Four Years of War: A Political History of Slavery in the United States together with a Narrative of the Campaigns and Battles of the Civil War in which the Author Took Part, 1861-1865* (New York: Putnam, 1900), 1:316.

⁷⁹"Freedom to Slaves!" General Robert H. Milroy Papers, Jasper County Public Library, Rensselaer, Ind.

assembly, which declares if a free person advise or conspire with a slave to revolt ... he shall be punished with death.”⁸⁰ Threats of death and even a \$100,000 reward for Milroy’s capture did not seem to concern him as he believed that he was performing God’s work in Frederick County. Believing that only an Old-Testament style scourge of the south could end slavery and thus the Civil War, Milroy wrote to his wife Mary that a “long bitter cry has went up to ... God from a nation of slaves in America. He has heard that cry and for many years been sending good men to reason with the slaveholders ... but the slave holders have met ... all arguments with scorn ... Hell deserving iniquity until like the Pharaoh and his host, they will overwhelm in total destruction.”⁸¹

Fearlessly, Milroy ordered his command to move throughout Frederick County and enforce emancipation. On February 2, Milroy’s command moved into Newtown and areas just south to enforce emancipation.⁸² The extent of Milroy’s influence on slaves in the Middletown area or near Cedar Creek is uncertain, as Milroy knew that Confederate cavalry under Gen. William “Grumble” Jones and Gen. John Imboden lurked somewhere in the vicinity of Strasburg, about five miles south of Middletown, and his troops had to guard against surprise attacks from the enemy.⁸³ Generally, slave owners in this part of Frederick County noted that during the time of Milroy’s enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation, former slaves did not react violently toward their masters. Mary Walls, who lived several miles north of Middletown, noted how former slaves caused no trouble: “It was perfectly surprising how well the Negroes did all during the war ... we lived so near the border they could have done a great deal of

⁸⁰Executive Communication to the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates, January 20, 1863, John Letcher Papers, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

⁸¹Milroy to Mary Milroy, February 10, 1863, General Robert H. Milroy Papers, Jasper County Public Library, Rensselaer, Ind.

⁸²Diary of John Magill Steele and Sarah Eliza Steele in Garland R. Quarles, et. al., eds. *Diaries, Letters, and Recollections of the War Between the States* (Winchester, Va.: Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society, 1955), 64; No records exist, or have yet been uncovered, that provide an accounting of how many slaves Milroy emancipated, however, it is estimated at several thousand.

⁸³Noyalas, “*My Will is Absolute Law*”, 85.

mischievous if they had a notion.”⁸⁴ Col. Joseph Warren Kiefer, who in 1863 commanded the 110th Ohio and supported Milroy’s enforcement of emancipation in Frederick County, echoed Walls’ observation. He noted in his postwar reminiscences that when a slave departed his master during this period, at least in Winchester, “kindness and indulgence were the rule.”⁸⁵ Kiefer’s observation of “kindness” should come with a caveat, however. Whites understood that if they treated their departing slaves with anything but kindness it could give Milroy necessary leverage to punish the former master.⁸⁶ Additionally, Kiefer wrote his observation nearly forty years after the fact. Like many former Union veterans who engaged in postwar reconciliation through their writings, they did so at the cost of the conflict’s legacy of emancipation by either avoiding discussions of slavery or by bolstering the notion of the happy slave so prevalent in Lost Cause literature.⁸⁷ The reality in 1863 was that although no newly emancipated slaves revolted, they viewed Milroy’s presence as a great opportunity to secure their freedom by leaving the South. Area slaves who remained in the Valley with Milroy’s command as either laborers or spies, realized, as the spring campaign season of 1863 approached, that their freedom became tenuous.

Precursor to Second Battle of Winchester

Following the Army of Northern Virginia’s victory at the Battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863, Gen. Robert E. Lee’s army seized the strategic initiative and launched its second invasion of the north. In Winchester, Milroy received reports that his command would be attacked on June 10, but, the day came

⁸⁴William D. Wintz, ed., *Civil War Memoirs of Two Rebel Sisters* (Charleston, W.Va.: Pictorial Histories, 1989), 34.

⁸⁵Kiefer, *Four Years of Slavery and War*, 1: 318, 320.

⁸⁶For a discussion of Milroy’s policies regarding punishment and exile see Noyalas, *My Will is Absolute Law*, 79-102.

⁸⁷For a discussion of Union soldiers eliminating the emancipationist legacy of the Civil War in postwar writings in favor of reconciliation among veterans of both sides see David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2001), 218-219.

and went without incident. Two days later, however, the information Milroy received compelled him to realize that a Confederate force was approaching—he just did not know in what strength. On the morning of June 12, Milroy sent a small reconnaissance force commanded by Col. John W. Schall—400 hundred men from the 87th Pennsylvania Infantry, approximately 200 men from the 13th Pennsylvania Cavalry, and two cannon from Battery L, 5th U.S. Artillery—to move south on the Valley Pike toward Strasburg.⁸⁸ As Schall's contingent neared Middletown, Confederate cavalry officer Col. Harry Gilmor lay sick in Larrick's Hotel in Middletown.⁸⁹ As Union cavalry from the 13th Pennsylvania rode into Middletown, Gilmor's Maryland troopers maintained "a fire from the cross streets with ... rapidity." Gilmor had been able to escape and lead the troops from the 1st Maryland Cavalry in pursuit of the Union forces north toward Kernstown. The small engagement did not concern Milroy; however, the following three days of fighting against Ewell's corps during the Second Battle of Winchester brought disaster to Milroy's command.⁹⁰

Setting the Stage for the 1864 Campaign Season

From the Second Battle of Winchester through the autumn of 1864, residents in the Middletown area experienced war with an alarming frequency. On April 24, 1864, troops from Maj. Fielding H. Calmese's 23rd Virginia Cavalry fought a brief skirmish with troops from Gen. Max Weber's command.⁹¹ About two weeks later Middletown's residents saw Gen. Franz Sigel's army head south on the Valley Pike. On May 9, as Sigel's troops moved through Middletown they noticed something curious—that Middletown

⁸⁸George R. Prowell, *History of the Eighty-Seventh Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers* (York, Pa.: Press of the York Daily, 1903), 65.

⁸⁹Colonel Harry Gilmor, *Four Years in the Saddle* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1866), 79-82.

⁹⁰For further reading on the Second Battle of Winchester see Charles S. Grunder and Brandon H. Beck, *The Second Battle of Winchester: June 12-15, 1863* (Lynchburg, Va.: H.E. Howard, 1989).

⁹¹*O.R.* Ser. 1, vol. 33, 308-309.

seemed quiet and the Confederate sympathizers in the area, such as the Stickleys who did not fear showing their displeasure to Union occupiers, seemed to withdraw themselves indoors (Insert Image 013N). A soldier in the 18th Connecticut, which had been a part of Milroy's force in 1863, noted "a great change in the deportment of the citizens" as they marched through Middletown. Chaplain William C. Walker of the regiment recalled: "The people who met these soldiers the year before with taunts and threats, were now very quiet and undemonstrative." Additionally, Walker noted that there seemed to be fewer people around—perhaps because of new conscription laws that had gone into effect in the Confederacy or because some had become so fed up with the war that they left and sought refuge on Little North Mountain to the west. "In fact there seemed to be fewer people in all the places which were passed, the men had either been forced into the rebel army or had run away in the mountains," Walker penned, "and the women were not fond of showing themselves to the hated Yankees."⁹²

The presence of Sigel's command in the spring signaled the start of the most active and bloodiest campaign season in the Shenandoah Valley. Over the remainder of the spring and summer, residents of Middletown could not escape the war, regardless of how much they tried to avoid it. They watched as Confederate forces under Gen. Jubal A. Early wrought havoc on Union forces operating in the Shenandoah Valley. Although many of the region's Confederate population reveled in their successes over armies commanded by Gen. David Hunter and Gen. George Crook, the beginning of the end arrived on August 6, 1864, when Gen. Ulysses S. Grant restructured the Union command in the Shenandoah Valley.

For the war's first three years, Union war planners in Washington, D.C. understood the Shenandoah Valley's role as an avenue of invasion and supplier of foodstuffs to the Confederate forces operating in Virginia. However, they believed the Valley's most important role was to act as a buffer between Confederate forces and the capital in Washington, D.C. After Confederate forces under Early defeated the Army of West Virginia at the Second Battle of Kernstown on July 24, followed by Gen. John

⁹²William C. Walker, *History of the Eighteenth Conn. Volunteers in the War for the Union* (Norwich, Conn.: The Committee, 1885), 217.

McCausland's burning of Chambersburg several days later, Grant fumed with indignation. Grant understood that each time Early achieved success, his operations to hammer Lee into submission around Petersburg and subsequently capture Richmond suffered. Incensed by the War Department's use of the Valley as a strategic buffer, he decided to consolidate the Department of the Susquehanna, Middle Department, Department of Washington, and the Department of the West into the Middle Military Division. The new general-in-chief understood that at no point in the war had these four departments cooperated with each other nor were they encouraged to do so by officials in Washington so long as the capital had not been attacked. After the war, Grant observed "It seemed to be the policy of General Halleck and Secretary Stanton, to keep any force sent there in pursuit of the invading army, moving right and left so as to keep between the enemy and our capital; and, generally speaking they pursued this policy until all knowledge of the whereabouts of the enemy was lost."⁹³ Furthermore Grant understood that Union commanders in the Valley had not been the most effective. With all of this in mind, Grant realized that his newly created Middle Military Division needed an aggressive commander.

When Grant met with President Abraham Lincoln and Secretary Stanton to discuss potential candidates to command this new Division he initially suggested Maj. Gen. William B. Franklin, a fellow classmate of Grant's at West Point. Lincoln disapproved of Grant's first choice. A Democrat, Franklin constantly criticized the Lincoln administration and had his reputation tarnished by the debacle of his Left Grand Division at the Battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862. Additionally, Lincoln did not like the choice because Franklin supported former Union General George B. McClellan for president.⁹⁴ Lincoln understood that the campaign in the Valley would contribute to his success or failure at the polls in November. After Franklin, Grant suggested Maj. Gen. George G. Meade, the current commander of the Army of the Potomac. Lincoln also disliked this idea. The President reminded Grant that a number of

⁹³Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant* (New York: Charles L. Webster, 1886),2:316-317.

⁹⁴Mark A. Snell, *From First to Last: The Life of Major General William B. Franklin* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 92, 151, 199.

individuals had pressured him to remove Meade from command. With the election only months away, Lincoln did not want to appear as if he acquiesced to the wishes of a few individuals.⁹⁵ Finally Grant suggested Gen. Philip H. Sheridan. Initially Lincoln appeared comfortable with the decision, but Stanton did not. Although Sheridan had performed well with Grant in the west and as a cavalry commander in the Army of the Potomac, Stanton believed that Sheridan was too young for such an important post, particularly months away from Lincoln's reelection bid. Grant, however, calmed Stanton's fears and Sheridan became the commander of the newly minted Middle Military Division, which would soon become popularly known as the Army of the Shenandoah.

Sheridan's appointment, which came on August 6, 1864, met with mixed reaction among the troops charged with doing what no other Union general had been able to do before—wrest the Shenandoah Valley from a firm Confederate grip. Three days after Sheridan's appointment, Col. Charles Russell Lowell wrote his wife from Harpers Ferry, the launching point for Sheridan's 1864 Shenandoah Campaign: "Everything is in chaos here, but under Sheridan is rapidly assuming shape. It was a lucky inspiration of Grant's or Lincoln's to make a Middle Military Division and put him in command of it."⁹⁶ Some of Sheridan's men seemed inspired by his mere presence and confidence. Gen. Emory Upton explained to his sister that "General Sheridan has the appearance of great nerve ... I am better pleased with his appearance than that of any other commander under whom I have served."⁹⁷ Still not all troops were sold on Sheridan. A New Yorker recalled: "General Sheridan was a man, but little known at this time, and many were the expressions of surprise that an officer of so little distinction should be placed in

⁹⁵Jeffry D. Wert, *The Sword of Lincoln: The Army of the Potomac* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005), 387; A. Wilson Greene, "Union Generalship in the 1864 Valley Campaign" in Gary W. Gallagher, ed., *Struggle for the Shenandoah : Essays on the 1864 Valley Campaign* (Kent, Oh.: Kent State University Press, 1991), 41-43.

⁹⁶Charles Russell Lowell to wife, August 9, 1864, quoted in Edward Waldo Emerson, ed., *Life and Letters of Charles Russell Lowell: Captain, Sixth United States Cavalry, Colonel Second Massachusetts Cavalry, Brigadier-General, United States Volunteers* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 322.

⁹⁷Emory Upton to sister, August 9, 1864, quoted in Peter S. Michie, *The Life and Letters of Emory Upton: Colonel of the Fourth Regiment of Artillery, and Brevet-Major-General, U.S. Army* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1885), 122.

charge of such an immense command.”⁹⁸ Other troops in the Army of the Shenandoah who knew little about Sheridan decided to put their trust in Grant’s judgment. “Of Gen’l. Sheridan we knew very little. His name had been associated with some brilliant cavalry exploits,” recalled a veteran of the 116th New York, “but much regret was manifested that some man better known ... had not been selected. Gen’l. Grant, however, knew better than we the duties to be performed.”⁹⁹ While many passed judgment on Sheridan, some such as the 29th Maine’s William Knowlton decided to wait and see what Sheridan would do on campaign. “General Sheridan has assumed the command of this Department and he has now a very strong force ... what he will do remains to be seen,” Knowlton simply explained to his wife on August 9.¹⁰⁰

Three days after Knowlton wrote to his wife, Middletown’s residents viewed, for the first time, the Army of the Shenandoah, the force that would finally wrest the Valley from Confederate control. On August 12, Sheridan’s army camped along the banks of Cedar Creek while Early’s forces rested about five miles south atop Fisher’s Hill.¹⁰¹ As Sheridan’s Army of the Shenandoah passed through Middletown some noticed how this community had been scarred by war. James Taylor, who served as an artist-correspondent, noted “the scattering of dwellings and fences at the suburbs liberally peppered with Minnie balls.” As he walked the grounds of the Belle Grove mansion he recalled that the “Belle Grove House was seldom without a military tenant nor its ground without an army. Dead to sentiment, ruthless

⁹⁸Harris Beecher, *Record of the 114th Regiment, NYSV* (Norwich, N.Y.: J.F. Hubbard, Jr., 1866), 396.

⁹⁹Orton S. Clark, *The One Hundred and Sixteenth Regiment of New York State Volunteers: Being a Complete History of Its Organization and of its Nearly Three Years of Active Service in the Great Rebellion* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Printing House of Matthews and Warren, 1868), 205.

¹⁰⁰William Knowlton to wife Harriet, August 9, 1864, William Knowlton Papers, Nicholas P. Picerno private collection, Bridgewater, Va.

¹⁰¹Jeffry D. Wert, *From Winchester to Cedar Creek: The Shenandoah Campaign of 1864* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1997), 31.

war had already made a waste of these ornate grounds in which its warrior lord had once taken such pride.”¹⁰²

Sheridan’s army remained for only that night, however, as Sheridan spent the remainder of August and the first half of September maneuvering and skirmishing with Early. Sheridan’s apparent lack of aggressiveness concerned some, but he had been instructed to be pragmatic and know precisely the whereabouts and strength of Early’s army before he struck. “It was Sheridan’s first independent command,” explained a soldier in the 121st New York, “and he was cautioned against attempting any general engagement until his army had become unified in operation, and more developed in morale.”¹⁰³

Finally, on September 19, Sheridan struck and defeated Early at the Third Battle of Winchester. The following day Sheridan’s army pursued Early’s battered Confederates south on the Valley Pike through Middletown and Strasburg to Fisher’s Hill where on September 22 Sheridan’s army again delivered another crushing blow. On September 20 Sheridan and his corps commanders met at Sheridan’s headquarters tent, south of Cedar Creek on the Stickley Farm, where they agreed to use a heavy flanking column to strike Early’s western flank at Fisher’s Hill.¹⁰⁴

Following Sheridan’s victories at Winchester and Fisher’s Hill, the Union forces in the Valley then set to the work of destroying the “Breadbasket of the Confederacy.” Over a period of thirteen days Sheridan’s command began its campaign of destruction known as “The Burning”, in which grain, livestock, barns, and mills were destroyed to prevent their use by the Confederate war effort. By the time Sheridan’s troops reached Strasburg on October 8, they reportedly destroyed approximately 1,200 barns

¹⁰²Dennis E. Frye, Martin F. Graham, and George F. Skoch, eds., *With Sheridan Up the Shenandoah Valley in 1864: Leaves from a Special Artists Sketch Book and Diary* (Dayton, Oh.: Morningside House, 1989), 116, 118.

¹⁰³Isaac O. Best, *History of the 121st New York State Infantry* (Chicago: Jas. H. Smith, 1921), 176.

¹⁰⁴Richard Kleese, *Shenandoah County in the Civil War: The Turbulent Years* (Lynchburg, Va.: H.E. Howard, 1992), 75; For further discussion of the meetings that took place on the Stickley Farm on September 20, 1864, and the subsequent battle of Fisher’s Hill see Jonathan A. Noyalas, “False Gibraltar at Fisher’s Hill” *America’s Civil War* 19 no. 1 (2006): 34-40.

and over 435,000 bushels of wheat, and seized approximately 11,000 head of cattle.¹⁰⁵ Luckily for the residents of Middletown, they did not suffer widespread destruction. Only the Stickley Mills fell victim to Sheridan's torch. Sheridan protected properties north of Cedar Creek as he understood that the buildings and resources would be needed by his army once it established camps along the northern banks of Cedar Creek.¹⁰⁶

Confidence among the Army of the Shenandoah soared by the second week of October as they established a defensive position south of Middletown. "General Sheridan, having burned all the grain and forage in the Upper Shenandoah, had leisurely fallen back far enough to keep his communications safe," recalled a veteran of the 114th New York, "and was establishing a line of defense which should hold the richest and most fertile part of the Valley."¹⁰⁷ In addition to the natural defense of Cedar Creek, the Shenandoah River on the army's eastern flank, along the base of the Massanutten Mountain, Sheridan's troops dug a line of earthworks to make the position "almost impregnable."¹⁰⁸ The troops of Sheridan's command welcomed the monotony of digging earthworks. One soldier recalled that this work provided a "respite from fatiguing marches and terrible battles."¹⁰⁹ A soldier in the 65th New York wrote: "After two weeks of incessant marches and countermarches, up the valley, and then down again, we have come to a halt, and are at present enjoying a much needed rest on the north bank of Cedar Creek."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵Mahon, *The Shenandoah Valley*, 135.

¹⁰⁶Heatwole, *The Burning*, 219. Sheridan considered his work of destruction complete by the time his army reached Strasburg on October 8. Aside from burning the Stickley Mills Sheridan would not give orders to destroy property north of Cedar Creek as those resources were essential to his army's survival.

¹⁰⁷Harris H. Beecher, *Record of the 114th Regiment, N.Y.S.V.: Where it Went, What it Saw, and What it Did* (Norwich, N.Y.: J.F. Hubbard, Jr. 1866), 442.

¹⁰⁸Clark, *The One Hundred and Sixteenth Regiment*, 238.

¹⁰⁹Clark, *The One Hundred and Sixteenth Regiment*, 238.

¹¹⁰Letter of unidentified soldier from 65th New York to *New York Sunday Mercury*, October 18, 1864, quoted in William B. Styple, ed., *Writing and Fighting the Civil War: Solider Correspondence to the New York Sunday Mercury* (Kearny, N.J.: Belle Grove Publishing, 2000), 298.

Conclusion

As Sheridan's army entrenched, confidence spread throughout the Army of the Shenandoah. Col.

Benjamin F. Coates, who commanded a brigade in the VIII Corps, exemplified the assurance that many in the army felt that second week of October: "I do not think another battle will result, I have no fears of their [Confederates] attacking us in our general position as they must know that if they do we will whip them as our position is a very good one."¹¹¹

While confidence reigned among many of Sheridan's troops, Gen. Early his course. His eventual decision to attack the Army of the Shenandoah would impact the civilians in the area as well the armies. Now, the oft-contested community of Middletown would become the epicenter of military activity in the Shenandoah Valley and this border region would emerge as the Valley's most significant battlefield.

¹¹¹Benjamin F. Coates to wife, October 15, 1864, Coates Papers, Rutherford B. Hayes' Presidential Center, Fremont, Oh.

Chapter Five

The Battle of Cedar Creek and Its Consequences

Introduction

Among the thirteen major military engagements fought in the Shenandoah Valley during the Civil War none had greater consequences than the Battle of Cedar Creek, October 19, 1864. Union victory at the battle effectively ended Confederate military operations in the region. Additionally, Union success meant an end to the Valley's role as a diversionary theater of war for the Confederacy. With the Valley's strategic benefits eliminated after Cedar Creek, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and the Army of the Potomac could now focus all attention on the Army of Northern Virginia at Petersburg, which had to be defeated in order to end the conflict in the Union's favor. The victory at Cedar Creek also buoyed President Abraham Lincoln's bid for reelection one month later, and the battle emerged as arguably the defining moment for Union Gen. Philip H. Sheridan's legacy in the popular American consciousness.

This chapter explores numerous aspects of the Battle of Cedar Creek: beginning with the fight at Stickley's Farm on October 13, Gen. Early's decision making leading up to the battle on the 19th, the Confederate night march from Fisher's Hill to the fords along the North Fork of the Shenandoah River, and the battle's pivotal moments, including an analysis of how weather conditions greatly reduced the advantage provided by the area's topography. The chapter also discusses the political consequences of the battle, its impact on area civilians, and its role in helping shape Sheridan's legacy.

The Fight at Stickley's Farm, October 13, 1864

On October 11, 1864, Gen. Jubal Early received startling news that threatened his diversionary operations in the Shenandoah Valley: Gen. Sheridan had ordered Gen. Horatio G. Wright's VI Corps from the

Valley to reinforce Grant at Petersburg. The following day Early marched his command north from the vicinity of Mount Jackson toward Fisher's Hill, hoping that this action would cause Sheridan to suspend Wright's movement. By the following morning the lead elements of Early's army, under command of Gen. John B. Gordon, arrived at Hupp's Hill, just south of Sheridan's camps. Confederate artillery on Hupp's Hill opened fire on the Union regiments camped around Belle Grove. To the Union commanders this bombardment made little sense as they believed that Early's army had been fully defeated. Promptly, Gen's. George Crook and William Emory sent Col. Joseph Thoburn's division out to locate the enemy position and discover their plan.

Thoburn ordered his troops, led by Col. George Wells and Col. Thomas M. Harris, across Cedar Creek. As the two brigades advanced across the creek and the grounds of the Stickley Farm, the Confederates greeted them with heavy fire. "The Rebels concentrated their fire upon this ground as we moved over it," noted a soldier in Wells' brigade, "but the old Regiment had seen too much hot work ... to flinch at such a time."¹ Additionally, Gen. James Conner's brigade from Gen. Joseph Kershaw's division advanced to stymie the Union advance. Despite some eventual artillery support, Thoburn's division quickly realized that they were outmanned and they withdrew.

After an approximately one hour fight on the Stickley Farm, Thoburn's command suffered 209 casualties, with nearly three-fourths of them coming from Col. Wells' brigade. Among those wounded in Wells' command was the brigade's commander (Insert Image 014N). During the withdrawal that occurred in "some disorder", Wells' men tried desperately to remove their commander from the field. The men from his original regiment, the 34th Massachusetts, could not remove him in time and were captured. Gen. Early rode onto the field to the wounded Union officer, asked about the officer's identity. When the Massachusetts men informed him that it was Col. Wells, Early ordered an ambulance to the front, but it was too late. Wells died as his men lifted him into the ambulance. "Thus died our beloved commander, always brave and cool, strict in discipline, and thoughtful for the welfare of his soldiers, and

¹William S. Lincoln, *Life with the Thirty-Fourth Massachusetts Infantry in the War of the Rebellion* (Worcester, Mass.: Press of Noyes, Snow, & Co., 1879), 371-372.

the reputation of the Regiment”, recalled an officer in the 34th.² The day after the fight, veterans of the 34th Massachusetts secured Wells’ body and sent it home for a proper burial.

Although the fight on the 13th was not a major battle, it had profound strategic consequences. It illustrated to Sheridan and his subordinates that Early was not yet ready to capitulate. Confronted with this reality, Sheridan now had no other alternative than to recall the VI Corps. For the moment, Early achieved the continuance of his mission of strategic diversion. Although the fight on October 13 weakened Sheridan’s certainty as to Early’s intentions, careful consideration of Early’s strength and the entrenched position of the Union army led Sheridan to regard Early as little more than a nuisance. Confident in Early’s inability to be aggressive, Sheridan made several decisions that impacted the battle on the 19th. First, Sheridan sent a portion of his cavalry to Front Royal with the idea of sending it on to Charlottesville via Chester Gap in order to disrupt the Virginia Central Railroad. Perhaps more significantly, Sheridan accepted an invitation from Secretary of War Stanton to come to Washington, D.C., to discuss strategic issues. In his absence, Sheridan placed Gen. Wright in temporary command of the Army of the Shenandoah. As Sheridan made his way to the capital he received a dispatch from Wright on the 16th stating that reinforcements from Gen. James Longstreet’s corps were en route to reinforce Early.³ This later proved false. The only reinforcements Early received that fall were troops from Gen. Joseph Kershaw’s division after the Confederate defeat at Fisher’s Hill in late September. Nonetheless, Sheridan could not take the risk; he ordered Union cavalry to cease their movement against the Virginia Central Railroad and return to the army’s camps along Cedar Creek (Insert Image 015N).

While Sheridan reacted to each piece of intelligence with caution, Gen. Early contemplated not only his next military move, but how he would deal with issues of low morale in his army. Early risked

²Lincoln, *Life with the Thirty-Fourth Massachusetts Infantry*, 372-374

³Kershaw’s division, which had been sent to the Valley to reinforce Early in the summer, was sent out of the Valley just prior to the Third Battle of Winchester due to lack of Union inactivity. On September 23, however, Lee redirected Kershaw’s division back to the Valley to reinforce Early’s army so badly bruised after the fight at Winchester and Fisher’s Hill. Mahr, *Battle of Cedar Creek*, 20.

losing his army if they remained idle too long. William Wartmann, a justice from Rockingham County, urged Early to act in order to present the desertion of his men. Wartmann explained to Early that when Valley soldiers discovered the hardships confronted by their families they “*will become uneasy in his place and will weigh the duty he owes his family; and what the promptings of nature would be is not difficult to determine.*”⁴ In addition to the threat of desertion, other troops— in addition to those who called the Valley home—suffered from exhaustion and simply wanted to remain idle in winter camp. A South Carolina officer hoped that Early’s army “would have a long sweet rest ... after two months of incessant marching and fighting.”⁵ Early’s army also confronted starvation. Sheridan’s burning eliminated Early’s capacity to forage and resupply his troops. The 13th Virginia’s Capt. Samuel Buck noted that the Confederate army had little to eat because “every mill had been destroyed and [we had] no way to get flour or meal and no forage for horses.”⁶ Faced with these problems Early decided to attack the Army of the Shenandoah.⁷ After this decision was made, Early now confronted the monumental task of developing a plan to strike an army more than double the size of his, and which was fortified on commanding ground on Cedar Creek’s northern bank. (Insert Image 016N).

Gen. Early Devises a Plan

Gen. Early turned to Gen. Gordon to help develop an attack strategy. On October 17 Early sent Gordon with one brigade to Hupp’s Hill to reconnoiter the Union position. Gordon confirmed the presence of

⁴William Wartmann, quoted in George E. Pond, *The Shenandoah Valley in 1864* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1883), 200.

⁵D. Augustus Dickert, *History of Kershaw’s Brigade, With Complete Roll of Companies, Biographical Sketches, Incidents, Anecdotes, etc.* (Newberry, S.C.: Elbert H. Aull Co., 1899), 443.

⁶Capt. Samuel D. Buck, *With the Old Confeds: Actual Experiences of a Captain in the Line* (Baltimore, Md.: H.E. Houck & Co., 1925), 122. For an additional discussion of issues of starvation in Early’s army see Jeffry D. Wert, *A Brotherhood of Valor: The Common Soldiers of the Stonewall Brigade, C.S.A., and the Iron Brigade, U.S.A.* (New York: Touchstone, 1999), 309-310.

⁷Jubal A. Early, *A Memoir of the Last Year of the War for Independence in the Confederate States of America* (Lynchburg, Va.: Charles W. Button, 1867), 105.

Union earthworks. The existence of strong defenses ruled out a frontal assault. A flank attack now became Early's only alternative, but the question loomed as to which flank was most vulnerable to attack. During the night of October 17, Gen. Gordon, his chief of staff Maj. Robert W. Hunter, Brig. Gen. Clement Evans, and topographical engineer Capt. Jedediah Hotchkiss, climbed Massanutten Mountain to observe the Union position from Signal Knob. All agreed that an attack could be made against the Union left flank.

By the night of October 17, some Federals also realized that their left flank was susceptible. Although the left flank stood on high ground above Cedar Creek and the Valley Pike, the absence of Union cavalry to protect the fords along Cedar Creek, and particularly fords along the North Fork of the Shenandoah River, meant that Confederates had an open avenue into the rear of Sheridan's left flank. Before Sheridan left his army on the 15th, he placed Gen. Merritt's division to protect the left. However, after Wright assumed temporary command he rescinded that order and pulled all of the Union cavalry to the Union right flank—where he believed an attack would come.⁸ Gen. George Crook, whose small corps held the left flank, fully believed that the absence of cavalry on the left invited attack.⁹ Crook's chief of artillery, Capt. Henry DuPont, observed that the left flank "was very inadequately protected."¹⁰ Another Union officer supported Crook's conclusion: "The want of cavalry on the left rendered that flank much exposed, and at the mercy of an enemy who could once place himself in position there across the river and creek."¹¹

⁸Col. Benjamin W. Crowninshield, *The Battle of Cedar Creek, October 19, 1864: A Paper Read Before the Massachusetts Military Historical Society, December 8, 1879* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1879), 12-13. In his paper Crowninshield—who served as Union provost marshal—noted that "The rebel divisions of Gordon, Ramseur, Pegram, and Payne's cavalry were actually formed for the attack in the field next where Merritt's cavalry had been encamped October 14th."

⁹Martin F. Schmitt, ed., *General George Crook: His Autobiography* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946), 132.

¹⁰Henry A. DuPont, *The Campaign of 1864 in the Valley of Virginia and the Expedition to Lynchburg* (New York: National Americana Society, 1925), 152.

¹¹Crowninshield, *The Battle of Cedar Creek*, 13.

On the morning of October 18, Early's division commanders met at his headquarters at Round Hill to discuss the assault plan which included four basic elements. First, the divisions of Gordon, Stephen Ramseur, and Pegram would cross the North Fork of the Shenandoah River to attack Col. Rutherford B. Hayes' division of the VIII Corps. Gordon would cross at McInturff's Ford while Ramseur and Pegram crossed at Bowman's Ford.¹² These deployments would place three Confederate divisions in the rear of the Union left flank, mitigating any advantages of topography. Next, the division of Gen. Joseph Kershaw would cross Cedar Creek at Bowman's Mill Ford to attack Col. Joseph Thoburn's division of Crook's VIII Corps in its entrenched position on high ground north of present day County Route 635 and bent back to the east toward the Valley Pike.¹³ The third element of Early's plan called for Gen. Gabriel Wharton's division to move along the Valley Pike while Gen. William Payne's cavalry attacked Belle Grove to kidnap Gen. Sheridan; Early did not realize that Sheridan was not with the Union army. The final phase of Early's plan involved a ruse on the Union right flank to be created by sending Gen. Thomas Rosser to attack the Federals near Cupp's Ford and lure the Federals into believing that the Union right—as Gen. Wright believed—would be the attack's focal point.¹⁴

As Early made his preparations on the 18th, several Union officers felt increasingly uneasy about the possibility of an enemy assault. Perhaps the most anxious was Gen. William H. Emory, commander of the XIX Corps. On October 17, Emory received a report that several Confederates appeared to be spying on the Union position from Signal Knob. This report proved to be genuine as Gordon, Hunter, Evans, and Hotchkiss had indeed spied on the Union position that evening. Furthermore, on the 18th, Col. Stephen Thomas, one of Emory's brigade commanders, informed Emory that he saw two individuals in

¹²These fords are still accessible today. The general location of McInturff's Ford is marked by the presence of large boulders on the south side of County Route 611, which runs along the Shenandoah. Bowman's Ford is opposite Long Meadow Farm.

¹³This site is also accessible today via County Route 635 and a low water bridge. The property sits within the NPS boundary and is owned by the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation. For a map rendering of the location see Joseph W.A. Whitehorne, *The Battle of Cedar Creek: Self-Guided Tour* (Middletown, Va.: Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation, 2006), 30.

¹⁴McDonald, ed., *Make Me a Map of the Valley*, 238; Whitehorne, *Battle of Cedar Creek*, 32, 34-35.

civilian clothing who appeared to be spying on the Union position from the base of Massanutten Mountain. Probably, the two individuals Thomas observed were Gordon and Hotchkiss. Although those two Confederate officers never mentioned any sort of reconnaissance, at least one source indicates that it did occur.¹⁵

Armed with this information, Gen. Emory appealed to Wright to be proactive and prepare for an attack (Insert Image 019N). Wright listened but he did not seem alarmed. Additionally the army's provost marshal informed Wright that questioning of Confederate soldiers in the days leading up to Cedar Creek revealed that Early planned some movement against the Army of the Shenandoah. Furthermore, thirteen spies employed by the Army of the Shenandoah corroborated the story that Early had something planned. Several officers from the XIX Corps also observed flashing lights from the Confederate signal station atop Signal Knob.¹⁶ Still, Wright maintained the status quo.¹⁷

What caused Wright to discount these reports was the intelligence he received from Col. Thomas M. Harris on the evening of October 18. Harris' brigade, part of the VIII Corps, made a reconnaissance mission toward Fisher's Hill that evening and found Early's camps abandoned. Although Harris observed vacant Confederate camps, they had left to attack the Union army, not to depart the Valley. Emory continued to press Wright and finally Wright acquiesced—by allowing Emory to send a reconnaissance mission early the next morning to find Early and discover his intentions.¹⁸ After receiving Wright's order, Emory ordered three brigades in his second division—those being Brig. Gen. Henry Birge, Col. Edward Molineux, and Col. Daniel Macauley—to be prepared to move out promptly at 5:30 a.m.¹⁹

¹⁵Frye, Graham, and Skoch, eds., *With Sheridan Up the Shenandoah Valley in 1864*, 486; Richard B. Irwin, *History of the Nineteenth Army Corps* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1892), 415-416; George N. Carpenter, *History of the Eighth Regiment, Vermont Volunteers, 1861-1865* (Boston: Press of Deland and Barta, 1886), 207.

¹⁶T. Harry Williams, *Hayes of the 23rd: The Civil War Volunteer Officer* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 287.

¹⁷Crowninshield, *The Battle of Cedar Creek*, 10-11.

¹⁸*O.R.* ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 158.

¹⁹*O.R.* ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 333.

Wright ought not to receive too much credit for ordering out the early morning reconnaissance. His order arguably had little to do with military caution and probably more to do with quieting Emory's annoyance. Supporting the notion that Wright held no anxieties about a Confederate attack on the evening of the 18th (despite the reports he received to the contrary) was his alteration of an order issued by Sheridan before he left for Washington, D.C. Sheridan gave Wright a standing order to have reveille blown at 2:00 a.m. and have the men under arms in case Early decided to launch a surprise attack. After several days of inactivity Wright suspended the order on the night of the 18th.²⁰ A veteran of Emory's corps noted after the war: "Some unusual movement of Rebel troops was observed, but evidently Gen. Wright was not in the slightest degree alarmed."²¹

Near midnight Early's army began its flank march. Secrecy remained a paramount concern for Early. He ordered his men to maintain complete silence as they marched from Fisher's Hill along narrow trails to the base of Massanutten and the river fords. A Louisiana soldier noted that Early placed the army in "light marching order, the men being divested of their canteens and everything that could rattle or make noise so that they could get as near as possible to the enemy."²²

As Early's army made its night march, the majority of Union soldiers—aside from the likes of Emory—held complete confidence that Early would attempt nothing. The 14th New Hampshire's Francis Buffum recalled: "There was perfect confidence that Early had been so gloriously whipped that he would never dare attack the Union force in the Valley." However, many Union soldiers, including Gen. Wright, failed to realize Early's dire situation and they underestimated his tenacity. "But it seems that it was not safe to rely on the timidity of Early," noted a XIX Corps staff officer after the war. "Undismayed by

²⁰Thomas A. Lewis, *The Guns of Cedar Creek* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 134.

²¹Francis H. Buffum, *A Memorial of the Great Rebellion: Being a History of the Fourteenth Regiment New Hampshire Volunteers, Covering Its Three Years of Service, with Original Sketches of Army Life, 1861-1865* (Boston: Franklin Press, Rand, Avery, & Co., 1882), 278.

²²Terry L. Jones, ed., *The Civil War Memoirs of Captain William J. Seymour: Reminiscences of a Louisiana Tiger* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 148.

three severe defeats, or possibly goaded by them to an act of sublime desperation, he planned and performed the most audacious... nocturnal flank movement of the war.”²³

Early Morning Attack

Throughout the night of October 18 and the early hours of the 19th, the pickets of the 5th New York Heavy Artillery, patrolling the Army of the Shenandoah’s left flank, felt uneasy. During the night, troops of Capt. Frederick C. Wilkie’s regiment heard an excessive amount of noise coming from the east. Wilkie reported the noise to Col. Thomas Wildes, his brigade commander. Wildes, however, did not believe that the New Yorkers had any reason for concern. Although Wildes showed no anxiety for the moment, the activity coming in the east caught the attention of another officer in Gen. George Crook’s VIII Corps—the 34th Ohio’s Lt. Col. Luther Furney who served as the VIII Corps’ officer of the day. As Furney investigated he soon discovered the lead regiments of Gen. Early’s attack columns. The Confederates captured Furney and prevented him from sounding the alarm about Early’s attack.²⁴

Around 4:00 a.m. Wilkie’s men learned what Furney already knew when they encountered Confederate cavalry commanded by Brig. Gen. William H. Payne. The Confederate horsemen struck the Federal picket line near Bowman’s Ford, but they were unable to dislodge the Federals from their post. The exchange of fire between Wilkie’s command and Payne’s cavalry lasted a brief moment.²⁵ The sharp report of small arms fire rolled into Col. Thoburn’s camp and now Col. Wildes realized that the activity reported to him earlier was not Union cavalry, but the enemy. In preparation for an attack Wildes ordered

²³John DeForrest, “Sheridan’s Victory of Middletown” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, December, 1864, to May, 1865 (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1865), 353.

²⁴Wert, *From Winchester to Cedar Creek*, 178; *O.R.* ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 382.

²⁵*O.R.* ser. 1, vol. 32, pt. 1, 382.

veille and his men to take position behind their earthwork fortifications.²⁶ Wildes' efforts to organize his defense proved too little to late.

Simultaneous with the initial Confederate cavalry foray against the Union left flank, Brig. Gen. Thomas Rosser's troopers assaulted the Army of the Shenandoah's extreme right flank near Cupp's Mill.²⁷ Early intended for Rosser's command to distract attention away from the attack against the Union left. Rosser's men met stiff resistance from the 7th Michigan Cavalry, who soon received reinforcements from other units in their brigade commanded by Col. James Kidd. As Kidd's command prepared for their attack on Rosser, reinforcements from Brig. Gen. George Custer's division and Col. Charles Russell Lowell's brigade arrived. Confronted with overwhelming numbers, Rosser had no alternative but to withdraw.²⁸

Within an hour of the initial Confederate cavalry probes against each flank of the Army of the Shenandoah, Gen. Joseph Kershaw's infantry division crossed Bowman's Mill Ford and smashed into Thoburn's troops. Kershaw's men fell upon Wilkie's New Yorkers so quickly that they had no time to react; only forty of them avoided capture. The New Yorkers were "unable to check in the slightest degree the advance of the enemy," noted Wilkie in his report of the battle (Insert Image 020N).²⁹

Despite the ease with which the New York pickets were pushed aside, a number of Kershaw's men wondered how they would break Thoburn's main position. Thoburn's camp and defenses towered above the Valley floor and provided, at least on a clear day, a commanding view of the Valley Pike as well as the land in front of Cedar Creek. Viewing the apparently strong position, one of Kershaw's soldiers believed that it was "the most completely fortified position by nature, as well as by hand, of any

²⁶*O.R.* ser. 1, vol. 32, pt. 1, 379.

²⁷This area does not sit within the NPS boundary. See map in Whitehorne, *Battle of Cedar Creek*, 25.

²⁸*O.R.* ser. 1, vol. 32, pt. 1, 522; Carol Bundy, *The Nature of Sacrifice: A Biography of Charles Russell Lowell, Jr., 1845-1864* (New York: Farar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005), 458; Theodore C. Mahr, *The Battle of Cedar Creek: Showdown in the Shenandoah, October 1-30, 1864* (Lynchburg, Va.: H.E. Howard, 1992), 105.

²⁹*O.R.*, ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 591.

line occupied during the war.”³⁰ A Georgian in the division noted: “The works were of a formidable character, with a strong abatis covering most of the front.”³¹ Although Confederate attackers might have initially viewed Thoburn’s position as strong, the only way that the full potential of its strength could be realized was if enough troops manned the line. Despite Wildes’ order to blow reveille after the initial strike from Payne, the troops did not react quickly enough. Many of Kershaw’s men noted that as they closed in they could see “half-dressed” soldiers in position.³² The Federal soldiers who made it into line did all they could to slow the Confederate onslaught and delivered, according to one of Kershaw’s men, a “galling” fire of musketry.³³ A soldier in the 12th Georgia, writing of the fire from Thoburn’s command noted that: “[they] opened fire on us from behind the breast-work, which made a solid sheet of fire in our front. That really done us more damage than all the balance of the days fighting.”³⁴ Although the Union volleys might have stymied some of the Confederates for a moment, they rushed forward “with one impulse” and “scattered them [Thoburn’s division] like chaff before the wind.”³⁵

As the Federal troops evacuated their position, Union artillery on the extreme left flank of Thoburn’s earthworks attempted to slow the enemy onslaught. 1st Lt. William Munk’s Battery D, 1st Pennsylvania Reserve Artillery, unleashed canister on the Confederate attackers. Under normal circumstances Munk’s artillery would have commanded the ground to its front and been able to obliterate Kershaw’s division, but, the element of surprise, the speed of the Confederate advance, and the morning fog, eliminated any advantages provided by topography. According to Munk, his gunners were only able

³⁰Dickert, *History of Kershaw’s Brigade*, 446.

³¹*O.R.*, ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 591.

³²Dickert, *History of Kershaw’s Brigade*, 448.

³³Dickert, *History of Kershaw’s Brigade*, 448.

³⁴B.F. Cobb, unpublished postwar reminiscence about the Battle of Cedar Creek, July 15, 1907, Thomas Cobb private collection, Elk Grove, Calif. The area of Thoburn’s camp and defenses does sit within the NPS boundary and is protected by the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation.

³⁵B.F. Cobb, unpublished postwar reminiscence about the Battle of Cedar Creek, July 15, 1907, Thomas Cobb private collection, Elk Grove, Calif.

to fire fifteen rounds on Kershaw's troops before the Confederates overtook their position and captured six of his cannons.³⁶ Kershaw's men quickly turned the seized guns on the retreating Union soldiers.³⁷

Four hundred yards west of Munk's position rested 1st Lt. Henry Brewerton's Battery B, 5th U.S. Artillery which in the days before the battle was placed to protect the bridge over the Valley Pike. Brewerton, too, tried to slow Kershaw's advance but the fog stood so thick in front of Brewerton's artillery that his men could not discern who was friend or foe. Again, the circumstances of weather eliminated the advantages provided by topography. Capt. Henry DuPont, who commanded Crook's artillery, simply directed Brewerton to fire in the direction of the attack. These efforts proved futile as well, as Confederates quickly swarmed around Brewerton's cannons. Remarkably, however, Brewerton's battery fared better as it lost only one cannon.³⁸

During the fifteen minutes that it took for the Confederate attack to push the Federals from their position, Thoburn's division suffered nearly 600 casualties. Approximately fifty years after the battle a northerner writer, Clifton Johnson, visited the Shenandoah Valley and interviewed some local residents who experienced the Battle of Cedar Creek. In one oral history interview, Johnson spoke with an unidentified male, a young boy at the time of the battle, who went into Thoburn's camps after the successful attack. He recalled: "Men had run out of their bunks who didn't get their guns at all, and we saw some soldiers in the tents who had been shot there...Behind the breastworks the dead and wounded were layin' five deep."³⁹

Defense of Col. Rutherford B. Hayes and Col. J. Howard Kitching's Divisions

³⁶*O.R.*, ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 418-419.

³⁷Cobb, unpublished postwar reminiscence about the Battle of Cedar Creek, July 15, 1907, Thomas Cobb private collection, Elk Grove, Calif.

³⁸*O.R.*, ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 419-421.

³⁹Johnson, *Battleground Adventures*, 403-404.

With Thoburn's division routed, Col. Rutherford B. Hayes' division stood next in line to meet the assault. The sound of battle alerted Hayes to the coming attack and he immediately prepared his men (Insert Image 021N). Hayes formed his division of approximately 2,400 men a little less than one mile north of Thoburn's position, on the east side of the Valley Pike. Generally, Hayes' position stood on high ground east of present day Route 11, on both sides of Water Plant Rd.⁴⁰ Hayes ordered his men to lie down, partly for protection but also to improve his soldiers' vision. The fog that shrouded the battlefield did not meet the ground, thus providing a window for Hayes' division to at least see the legs of the attacking Confederate soldiers.⁴¹ Col. Hayes sent two companies from the 36th Ohio forward as skirmishers to meet the Confederate advance. As the pickets moved forward they were immediately greeted with enemy fire.⁴²

As Hayes' pickets engaged troops from Gordon's division Col. J. Howard Kitching's provisional division established its line on Hayes' left flank. Because he knew little of Kitching's ability, Hayes rode to the twenty-five year old colonel from New York to see if the provisional division—comprised of the 6th New York Heavy Artillery and a miscellaneous conglomeration of other Federal units—would be able to hold its position. When Hayes approached Kitching he inquired: "Can you hold on here?" Without hesitation Kitching replied: "Oh, yes...I shall have no trouble." The nature of the ridge upon which Kitching's command stood probably contributed to his confidence.⁴³ The advantage of high ground,

⁴⁰Hayes' camps also stood in this area, essentially from the ridge, back west toward the Valley Pike. The land on the south side of Water Plant Road is protected by the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation. The land on the north side is not presently protected.

⁴¹Charles Carleton Coffin, *Freedom Triumphant: The Fourth Period of the War of the Rebellion, From September, 1864, to its Close* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1890), 52.

⁴²*O.R.*, ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 406.

⁴³It is impossible to pinpoint the exact location of Kitching's provisional division. However, Kitching formed on Hayes' left and extended the Federal line north toward Middletown. Based on the deployments and various maps, including the one presented in Whitehorne, *Battle of Cedar Creek*, p. 37 Kitching's camps and defensive line stood in the vicinity of where the 8th Vermont monument (Thomas' brigade) currently stands.

however, as had been the case with Thoburn's position, was eliminated due to the dense fog that cloaked the battlefield.

By the time Hayes returned to his line he began to see his main line crack under the pressure from Gordon's division. The Confederate attack column approached Hayes' and Kitching's positions obliquely in a northeasterly line, with Gordon's division at the base, causing Confederate deployment to encounter Hayes first. Hayes explained of the sight of his men breaking, "Naturally I was somewhat surprised and I galloped down to see what was going on." As Hayes "galloped" along his line into a ravine between the ridge and the Valley Pike, a Confederate bullet struck his horse and it "rolled over ... dead." Col. Hayes fell violently to the ground and injured his right ankle. Hayes lay on the ground somewhat "bewildered" after having suffered "a sort of fainting spell," but he escaped capture.⁴⁴

Confusion dominated this portion of the field. As Hayes' line broke from the weight of Gordon's three brigades, fugitives from Thoburn's streaming to the rear made it impossible to maintain any semblance of order. Col. Kitching's division fared no better. Troops from Gen. Ramseur's division struck Kitching's division in the front as well as on its left flank. Ramseur deployed Gen. Cullen Battle's brigade to sweep around Kitching's left. Additionally, three Virginia cavalry regiments from Gen. William Payne's brigade swept around Kitching's left in an effort to cut the Federals off from Middletown and the Valley Pike.⁴⁵

Again, as had been the case with Thoburn's division, artillery moved forward to support the infantry, but with little accomplishment. One cannon from Capt. Frank Gibbs, Battery L, 1st Ohio Light Artillery, took position behind the center of Kitching's command, while his three other guns unlimbered to the left and rear of Kitching's troops. However, the inability of the Union line to slow the Confederate advance diminished the artillery's ability. "I opened with case shot, and soon the enemy advanced on the charge, when I ordered canister," recalled Capt. Gibbs, "but my supports gave away without any

⁴⁴Hayes, "Incidents at the Battle of Cedar Creek", 239.

⁴⁵Mahr, *The Battle of Cedar Creek*, 131.

resistance to the advance of the enemy, I immediately limbered up and got away just in time to save capture.”⁴⁶

As the Confederate line surged forward , Col. Kitching refused to let Gibbs’ artillery fall into enemy hands. The color bearers of the 6th New York Heavy Artillery—Kitching’s original unit—stood firm to rally the division. The 6th New York’s Maj. Edward Jones stood by Kitching in his attempt to rally the men. A Confederate bullet mortally wounded Jones. Kitching, fully understanding the affection the New Yorkers held for Maj. Jones, used his wounding to rally his division. “Stop men,” Kitching ordered. “You will not let Jones be made a prisoner.”⁴⁷ The New Yorkers rallied around Kitching so that Jones could be removed from the field and Gibbs’ guns withdrawn.

While the provisional division retreated north, Kitching encountered one of the 6th New York’s color sergeant’s who suffered a mortal wound in his attempt to rally the New Yorkers. The sergeant looked up at Kitching and told him: “Colonel, I did the best I could.” As Kitching rode from his line he sought out Gen. Wright. The temporary army commander informed him to “rally the troops wherever he should find them.” Kitching accepted his charge. His efforts proved difficult, however, as troops from Early’s divisions swarmed over the fields. Amid the tumult a Confederate bullet “crashed through his foot.” Although bleeding profusely, Kitching refused to quit his duties. He remained on the field until the late morning when loss of blood compelled him to relinquish command. Doctors eventually amputated his foot and complications from that operation caused his untimely death on January 10, 1865.⁴⁸

Although Kershaw and Gordon drove Crook’s entire corps, within thirty minutes many of Crook’s officers and enlisted men attempted to rally and slow the enemy onslaught. Col. Thoburn tried to organize his scattered division and was mortally wounded in the process (Insert Image 022N). While

⁴⁶*O.R.*, ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 417.

⁴⁷Irving, “*More than Conqueror*,” 199-200.

⁴⁸Irving, “*More than Conqueror*,” 200-201, 238.

Thoburn hollered orders to his soldiers on Church Street in Middletown, Confederate cavalryman dressed in Union overcoats got close to Thoburn “without exciting his suspicions” and shot him in the back.⁴⁹ Thoburn died later that evening. “No nobler man died that day than Colonel Thoburn,” recalled the regimental historian of the 1st West Virginia Infantry.⁵⁰ A West Virginia newspaper editor lamented that, “There West Virginia lost a gallant soldier, one she could well boast of as a chivalrous and efficient officer, a gentleman of the highest order.”⁵¹

Col. Wildes successfully rallied the 116th and 123rd Ohio and, upon orders from both Gen. Wright and Gen. Emory, charged into the ravine on the east side of the Valley Pike, south of present-day Water Plant Road on property owned by the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation.⁵² Wright, who helped command the attack, received a bullet wound to his chin. (Insert Image 023N). The Ohioans charged through the ravine and got as far as the first ridge to their front when they encountered terrific fire from the Georgians of Col. James P. Simms’ brigade as well as four Mississippi regiments commanded by Lt. Col. John Sims.⁵³ The Georgians and Missippians, recalled a veteran of the 116th Ohio, delivered “a terrible fire and counter charge ... which swept us back again to the pike.”⁵⁴

The Stand of the XIX Corps

⁴⁹*O.R.*, ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 374; Frye, Graham, and Skoch, eds., *With Sheridan Up the Shenandoah Valley in 1864*, 488.

⁵⁰C.J. Rawling, *History of the First Regiment West Virginia Infantry* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1887), 213.

⁵¹*Wheeling Register*, Nov. 17, 1877.

⁵²For a detailed sketch map of troop positions and Federal camps for this portion of the fight see Frye, Graham and Skoch, eds., *With Sheridan up the Shenandoah Valley in 1864*, 489.

⁵³Mahr, *The Battle of Cedar Creek*, 134.

⁵⁴Gerlad L. Earley, *I Belonged to the 116th: A Narrative of the 116th Ohio Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War* (Westminster, Md.: Heritage Books, 2007), 175; Thomas F. Wildes, *Record of the One Hundred and Sixteenth Ohio Infantry Volunteers in the War of the Rebellion* (Sandusky, Oh.: I.F. Mack, and Bros., Printers, 1884), 205.

With Crook's command broken, the burden of slowing Early's assault now fell upon Emory's shoulders. The first soldiers from Emory's command to encounter the Confederate assault were troops from the 128th New York. These soldiers manned what they called the "Stonewall Post" along Cedar Creek west of the Valley Pike in the vicinity of the Stickley Farm.⁵⁵ "A sheet of fire burst forth, followed by the rattle of musketry and the shouts of the combatants," recalled a member of the regiment.⁵⁶ The opening salvo that greeted the New Yorkers was delivered by troops from Gen. Gabriel Wharton's division. Wharton's men closed to within thirty yards of the pickets at the intersection of Cedar Creek and the Valley Pike and hollered: 'Throw down your arms, you d[amned] Yanks.' Instead of surrendering, the 128th took aim, fired three volleys into Wharton's men and then pulled back to the main XIX Corps' line. As the New Yorkers pulled out of their Stonewall post, Wharton's men rushed at them and captured approximately twenty Federals.⁵⁷

Emory's main line now braced for the attack. Emory's corps, unlike Crook's, were in a better position to slow Early's assault, as Gen. Cuvier Grover's division had been awake since 3:00 a.m. in preparation for its morning reconnaissance. When the battle's initial shots rang out, the men in Grover's division did not panic. Perhaps the troops most prepared for the morning attack in Grover's division came from Col. Edward Molineux's brigade. Molineux ordered his men to pack up their tents and prepare for an attack even before the first shots of battle pierced the morning air (Insert Image 024N). When Molineux heard the initial shots he immediately moved his men from their camps, which sat on the open ground just north of the XIX Corps' trenches, into the earthworks.⁵⁸

⁵⁵D.H. Hanaburgh, *History of the One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Regiment, New York Volunteers (U.S. Infantry) in the Late Civil War* (Pookepsie, N.Y.: Press of Enterprise Publishing Co., 1894), 164.

⁵⁶Hanaburgh, *History of the One Hundred Twenty-Eighth Regiment*, 164.

⁵⁷Whitehorne, *The Battle of Cedar Creek*, 36.

⁵⁸*O.R.*, ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 333.

Although Emory's men might have been in a better situation than Crook's, the XIX Corps' commander fully understood that Early's assault against the Union left was occurring with tremendous speed and power. Emory never intended to whip Early from his trenches, which ran obliquely to the northwest from the Valley Pike toward Belle Grove for approximately three-fourths of a mile. However, Emory did hope to delay the Confederate assault long enough for the remainder of the Army of the Shenandoah to prepare a proper defense, and for hundreds of Union supply wagons parked on the ground between Belle Grove and the Valley Pike to withdraw to the north safely.

To achieve his objective, Emory first turned to Col. Stephen Thomas' brigade—the 12th Connecticut, 47th Pennsylvania, 160th New York, and 8th Vermont. Emory ordered Thomas to move his regiments from the XIX Corps' trench line to a wooded ridge on the east side of the Valley Pike.⁵⁹ Thomas, a native Vermonter with a reputation as a hard-nosed fighter, obeyed the orders and moved his men into position, fully understanding that this one brigade needed to delay as long as possible (Insert Image 025N). Thomas' brigade marched to that ridge, fully understanding their fate. As the regiments moved quickly into line, Confederate musket fire fell upon them from every direction. "As the great drops of rain and hail precede the hurricane, so now the leaden hail filled the air, seemingly from all directions," remembered a survivor from the 8th Vermont. Confederates also fired on the ridge with cannon placed on another ridge opposite the Federal line.⁶⁰

The shock of the Confederate assault fragmented the brigade line. The 47th Pennsylvania, which stood on the right end of Thomas' line, experienced the Confederate attack first as seven Georgia regiments commanded by Col. Edmund Atkinson smashed into it. The regiments to the left of the Pennsylvanians met a similar fate as the Louisiana Brigade under Col. William Peck and Gen. William Terry's brigade hit the Federal front. The situation worsened for Thomas' men

⁵⁹This wooded ridge can be identified today by the location of the 8th Vermont Monument which sits on private property owned by Mr. Don Ratcliff. This monument marked the northern portion of Thomas' line. Other regiments would have filed in to the monument's right.

⁶⁰ Carpenter, *History of the Eighth Regiment Vermont Volunteers*, 215, 218.

when Gen. Bryan Grimes' brigade from Ramseur's division attacked the left flank of Thomas' brigade held by the 8th Vermont.⁶¹ Cohesion in the brigade disappeared quickly. Confederate soldiers swarmed around the colors of the 8th Vermont and demanded their surrender, but the Vermonters refused. "Amid tremendous excitement, commenced one of the most desperate and ugly hand-to-hand conflicts over flags that has ever been recorded," recalled a Vermonter, "Men seemed more like demons than human beings, as they struck fiercely at each other with clubbed muskets and bayonets." Fighting around the flags intensified with each passing moment (Insert Image 026N).

Casualties mounted and after approximately thirty minutes Thomas realized that his broken regiments could no longer hold their position. Thomas ordered his men to withdraw.⁶² The thirty-minute delay slowed the enemy advance, but it came at a high cost to soldiers in Thomas' command. In the 8th Vermont alone, 106 men of the 159 engaged were casualties, including thirteen of the regiment's sixteen field officers.⁶³

Thomas' conduct on that ridge earned him praise from foes as well as friends. In 1886 Jedediah Hotchkiss corresponded with the 8th Vermont's regimental historian, George Carpenter, and explained how awestruck he was that morning as he observed Thomas' brigade stand firm while confronted with seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Hotchkiss noted that, "Gen. Thomas's command must have been under most admirable discipline to have been able to rally and form, under such circumstances. Such a display of heroic fortitude by the men and by the leader of your command is worthy of the highest praise and admiration."⁶⁴

⁶¹Mahr, *The Battle of Cedar Creek*, 142-146, 154.

⁶²Carpenter, *History of the Eighth Regiment Vermont Volunteers*, 218; *O.R.*, ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 133.

⁶³Carpenter, *History of the Eighth Regiment Vermont Volunteers*, 210.

⁶⁴Hotchkiss to Carpenter, quoted in Carpenter, *History of the Eighth Regiment Vermont Volunteers*, 212.

As Thomas' men struggled east of the Valley Pike, west of it Gen's. Wright and Emory met to determine how best to block the enemy's advance. Wright suggested that Emory merely hurl more troops across the Pike. Emory, however, believed that his men could best defend the position from the XIX Corps' trenches.⁶⁵ Shortly after Emory ordered his men to remain in their trenches, they started to take fire from the rear. What none of the Federal commanders realized that morning was that the Confederate line extended so far to the right that troops from Gen. Gordon's division actually fired into the back of Emory's troops. Quickly, Emory ordered his men to reverse the trenches to meet the fire from Gordon's division (Insert Image 027N).⁶⁶

Emory also had to contend with Kershaw's brigades pounding the Union left flank. To protect that flank, Emory directed the 156th and 176th New York from Col. Daniel Macauley's brigade, along with Col. David Shunk's brigade, to move out of the trenches and form a line perpendicular to the main line and parallel with the Valley Pike. One officer recalled that as Emory's troops realigned themselves on the outer part of the earthworks "a shallow, dry ditch, on the outside of a trivial redoubt constituted the final hold of the Nineteenth Corps on its fortified camp. It was in the case of a man who has been pushed out of a window, and who desperately clings to the sill with the end of his fingers."⁶⁷

Macauley's and Shunk's troops came under fire almost immediately after they established their new line. Macauley's brigade had to withstand the full weight of Kershaw's division, while Shunk's men defended against troops from Gordon's division.⁶⁸ Officers were inclined to order their commands to open fire but a heavy fog caused uncertainty. While Macauley's and Shunk's troops wanted to defend the position, they did not want to fire blindly

⁶⁵O.R., ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 284.

⁶⁶Clark, *The One Hundred and Sixteenth Regiment*, 240.

⁶⁷Croushore, ed., *A Volunteer's Adventures*, 215.

⁶⁸Whitehorne, *Battle of Cedar Creek*, 16; Mahr, *The Battle of Cedar Creek*, 154-158; Wert, *From Winchester to Cedar Creek*, 192.

and mistakenly shoot the fleeing soldiers from Crook's command or troops from Thomas' brigade.⁶⁹

When the main line of the XIX Corps engaged Kershaw's and Gordon's divisions, Gen. Wright ordered Emory to withdraw (Insert Images 028N, 029N and 061N). Emory intentionally stalled, reasoning that if he pulled his men out of line at first contact it would be demoralizing to them, and also increase the likelihood that they would be captured by the enemy. A staff officer noted that Emory refused the order so that his command could "get out of our trap without being closely followed and quite routed."⁷⁰ As Kershaw's division moved closer, the fighting became intense and hand-to-hand combat ensued. The fighting around the 156th and 176th New York's regimental standards became particularly intense. According to Col. Neafie, Confederate soldiers grabbed the flag staffs and saved the banners only by tearing them from their poles.⁷¹ Efforts to resist Kershaw and Gordon proved futile. By 7:30 a.m. Emory ordered a withdrawal.

Defense around Belle Grove

As Emory pulled his men out of line, both he and Gen. Crook attempted to reorganize their fragments around Belle Grove to allow Union wagon trains additional time to evacuate (Insert Image 030N). With Kershaw's and Gordon's divisions close on their heels, however, Emory understood that he needed a delaying action to allow the scattered commands of the VIII and XIX Corps to form. To perform this suicidal mission, Emory turned to troops from Col. Edwin Davis' Brigade—the only portion of the XIX Corps that had not yet been engaged in the battle. Davis' command protected the XIX Corps' right flank,

⁶⁹*O.R.*, ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 347-348.

⁷⁰Croushore, ed., *A Volunteer's Adventures*, 215.

⁷¹*O.R.*, ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 342.

which ended where Cedar Creek and Meadow Brook joined.⁷² Emory ordered two of Davis' regiments—the 114th New York and 30th Massachusetts—from their position across Meadow Brook to form on a knoll in the fields just southwest of the Belle Grove mansion.⁷³ As the veterans of these two regiments took position, their officers noted that an uneasiness permeated the ranks. Capt. Charles Fitts, noted: “The men who were now beneath my eyes were veterans, tried in half-a-dozen engagements, but I noticed that their hands clutched their muskets nervously, and their teeth were set hard together, as they tried to peer through that impenetrable curtain of fog.”⁷⁴

From their position in front of Belle Grove, the New York and Massachusetts troops suffered the effects of Kershaw's and Gordon's fire but could not discern the enemy. “Shells and bullets were banging and humming about their ears,” noted the assistant surgeon of the 114th New York, Harris Beecher, “but they could not discern any rebels, by reason of the density of the fog.”⁷⁵ Remarkably, the two regiments from Davis' brigade did not break under the opening Confederate salvo. When the Confederates did finally come into view, the two regiments unleashed a “withering volley” that caused the Confederates to momentarily “stagger.”⁷⁶ In an effort to maintain a continuous fire on the enemy, the New Yorkers fired by file. Regardless of their heroism, the weight of the enemy onslaught became too much to endure and the two regiments from Davis' brigade retired back across Meadow Brook. At one point, the two regiments found themselves taking fire from front, rear, and both flanks.⁷⁷

⁷²Mahr, *Battle of Cedar Creek*, 164.

⁷³Mahr, *Battle of Cedar Creek*, 157. Mahr identifies this position in the photograph that appears on the noted page. The knoll is on the south side of the road to Belle Grove, almost opposite the Overseer's House.

⁷⁴Charles Fitts, “In the Ranks at Cedar Creek” in *The Galaxy: An Illustrated Magazine of Entertaining Reading* (New York: W.C. and F.P. Church, 1866), 1: 538.

⁷⁵Beecher, *Record of the 114th Regiment, N.Y.S.V.*, 445-446.

⁷⁶Beecher, *Record of the 114th Regiment, N.Y.S.V.*, 446.

⁷⁷Pellet, *History of the 114th Regiment*, 269.

The New York and Massachusetts troops allowed Emory and Crook to establish an approximately thirty-minute defense around army headquarters. The fighting here and the task of extricating the supplies proved difficult, but significant. Every available man—from soldiers in the ranks to officers—shouldered muskets and did all they could to slow the Confederate attack. Col. Wildes recalled: “A great many line and staff officers took muskets, and lay down in the ranks of the men, while all mounted officers used their holster revolvers. The position was held for over half an hour.”⁷⁸ According to most accounts, the Union defense around Belle Grove allowed all but five wagons to escape from the field.

In addition to the confusion of battle, the presence of approximately 300 Confederate prisoners of war temporarily confined in a makeshift structure near Belle Grove further exacerbated the situation for the Federals. Capt. Benjamin Crowninshield, the army’s provost marshal, worried that these Confederates would become caught in a cross fire. Despite the wounding of some of these prisoners, the 26th Massachusetts Infantry Battalion safely moved the Confederates from the field.⁷⁹

The occupants of Belle Grove—the Cooley family—also found themselves caught in the middle of this terrible fight. They took cover in the buildings and hoped to survive. Capt. Crowninshield sympathized with the Cooleys and noted that: “The poor woman and children who occupied this house remained shut up in it all day, cowering below the level of the windows for safety.”⁸⁰

During the delaying action around Belle Grove, Gen. Wright sent orders to the only infantry corps not yet engaged—the VI Corps—to combat Early’s assault. As veterans of the Army of the Potomac, the VI Corps has been regarded by some as the best troops in the Army of the Shenandoah.

⁷⁸Wildes, *Record of the One Hundred Sixteenth Ohio*, 207.

⁷⁹Benjamin W. Crowninshield, *The Battle of Cedar Creek: October 19, 1864, A Paper Read Before the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, December 8, 1879* (Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1879), 21-22.

⁸⁰Crowninshield, *The Battle of Cedar Creek*, 21-22.

“The hope of the nation now rested with those heroes of many battlefields...the wearers of the Greek cross,” recalled a surgeon in the VI Corps.”⁸¹

The Defense of Meadow Brook

As the VI Corps’ veterans readied themselves in their camps north of Meadow Brook, Emory gathered what elements of his corps he could and established them in a defensive position on high ground opposite Meadow Brook.⁸² Emory already had two regiments from his corps (not yet engaged in the battle) on the northern banks of Meadow Brook, the 29th Maine and 90th New York. After firing into the advancing troops from Kershaw’s division in order to provide cover for retreating Federals, the regiments pulled back to the vicinity of the home of Dr. Shipley—an area known locally as Red Hill. Once again the Federals tried to utilize the high ground in an effort to slow the Confederate attack. As the 29th Maine and 90th New York withdrew closer to the Shipley house, troops from Kershaw’s division fired into their rear and flanks. Perhaps the 29th Maine suffered the most of these two regiments as they had to contend not only with enemy fire but friendly fire as well. The 90th New York contained two companies of new recruits who, at least according to the 29th Maine’s Maj. John Mead Gould, fired into the regiment’s rear when it halted briefly to deliver volleys into the pursuing enemy (Insert Image 031N).⁸³ Despite the issue of friendly fire, these two regiments from Davis’ brigade now became a cornerstone upon which the defensive line north of Meadow Brook could form.⁸⁴

⁸¹Stevens quoted in Penrose G. Mark, *Red: White: and Blue Badge: Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteers, A History of the 93rd Regiment, Known as the “Lebanon Infantry” and “One of the 300 Fighting Regiments” from September 12th 1861 to June 27th 1865* (Harrisburg, Pa.: The Aughinbaugh Press, 1911), 301.

⁸²The location of the VI Corps’ camps north of Meadow Brook can only be estimated as much of this property does not sit within the NPS boundary and is on land owned by the Carmeuse Quarry.

⁸³John M. Gould, *History of the First-Tenth-Twenty-ninth Maine Regiment* (Portland, Me.: Stephen Berry, 1871), 531.

Troops from Davis' brigade and Gen. Henry Birge's brigade readied themselves for the attack. The XIX Corps' veterans fired at least five volleys into Kershaw's troops, when skirmishers from Davis' brigade announced an attempt by Kershaw to flank the Union right held by the 29th Maine. The 29th Maine's Maj. George Nye refused to dismount his horse, despite the heavy small arms fire,. He paid dearly for this decision (Insert Image 032N). As he attempted to inspire his men, a Confederate bullet smashed into his teeth and knocked him from his horse.⁸⁵ During the fight some soldiers in Davis' command noted several odd attempts by Confederate soldiers to break the Union right flank. Gould recalled of one of the more humorous spectacles: "There was one poor drunken fellow who charged out alone, solemnly and grandly. He had on his head about a dozen yankee caps, and was perhaps in search of the thirteenth, but he dropped."⁸⁶

While Emory's corps held the Union right on Red Hill, the two VI Corps divisions ordered by Gen. Wright to move into position—Brig. Gen. Frank Wheaton's First Division and Col. Joseph Warren Keifer's Third Division—established their line.⁸⁷ Wright ordered each division commander to initially send only one brigade from each division across Meadow Brook toward Belle Grove in order to test the Confederate advance. Keifer sent Col. William H. Ball's brigade across Meadow Brook. As the regiments moved forward, they became disorganized as troops from the XIX Corps headed toward the rear.⁸⁸ Col. William H. Penrose's brigade, from Wheaton's division, endured a similar experience.

⁸⁴Mahr, *Battle of Cedar Creek*, 168-169. Today, the area around the home of Dr. Shipley and Red Hill has been destroyed by the operations of the Carmeuse Quarry. Although there is no substantial evidence to corroborate this it is believed that an old structure which predates the Civil War and sits on the headquarters of the quarry operation is part of the Shipley home.

⁸⁵Gould, *First, Tenth, Twenty-ninth Maine Regiment*, 534.

⁸⁶Gould, *First, Tenth, Twenty-ninth Maine Regiment*, 534.

⁸⁷This portion of the battle, because of quarry operations as well as existing homes, is difficult to interpret. The best location to understand this portion of the battle as well as the role of the landscape is to view it from Meadow Mills Church located at the intersection County Routes 727 and 624. This location is identified as stop 7 in Whitehorne, *Battle of Cedar Creek*, 41.

⁸⁸Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 2: 133.

Without orders from their division commanders, both brigades withdrew to the northern side of Meadow Brook and prepared to meet Early's troops.

Keifer and Wheaton placed their troops on the high ground overlooking Meadow Brook, on the left flank of the remnants of the XIX Corps organized by Emory (Insert Image 033N). The chaos of battle, however, did not allow Keifer and Wheaton to form one continuous line of battle. Essentially, each division essentially fought its own separate battle.⁸⁹

As troops from Kershaw's division neared Keifer's troops, Keifer ordered a bayonet charge. The men surged forward and, in Keifer's words, "the enemy was driven to the east. Initially, the shock of Keifer's charge stunned the Confederates. Keifer believed that his bold maneuver actually assured "complete success."⁹⁰ Initial optimism soon faded as Brig. Gen. Benjamin Humphrey's brigade of Mississippians overlapped Keifer's left flank and forced the Federal division back to its position on the banks above Meadow Brook.⁹¹

As Keifer's division reestablished its line, Keifer and the elements of Emory's XIX Corps confronted Gordon's and Kershaw's divisions while Generals Ramseur and Pegram moved their division to strike Wheaton's command. Beyond the overwhelming weight of four Confederate divisions, the Federal defenders confronted an ammunition shortage. Staff officers from the division responded by going to the rear and guiding mules, with ammunition crates strapped to their backs, "through the fog, smoke, and confusion" to resupply both Keifer's and Wheaton's divisions.⁹² By 8:00 a.m., however, it proved nearly impossible to stem the Confederate assault. Keifer, Wheaton, and the units from the XIX Corps on their right had no alternative but to withdraw and reform with the other elements of the Army of

⁸⁹Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 2: 134.

⁹⁰Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 2: 136.

⁹¹Wert, *From Winchester to Cedar Creek*, 200.

⁹²Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 2: 135-136.

the Shenandoah, north of Middletown in the general vicinity of the present-day Virginia Department of Transportation weigh station.

Gen. Getty's Stand on Cemetery Hill

With the withdrawal from Meadow Brook only Gen. George Getty's second division of the VI Corps—the only infantry not yet engaged—remained to resist Early's army (Insert Image 034N). Initially Getty's troops marched onto the field with the intention of supporting Wheaton's division. By the time Getty arrived, however, Wheaton's troops had already been broken.⁹³ Getty understood the situation fully and knew that he had nothing to gain by remaining on this portion of the field. He quickly determined to pull his division back to the area around the Middletown cemetery—a commanding piece of high ground with good fields of fire in any direction.

Col. James Warner's, Brig. Gen. Lewis Grant's and Brig. Gen. Daniel Bidwell's brigades positioned themselves in a line of battle atop Cemetery Hill. Bidwell's brigade formed Getty's left flank in the cemetery, Grant's brigade held the division's center, and Warner's brigade guarded the right flank. Despite the absence of earthworks or other defenses, many of the soldiers in the division believed their position “was on the whole an excellent one.”⁹⁴ While Getty formed his battle line he deployed troops from Grant's command to push the Confederates from the fields between the Union position and the Valley Pike. Elements of three Vermont regiments—the 5th, 6th and 11th Vermont—moved forward. Although they were able to clear some of the Confederates from Getty's front, they came under artillery fire, not from Confederate cannon but from Union artillery of Capt. James McKnight's Battery M, 5th United States Artillery.⁹⁵

⁹³Aldace F. Walker, *The Vermont Brigade in the Shenandoah Valley, 1864* (Burlington, Vt.: The Free Press Association, 1869), 141.

⁹⁴Walker, *The Vermont Brigade*, 142.

Confederates from Brig. Gen. John Pegram's division attacked Getty's line first. The Union brigades held their fire until the enemy was within several hundred yards of the hill's crest. Additionally the guns from McKnight's Battery—posted between Grant's and Bidwell's brigades—unleashed a withering salvo at their attackers. "We loaded canister double," noted a member of the battery, "and braced ourselves for business of a pressing nature ... The moment they started we opened on them at point blank, and doing some fine execution." McKnight's gunners suppressed the cannons as much as they could to make certain that each shot had its desired impact.⁹⁶ Pegram's assault failed. Brig. Gen. Bryan Grimes' brigade moved up next to strike Getty's position, but suffered the same result as Pegram. The Union defenders atop Cemetery Hill "made a most stubborn resistance, in Grimes' estimation."⁹⁷

With the failure of the first two infantry assaults, Gen. Early decided to concentrate artillery on the commanding position. Some estimates state that as many as thirty cannon of Col. Thomas Carter's Artillery Battalion directed their fire against Getty's position. Carter placed his guns predominantly in the area of the present day location of Fisher Diagnostics and the high ground around the Heater House.⁹⁸ Confederate gunners lobbed their shells at Getty's position for approximately half an hour and then stopped their barrage, believing enough damage had been done to weaken Getty's line. Now, Early gave the order for the infantry assault to recommence. The task of attack fell upon Gen. Gabriel Wharton's and Gen. Joseph Kershaw's divisions. With the third assault against their position, the Confederates got closer to Getty's line than they had in previous attacks. Troops from Kershaw's division came so close that a hand-to-hand struggle ensued. With the infantry lines tangled, some of Kershaw's men attempted to capture the guns from McKnight's Battery. "It was now man to man, hand to hand, with bayonet and

⁹⁵Paul G. Zeller, *The Second Vermont Volunteer Infantry Regiment, 1861-1865* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2002), 223.

⁹⁶Augustus Buell, *The Cannoneer: Recollections of Service in the Army of the Potomac* (Washington, D.C.: The National Tribune, 1887), 287.

⁹⁷*O.R.*, ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 599.

⁹⁸Mahr, *The Battle of Cedar Creek*, 236.

musket butt on their side and revolvers, rammer heads and handspikes on ours,” remembered one Union artilleryman.⁹⁹ Approximately one hundred men of the Vermont Brigade saved McKnight’s guns from capture as they “charged in and drove the enemy out of the Battery at the point of the bayonet.”¹⁰⁰

By the time the artillery bombardment ended and the third Confederate assault began, there had been a shake up in the VI Corps’ command as a result of the wounding of Gen. James Ricketts—the corps’ temporary commander. (Insert Image 035N). With Ricketts incapacitated, command fell upon Gen. Getty. Command of Getty’s division fell upon Brig. Gen. Lewis Grant. Even though Getty now commanded the entire corps, he remained with his old division. After the third assault on his position at Cemetery Hill, Getty spied the Confederates forming for another assault. Despite the faith that Getty had in his old division’s ability to fight, he felt it prudent to rejoin the army north of Middletown.¹⁰¹

While Union troops withdrew from Cemetery Hill, Federal cavalry, which had been largely posted to protect the Union right flank, now moved toward the Valley Pike. Brig. Gen. Wesley Merritt’s cavalry division entered Middletown and fell upon chaos and disarray. As soldiers from both armies moved through Middletown the residents of the village now found themselves caught squarely in the track of war (Insert Image 036N). Mary Helen Kercheval came out of her home to see “panic-stricken Federals ... wildly fleeing through town before the hotly pursuing Confederates.” As she looked toward her front gate she noticed a wounded Union soldier “uttering cries of pain.” She gave the wounded Union soldier a drink of water and then convinced a Confederate ambulance driver to take the soldier to a field hospital.¹⁰² Abe Spencer’s daughter—Spencer was a free black man—became curious and ran outside into the confusion. “I was small and didn’t understand the danger. I thought it was the finest thing that ever was,” the energetic girl recalled almost half a century after the battle, “and my folks couldn’t hardly

⁹⁹Buell, *The Cannoneer*, 288.

¹⁰⁰Buell, *The Cannoneer*, 288.

¹⁰¹Walker, *The Vermont Brigade in the Shenandoah Valley*, 144.

¹⁰²Frye, Graham, and Skoch, eds., *With Sheridan up the Shenandoah Valley in 1864*, 527.

keep me in ... I wasn't a bit skeered, and I run across to the Wright's back and forth. Oh! I was busy as a bee. The bombshells was comin' over, and I jis' thought it was grand. One bombshell lodged right in our garden. It makes me laugh yet to think what a goof I was."¹⁰³

Gen. Wesley Merritt Helps Restore Order

Although Spencer's daughter felt energized, many of Sheridan's men were demoralized and simply wanted to get as far from the field as possible. Gen. Wright, however, did not want these men to run too far, as he was determined to establish a new line. To help him in his task, Wright turned to Merritt's cavalry to restore order. Wright told Merritt to use whatever force necessary to halt the flight of Union troops. Soldiers in Merritt's command took no pleasure in this. However, at least one of Merritt's brigade commanders, Brig. Gen. Thomas Devin (Insert Image 037N), noted that some of his men had no choice but to use force to carry out Wright's directive. As Devin explained, "I found large numbers of the infantry retiring by regiments, companies, squads, and stragglers. I checked the rout at this point ... it being necessary in several instances to fire on the crowds retiring, and to use the saber frequently."¹⁰⁴

As Merritt's troops carried out their mission, Confederate troops from Wharton's division along with infantry from Col. Henry P. Sanders' brigade from Kershaw's division, pushed through Middletown. Around 10 a.m., these Confederates ran squarely into Merritt's command supported by five artillery batteries. Throughout the morning, Early's army enjoyed tremendous success but now the Union cavalry presented a tremendous obstacle for the Confederates.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³Johnson, *Battleground Adventures*, 408.

¹⁰⁴*O.R.*, ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 478.

¹⁰⁵Wert, *From Winchester to Cedar Creek*, 215. Wert states that troops from Wharton's command and Brig. Gen. William Wofford's command ran into Union cavalry. Wofford was not at Cedar Creek, but his brigade commanded by Col. Henry P. Sanders, a part of Kershaw's division, was present at the battle. The apparent disparity in Union and Confederate detail during the battle's morning phase is due to a paucity of Confederate source material and Confederate perception of battle. For Confederates the battle was a fluid movement of attack,

Early's Decision to Halt

Confronted with a sizable force of Union cavalry for the first time in the battle, Early determined to halt his army and not pursue the Army of the Shenandoah any further for the moment. Early's decision to arrest his army's progress at this point emerged as one of the most hotly debated topics among Confederate veterans. Some looked at Early's decision to halt as a great blunder; he missed an opportunity to completely annihilate the Federals. Others believed Early's decision sensible. Despite the withdrawal of Grant's command from Cemetery Hill, the presence of Merritt's cavalry near the Valley Pike concerned Early tremendously. Since the Third Battle of Winchester, Early respected the Union cavalry in the Valley and knew that it could create absolute havoc. Further, Early did not believe that his army could continue the battle late that morning; his men were tired and their ranks thinned by casualties and stragglers.¹⁰⁶

From the battle's earliest moments, the Confederate ranks were reduced by soldiers who wanted to plunder the Union camps. Regimental commanders in Kershaw's division recalled that after Thoburn's division withdrew from their position, a number of enlisted men in their commands broke ranks and looted the Union camps. The 3rd South Carolina Infantry's Capt. D. August Dickert noted: "The smoking breakfast, just ready for the table, stood temptingly inviting, while the opened tents displayed a scene almost enchanting to the eyes of the Southern soldier ... All this fabulous wealth ... looked to the half-fed, half-clothed Confederates like the wealth of the Indies."¹⁰⁷

whereas for the Federals it consisted of a series of distinct delaying movements. Additionally, four of Early's five division commanders did not submit official reports of the battle. For further discussions of historiography see Wert, *From Winchester to Cedar Creek*, 203.

¹⁰⁶For a discussion of the ability of Union cavalry, especially at the Third Battle of Winchester see Brandon H. Beck and Roger U. Delauter, *The Third Battle of Winchester* (Lynchburg, Va.: H.E. Howard, 1997), 64-75.

¹⁰⁷Dickert, *History of Kershaw's Brigade*, 449.

The conduct of Confederate looters earned some of them the derision of their comrades in the Civil War's aftermath. One of Early's men, Daniel Wilson, wrote two days after the battle that Early had to halt his progress because these soldiers were "tempted by the luxuries of the deserted camps, they forgot their duty as soldiers and fell to 'plundering'—the army became a mob—an undisciplined crowd of plunderers."¹⁰⁸ Although Wilson made a very good point, other veterans of Early's army believed that assessments such as these proved unfair. Confederate John Worsham, a Valley native, believed that the Confederate troops had no other alternative than to plunder the Union camps during the morning of October 19. "The world will never know the extreme poverty of the Confederate soldier at that time! Hundreds of the men who were in the charge and captured the enemy's works were barefooted ... every one of them was ragged ... they had a great temptation thrown their way ... the temptation to stop and eat was too great."¹⁰⁹

Some did not agree with Early's decision to stop the attack. Artillerist Henry Robinson Berkeley lambasted his commander in his diary: "We drove them in great confusion for two miles beyond Middletown and had we not been stopped by our generals I believe we could easily have driven them to Harpers Ferry."¹¹⁰ One of Early's staff officers, Henry Kyd Douglas, likewise could not discern Early's motivations for ordering his army to halt: "Why we did not attack at once before they got over the confusion and demoralization caused by our surprise, I do not know. We had much to gain by taking the offensive." Col. Thomas Carter also disagreed. He reportedly implored Early after the halt to allow him to take his artillery battalion and follow up the withdrawing Federals.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸Daniel Allen Wilson to unidentified addressee, Oct. 21, 1864, Beverly Randolph Wellford Papers, 1773-1907, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va.

¹⁰⁹John H. Worsham, *One of Jackson's Foot Cavalry: His Experience and What He Saw During the War 1861-1865* (New York: The Neale Publishing Co., 1912), 276-277.

¹¹⁰William H. Runge, ed., *Four Years in the Confederate Artillery: The Diary of Private Henry Robinson Berkeley* (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, 191), 106.

¹¹¹Jennings Cropper Wise, *The Long Arm of Lee: The History of the Artillery of the Army of Northern Virginia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 890-891.

However, no one found greater fault with Early's conduct than Gen. Gordon. According to Gordon, he encountered Early on the field after Getty's division pulled off Cemetery Hill. "This is glory enough for one day," Early supposedly told Gordon. After the war Gordon stated that he wanted to continue to pressure the enemy and press the VI Corps, but Early, believing that the battle had already been won, would not allow it. Gordon wrote in his postwar reminiscences that "that the fatal halting, the hesitation, the spasmodic firing, and the isolate movements in the fact of the sullen, slow, and orderly retreat of this superb Federal corps, lost us the great opportunity."¹¹² While most of Early's critics emerged after the war, at the time of the battle it appeared that many Confederate soldiers welcomed the halt as an opportunity to reorganize and rest. A soldier from the 14th North Carolina noted that when Early halted his line just north of Middletown, many Confederate soldiers were "soon asleep."¹¹³

Gen. Sheridan's Arrival

As Confederate soldiers reorganized and rested, Union soldiers took stock of the morning's action. Many believed that the early morning fight at Cedar Creek had in a matter of hours wiped away all earlier successes in the Shenandoah Valley. The 29th Maine's John Mead Gould wrote in his journal that he believed all of the fighting and human sacrifice endured by the Army of the Shenandoah up to that point "had been spilled for nothing" and that "another sacrifice must be made for the cursed valley and that the rebellion was not ending."¹¹⁴

¹¹²General John B. Gordon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), 341-342.

¹¹³E. Ruffin Harris, "Battle Near Cedar Creek, Va" *Confederate Veteran* 9, no. 9 (1901): 390. Early's final Confederate line ran in the fields north of County Route 627 from the vicinity of Meadow Marsh Brook to the present-day Lord Fairfax Community College campus.

¹¹⁴William B. Jordan, ed., *The Civil War Journals of John Mead Gould: 1861-1866* (Baltimore, Md.: Butternut & Blue, 1997), 422.

What also troubled many Union soldiers was that the defeat occurred in Gen. Sheridan's absence. Sheridan arrived in Winchester on the evening of October 18 from his meeting in Washington, and planned to spend the night at the Logan House (Insert Image 038N). Despite Sheridan's confidence on the night of the 18th that his army would be fine, his calm began to turn to anxiety around 6:00 a.m. on October 19 when he received reports of artillery fire south of Winchester. He mounted his horse Rienzi and rode the Valley Pike south toward his army. When Sheridan arrived in Newtown (present-day Stephens City) the signs of a battle lost greeted him for the first time. "It was a gruesome sight to meet the eyes of a commanding general who, three short days before," one staff officer noted of the scene, "had left it a triumphant host lying quietly in camp, resting securely on its victories, and confident in its own strength."¹¹⁵

Understanding the perilous situation that his army now confronted, Sheridan pondered what he should do. Sheridan first thought to collect his army and reform it closer to Winchester. Quickly, however, Sheridan dismissed this option as he believed it would be demoralizing; it would illustrate Sheridan's lack of faith in his army's ability to regain the ground lost during the battle's morning phase. "Little Phil" did not want to do anything to break his army's confidence further. Sheridan once informed a graduating class at West Point after the war, "A General lacking the confidence of his men is in a precarious situation, it is the soldier who makes us all."¹¹⁶

When Sheridan arrived on the battlefield around 10:00 a.m., Gen. Alfred T.A. Torbert—commander of Sheridan's cavalry—greeted him first followed by Gen. Wright (Insert Image 039N).¹¹⁷ The temporary army commander now turned over command to Sheridan. By the time Sheridan arrived, Wright had already reorganized the army and established a new line near present day County Route 633.

¹¹⁵Gen. George A. Forsyth, "Sheridan's Ride" *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* (July 1897), 171-172.

¹¹⁶Philip H. Sheridan address to graduating class, West Point, 1878, Philip H. Sheridan Papers, Roll 100, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹¹⁷A state historical marker on the west side of Route 11 marks the general area where Sheridan met his army.

However, the one thing that Wright could not restore was the army's broken confidence. In a letter written shortly after the battle, Gen. Wright explained to his wife that Sheridan's appearance on the battlefield provided a "relief" and that Sheridan "had, naturally enough, more influence over the entire army than I have."¹¹⁸ As word spread of Sheridan's arrival, the mood among many in the Army of the Shenandoah transformed from pessimism to optimism. "There is no describing how that news affected us," noted the 29th Maine's John Mead Gould (Insert Image 040N).¹¹⁹

Fully cognizant of the importance of restoring confidence, one of Sheridan's staff officers suggested that Sheridan ride along the army's entire line to make his presence known to all. Sheridan agreed.¹²⁰ As Sheridan galloped in front of his troops, "men threw up their caps. All shouted for joy," recalled a veteran of the 3rd Massachusetts Cavalry, "for the victorious leader had arrived. It was an auspicious moment."¹²¹

As Sheridan rode among his reorganized army, the thunderous shouts rolled into Early's army. Some of Early's troops believed that the shouts signaled the arrival of Union reinforcements. Confederate artilleryman Henry Robinson Berkeley, wrote: "We remained quietly in line of battle about a mile north of [Middletown], until about 3 p.m. when the Yanks, having received large re-enforcements attacked us."¹²² The 13th Virginia's Capt. Samuel Buck also concluded that the loud cheers coming from north of their position could only mean that a substantial number of troops had arrived to bolster the Army of the Shenandoah. After the war, Buck wrote "While we lay waiting for orders, Sheridan was moving up from

¹¹⁸Gen. Horatio G. Wright to wife, Oct. 26, 1864, quoted in William W. Bergen, "The Other Hero of Cedar Creek: The 'Not Specially Ambitious' Horatio G. Wright" in Gary W. Gallagher, ed., *The Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1864* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 111. The original letter is in the Gilder Lehrman Collection, Morgan Library, New York.

¹¹⁹John M. Gould, *History of the First-Tenth-Twenty-ninth Maine Regiment*, 537.

¹²⁰Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs*, 2: 85-86.

¹²¹James K. Ewer, *The Third Massachusetts Cavalry in the War for the Union* (N.p.: Historical Committee of the Regimental Association, 1903), 227.

¹²²Runge, ed., *Four Years in the Confederate Artillery*, 106.

Winchester with a fresh corps that had not fired a gun, and with as many men as we had in our army.”¹²³ Confederate suspicions of a large Union reinforcement proved false. The only troops who arrived late that morning were Sheridan and his staff. A soldier in the 114th New York noted after the war that Sheridan’s arrival certainly seemed like a reinforcement: “the sight of that little man instantly inspired confidence, and threw them into a perfect frenzy of enthusiasm ... a powerful reinforcement had arrived, but it was only one man.”¹²⁴

By the early afternoon uncertainty crept into the Confederate high command about the condition and strength of the Army of the Shenandoah. Unnerved by the potential of additional Federal troops, Gen. Early ordered Gen. Gordon to advance against the Union line and test its strength. Instead of launching a full-blown attack Gordon sent a reconnaissance in force against the Union right flank held by troops from Gen. Emory’s XIX Corps.¹²⁵ Gordon’s movement occurred at the worst moment in Sheridan’s estimation, as he was in the process of putting the finishing touches on his counteroffensive. When Gordon’s men moved forward, Sheridan observed the movement from his position near the Valley Pike.¹²⁶ As the Confederate skirmishers approached Emory’s position, the XIX Corps’ veterans poured musket fire into the attackers. A soldier from the 128th New York wrote that, “On they came confident of crushing all opposition. Perfect quiet reigned within our lines until they arrived within about forty yards of us. When the entire division [Gen. Cuvier Grover’s] arose and delivered their fire. The fire was frightfully effective.”¹²⁷ Confederates involved in the attack noted that it occurred with such a small number of men that it had no chance of success.¹²⁸ After the small fight, Gen. Emory reported to

¹²³Buck, *With the Old Confeds*, 126.

¹²⁴Beecher, *Record of the 114th Regiment*, 449.

¹²⁵Gordon’s division, which held the extreme left of Early’s line, was positioned just west of present-day Rt. 625. See Whitehorne, *Battle of Cedar Creek*, 45.

¹²⁶Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs*, 2: 86.

¹²⁷Hanaburgh, *History of the One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Regiment*, 168.

Sheridan that his men held their position and that Gordon's troops had been "promptly driven back."¹²⁹

Sheridan ordered that if any Confederate attempt to strike his position again: "go after them, and to follow them up, and to sock it to them, and to give them the devil."¹³⁰

After the brief melee, Gen. Gordon decided not to launch a full assault against the Union line.¹³¹

In many ways, the failure of Gordon's movement bolstered Early's previous assumptions that morning that his army was in no condition to press the Union army any further. None of the attacks on Early's conduct at Cedar Creek, written after the war, address Gordon's decision not to press the Union line any further, after he had orders to do so.

While Early guessed about Sheridan's intentions, so too did Sheridan speculate about Confederate plans. Sheridan wondered what caused Early to halt his pursuit, and more importantly, he wanted to know if the Confederates had reinforcements en route to the battlefield? Throughout the day, Sheridan received reports that Gen. James Longstreet's corps was moving to reinforce Early. Although the reports proved false, on the afternoon of October 19, Sheridan treated each piece of information as fact, understanding the larger strategic and political consequences of a hasty decision. Sheridan needed to gather as much information about Early's intentions as possible, so he did not attack immediately. To help in his intelligence-gathering effort, Sheridan turned to Gen. Wesley Merritt. He ordered Merritt to attack "an exposed" Confederate artillery battery near the Valley Pike and take some prisoners for questioning. Merritt captured several Confederates. After a quick interrogation the prisoners informed Sheridan that the only troops from Longstreet's command with Early's army were from Gen. Kershaw's division. This information pleased Sheridan. However, shortly after he completed his questioning he received a report that Longstreet's corps was marching on the Front Royal Road to Winchester. One of

¹²⁸Worsham, *One of Jackson's Foot Cavalry*, 277.

¹²⁹DeForrest, "Sheridan's Victory at Middletown", 358.

¹³⁰DeForrest, "Sheridan's Victory at Middletown", 358.

¹³¹Early, *A Memoir of the Last Year of the War for Independence*, 115.

Sheridan's cavalry officers, Col. William Powell, whose force patrolled the Front Royal Road and the approaches to Winchester, promptly discounted that information.¹³²

Sheridan now determined to launch his counterattack. Early received his first inclination of Sheridan's intentions around 3:00 p.m. when signalman atop Signal Knob, along with Gen. Thomas Rosser, reported that Sheridan was massing heavy forces against the Confederate left flank.¹³³ Responsible for protecting the Confederate left flank, Gen. Gordon appealed to Early for additional protection. Initially, Gordon sent one of his staff officers to appeal to Gen. Early, but, that yielded no results. Incensed over Early's apparent unwillingness to support his end of the line, Gordon next appealed to the army commander in person. Early again refused support. Although this enraged Gordon, Early did not have much choice. Sending reinforcements to the left flank meant taking troops from another segment of his line, weakening it and making it more susceptible to attack. Gordon believed that Early's rebuff came as a result of Early's unwillingness to "share in the apprehension manifested by the warning signals as to the danger which immediately threatened us." Early advised Gordon "to stretch out" his already weak line and support it by posting an artillery battery on his extreme left. Incensed, Gordon rode back to his lines, but by the time he arrived Gordon noted that it "was too late" as the Army of the Shenandoah had already begun its counterattack.¹³⁴

The Union Counterattack

Around 4:00 p.m. Sheridan launched his counterattack. When the Union advance began, the line did not move forward simultaneously. Gen. Merritt's cavalry division hit the Confederate right flank first, east of that section of Valley Pike held by Gen. Wharton's division in what is today the campus of Lord Fairfax

¹³²Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs*, 2: 88.

¹³³Gordon, *Reminiscences*, 346; Mahr, *The Battle of Cedar Creek*, 272.

¹³⁴Gordon, *Reminiscences*, 346.

Community College. Wharton's troops repelled Merritt's attack.¹³⁵ To Merritt's right advanced Gen. Wright's VI Corps. It suffered a similar fate against Ramseur's and Pegram's divisions in the fields in front of Miller's Mill, along present-day County Route 634. Many of Ramseur's and Pegram's men took cover behind stone walls and delivered destructive volleys into their attackers. Col. Keifer noted that the Confederates in front of his division were "obstinate and, for a time, promised to extend [the battle] into the night."¹³⁶ The Confederate musket fire caused most of the VI Corps to pull off the field and reorganize, however, the Vermont Brigade and elements of Col. James Warner's brigade (both of which served in Gen. Getty's division) refused to quit the field. A veteran noted of the Vermont brigade's stubbornness, "Although brought to a halt [these brigades] stood firm, and with the utmost coolness opened so well-sustained and effective a hail of musketry upon the gray forms crouching behind the stone wall in front, that their fire visibly slackened."¹³⁷

Preliminary success in slowing the Union advance bolstered Early's confidence. Early believed the assaults were "handsomely repulsed" and that he could claim "the day was finally ours."¹³⁸ Although Early had been correct in his estimation that the initial attacks were repulsed with great ease, he did not realize that the Federals had not launched their assault against the weakest portion of his line—the left flank.

Gen. Emory's corps aimed at the Confederate left held by Gordon. Emory's first division, commanded by Gen. William Dwight, who assumed command of the division after Sheridan released him from arrest, advanced against the Confederate left. Unknown to him, his men marched into a gap in Gordon's line.¹³⁹ Unbeknownst to Emory or any of his officers, Gordon placed Gen. Clement Evans'

¹³⁵Mahr, *Cedar Creek*, 276.

¹³⁶Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 2: 146.

¹³⁷Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, *The Shenandoah Campaigns of 1862 and 1864*, 133.

¹³⁸Early, *Narrative of the War Between the States*, 448.

brigade on a ridge on the extreme left. The Confederate line, however, did not continue seamlessly between Evans and the remainder of Gordon's division. Once Dwight's division entered the gap, Evans' brigade was perpendicular to Dwight's line and able to deliver and enfilade fire into the XIX Corps' troops. Gen. James McMillan, who temporarily commanded Dwight's division earlier in the day, noted that as they entered the open Evans' command delivered "a most murderous fire."¹⁴⁰ As Dwight's men looked to their right they saw Evans urging his men to fire as quickly as possible.¹⁴¹ Dwight responded immediately by ordering McMillan's brigade along with Davis' to wheel to the right in order to form a line perpendicular to the main XIX Corps' line, and attack Evans.¹⁴² After the war, Early believed that the failure of Evans' brigade to maintain its difficult position sparked the collapse of his line north of Middletown.¹⁴³

After the XIX Corps checked Evans, Sheridan rode onto the field to congratulate them. He also ordered Emory's men not to press the Confederate left any further until Custer's cavalry division arrived to support the attack. "You are doing splendidly, but don't be in too much haste," Sheridan told Emory's men. He ordered them to "lie down right where you are, and wait until you see General Custer come down over those hills and then ... by God, I want you to *push* the rebels."¹⁴⁴ Shortly after Custer's troops moved into position, both Emory's infantry and Custer's cavalry surged forward. The rush of the cavalry assault did not allow any chance for the Confederates to erect any significant defense. As Custer's men surged into Gordon's line with their "bright and glistening sabres," an officer in the 116th New York recalled that the "suddenness of our onset made resistance impossible, and they fled before us, thus

¹³⁹ Dwight was placed under arrest by Sheridan for refusing to revise his report about the Third Battle of Winchester, September 19, 1864, which greatly criticized Gen. Cuvier Grover's conduct at the battle.

¹⁴⁰*O.R.*, ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 310.

¹⁴¹Gould, *History of the First-Tenth-Twenty-ninth Maine Regiment*, 540.

¹⁴²Carpenter, *History of the Eighth Vermont*, 223.

¹⁴³Early, *A Narrative of the War Between the States*, 448.

¹⁴⁴Beecher, *114th New York*, 452.

exposing the flank of the main line, upon which we now poured down with a still fiercer shout.” (Insert Image 041N)¹⁴⁵ Custer noted that his attack and the pressure applied by Emory’s troops caused the Confederate left to give “way in the utmost confusion.”¹⁴⁶ Despite Early’s observation that “General Gordon made every possible effort to rally his men, and lead them back against the enemy” the efforts proved futile.¹⁴⁷ The combined attack of massed cavalry and infantry caused Gordon’s left flank to roll up “like a scroll.”¹⁴⁸ When Confederate artilleryman Milton Humphreys looked to his left and saw the Confederate line breaking, he recalled it as a “most heart sickening scene ... the Army flying in confusion, followed closely by the enemy who were themselves in no order.”¹⁴⁹

After Gordon’s line collapsed, panic spread quickly throughout the regiments posted on the left end of his line. Two days after the battle, a confederate soldier recalled: “To the surprise of Gen. Early, the left suddenly gave way with the cry of ‘we’re flanked’ ‘we’re flanked.’ The panick [sic] spread along the entire line and the brave and gallant troops of the morning ran like scared sheep and soon in less time than it takes me to write it the army melted away into a chaotic mass of stragglers.”¹⁵⁰ Early believed that the panic was unnecessary, and that it contributed more to his army’s defeat than any Union assault. Early noted that “the information of this affair, with exaggerations, passed rapidly along Kershaw’s and Ramseur’s lines, and their men, under the apprehension of being flanked, commenced falling back in

¹⁴⁵Clark, *The One Hundred and Sixteenth Regiment*, 246-247.

¹⁴⁶*O.R.*, ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 524.

¹⁴⁷Early, *A Memoir of the Last Year of the War for Independence*, 116.

¹⁴⁸Gordon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 348.

¹⁴⁹Milton W. Humphreys Diary, Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.

¹⁵⁰Daniel Allen Wilson to unidentified recipient, Oct. 21, 1864, Beverly Randolph Wellford Papers, 1773-1907, Section 112, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va.

disorder, though no enemy was pressing them, and this gave me the first intimation of Gordon's condition."¹⁵¹

Buoyed by the success against Early's left, the remaining elements of the Army of the Shenandoah pushed forward but still confronted some opposition at various points. When Kershaw's division broke, posted on Gordon's right, the burden of holding the Confederate line fell upon Gen. Ramseur. As Kershaw's troops fled the field, Ramseur ordered his men out of line and formed them on a hill several hundred yards behind his original line, along Miller's Lane.¹⁵² When Ramseur vacated his old line, Union troops from the VI Corps immediately occupied Ramseur's old position and utilized the stone walls and buildings for protection (Insert Image 042N). "The group of buildings from which the enemy fled ... to a wall which protected their second line, was as good a protection for us as it had been for the rebels," recalled a Vermonter.¹⁵³ Ramseur intended to remain in position as long as he could in order to slow the Union assault. His fighting prowess that day earned him the praise of a number of officers who observed him. Gen. William Cox, who commanded one of Ramseur's brigades, noted at this point in the battle "no man could have behaved more magnificently and heroically than Ramseur did in his efforts to resist the overwhelming tide which was now setting upon us."¹⁵⁴ Perhaps Ramseur fought with such tenacity at Cedar Creek because he hoped that a Confederate victory would allow him a furlough to return home to North Carolina to see his newborn daughter. However, during Ramseur was mortally wounded during his attempts to rally his men. A bullet entered his right side, pierced both lungs, and lodged in his left side. Ramseur's adjutant general, Maj. R.R. Hutchinson, ran to his fallen commander and, with several other men, secured an ambulance to get him off the field safely.

¹⁵¹Early, *Narrative of the War Between the States*, 448.

¹⁵²The location of this ridge is clear if one drives south on County Route 635 toward Middletown.

¹⁵³Walker, *Vermont Brigade*, 151.

¹⁵⁴William R. Cox, "Major-General Stephen D. Ramseur: His Life and Character" *Southern Historical Society Papers* 18 (1890): 254.

Soon, four of Early's infantry divisions—Gordon's, Kershaw's, Ramseur's, and Pegram's—had been driven from the field. The only division that remained to contest the Union advance was Gen. Wharton's, east of the Valley Pike. Wharton's men braced for the final assault. His artillerymen loaded their guns with double-canister and unleashed a murderous fire on Merritt's troopers. Merritt recalled that, "the charge was made on an enemy well formed, prepared to receive it with guns double-shotted with canister; into that fearful charge rode many a noble spirit who met his death."¹⁵⁵ This time, however, Wharton's men would be unable to check the advance.

Among the casualties in Merritt's final attack was Col. Charles Russell Lowell, who commanded one of Merritt's brigades. Lowell had been wounded earlier in the day and spent the early afternoon trying to regain his strength (Insert Image 043N). When Lowell heard the orders for the counterattack he told the officers around him "I feel well, now." With assistance from his staff, Lowell climbed onto his horse, although he "could not speak above a whisper." As Lowell's brigade charged into Wharton's division and pushed them into Middletown, the young brigade commander suffered a mortal wound. His men carried him to a house in Middletown where he clung to life. One noted of Lowell's final moments: "He gave no sign of suffering; his mind was perfectly clear, calm and cheerful, he knew he had no chance of life. He dictated private messages of affection, gave complete directions to his command, and as the day rose he ceased to breathe the air of earth."¹⁵⁶ To the Northern press, Lowell's performance at Cedar Creek and subsequent death came to symbolize patriotic fervor. *Harper's Weekly*, although understanding that Lowell's death caused sadness to his loved ones, believed that neither he nor any other Union soldier killed at Cedar Creek had lost their life in vain: "They die, these brave and noble boys, but they live. They live in our purer purpose, in our firmer resolution, in the surer justice of the nation. Against compromise, against concession, against surrender, this precious blood cries from the ground."¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵*O.R.*, ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 450.

¹⁵⁶*Memoirs of the War of '61: Colonel Charles Russell Lowell, Friends and Cousins* (Boston: Press of Geo. H. Ellis, Co., 1920), 11.

Within an hour and one-half from Sheridan's opening assault, the entire Confederate line crumbled and Early's men fled south in panic. "By half past five o'clock," noted a soldier in the 122nd Ohio, Early's line "had dissolved into fleeing fragments."¹⁵⁷ Some Confederates attempted to establish pockets of resistance, but to no avail. Union troops surged forward, maintaining intense fire. Quickly, Sheridan's men exhausted their ammunition and were forced to take what they could from the dead and wounded of both sides.¹⁵⁹ As the Union attack pushed quickly through Middletown, the army's organization began to crumble. "Our formation was entirely lost but we had the organization and enthusiasm of recognized success," noted a Vermonter.¹⁶⁰ A soldier in the 14th New Hampshire remembered, "Every thing on legs was getting into a dead run; and both armies were full bent toward the pike crossing of Cedar Creek; neither Sheridan's nor Early's troops much regarding order: the one in a gallop of fun and boundless hilarity; the other panic-stricken."¹⁶¹ Some Union officers attempted to organize their men to deliver well-aimed, concentrated volleys into Early's retreating Confederates. Maj. Aldace Walker rallied the men of the Vermont Brigade in a portion of the XIX Corps' trenches.¹⁶²

Early's field officers attempted to respond to the volleys such as those delivered from the Vermont Brigade, by forming a makeshift line on the high ground on the south bank of Cedar Creek, in the vicinity of the Stickley farm. Perhaps the most notable stand came from troops organized by Gen. Pegram. According to the 13th Virginia's Capt. Samuel Buck, Pegram organized approximately one hundred men to slow the Union assault.¹⁶³ As Pegram tried desperately to delay, he received support

¹⁵⁷*Harper's Weekly*, November 5, 1864.

¹⁵⁸Moses M. Granger, "The Battle of Cedar Creek" in Robert Hunter, ed., *Sketches of War History, 1861-1865* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1890), 134.

¹⁵⁹Walker, *The Vermont Brigade*, 152.

¹⁶⁰Walker, *The Vermont Brigade*, 152.

¹⁶¹Buffum, *A Memorial of the Great Rebellion*, 290.

¹⁶²Ledoux, ed., *Quite Ready to be Sent Somewhere*, 313.

¹⁶³S.D. Buck, "Battle of Cedar Creek: Tribute to Early" *Confederate Veteran* 2, no. 3 (1894), 76.

from Carter's artillery battalion. Milton Humphreys, one of Carter's artillerists, noted that Carter crossed his guns at a ford below the bridge over Cedar Creek (more than likely Bowman's Mill Ford), and established a number of cannon "on a hill, which faced the original position of Sheridan's army."¹⁶⁴ Although the volleys from Pegram's infantry and Carter's artillery might not have halted the Union pursuit, it did delay the Federals long enough so that large portions of Early's command could escape south toward Fisher's Hill. "Matters would have been much worse but for the splendid service of the artillery, commanded by Colonel Thomas H. Carter," noted one Confederate officer after the war.¹⁶⁵

Confederates who made the stand on the hills above the Stickley Farm did so not only to slow the Union pursuit but also to allow for the safe evacuation of the wounded on the farm. Confederate doctors frantically tried to evacuate their wounded and prevent medical supplies from falling into Union hands. The doctors destroyed the items they could not carry. Mary Stickley recalled of the chaotic scene: "the surgeons set fire to the medical wagons and hurried off. Some of the wagons were down on the meadow and by the springhouse, and some up the hill back of the orchard. The chemicals in them made a bright blaze."¹⁶⁶

The presence of Union artillery and cavalry further complicated the situation for Early's men as they crossed Cedar Creek. Once the Confederates were pushed off the high ground on the Stickley Farm, Union artillery rolled into position and blasted away at Early's columns. Nine cannon from Capt. Henry DuPont's command pursued Early's retreating column on the Valley Pike.¹⁶⁷ When DuPont arrived at the banks of Cedar Creek he unlimbered his guns on high ground on the west side of the Valley Pike overlooking Stickleys, and opened on the retreating Confederates. DuPont directed the fire of his five

¹⁶⁴Milton W. Humphreys Diary, Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.

¹⁶⁵McNeily, "Battle of Cedar Creek, Oct. 19, 1864", 233.

¹⁶⁶Johnson, *Battleground Adventures*, 390.

¹⁶⁷DuPont, *The Campaign of 1864 in the Valley of Virginia*, 171-172.

rifled guns at the head of the enemy's retreating column, and that of his four twelve pound Napoleon's into the rear of Early's column. "Our shooting was very accurate and almost every shell exploded directly in the midst of the crowded masses before us," recalled DuPont.¹⁶⁸ For DuPont's actions at Cedar Creek, he was awarded the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest honor. (Insert Image 044N).¹⁶⁹ Custer's division also placed tremendous pressure on Early's men. Aldace Walker noted that "the artillery came up, and the cavalry, and Custer charged through the Creek, up the hill, into a line of fire that played out directly."¹⁷⁰

The situation did not improve for Early's men. As his army reached a small bridge over a stream just south of Strasburg, they found it clogged with wagons and therefore impassable. Although several explanations for this jam on the bridge may be found in the historical literature, the account that is most often cited by historians states that two of Early's wagons tried to cross simultaneously and became wedged on the bridge.¹⁷¹

With the bridge clogged, many of Early's Confederates simply waded across the stream and regrouped at Fisher's Hill. Fleeing Confederate soldiers, a clogged bridge, and Union cavalry thundering up the Valley Pike in pursuit of them created pandemonium. A South Carolinian observed that "the whole vast plain in front and rear was dotted with men running for life's sake, while over and among this struggling mass the bullets fell like hail. How any escaped was a wonder to the men themselves."¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸DuPont, *The Campaign of 1864 in the Valley of Virginia*, 172.

¹⁶⁹DuPont, *The Campaign of 1864 in the Valley of Virginia*, 177. DuPont's citation stated in part: "by his brave bearing, most distinguished gallantry and voluntary exposure to the enemy's fire at a critical moment when the Union line had been broken and defeated, encouraged his men to stand to their guns, checked the advance of the enemy and brought off most of his pieces. In the later victorious advance of the army, the same day, he also rendered valuable service."

¹⁷⁰Ledoux, ed., *Quite Ready to be Sent Somewhere*, 313.

¹⁷¹Whitehorne, *Battle of Cedar Creek*, 31; A Union account noted that a plank or two on the bridge were broken and that created the situation and prevented the wagons from passing over the bridge safely. See "Cedar Creek" in *Papers of the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts: The Shenandoah Campaigns of 1862 and 1864 and the Appomattox Campaign 1865* (Boston: Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, 1907), 175.

¹⁷²Dickert, *History of Kershaw's Brigade*, 453.

While some Early's men got away, scores of them were captured near the bridge as they could not outrun the Union horsemen. "I never saw such a stampede; whole companies surrender to half a dozen mounted men," recalled a Union trooper¹⁷³

Among those captured was the mortally wounded Gen. Ramseur. Corporal Frederick Lyon of the 1st Vermont Cavalry, halted and captured the ambulance that carried Ramseur's body. According to a Confederate account, when the Union cavalryman asked who was inside the wagon, the driver simply responded that, "the General says I must not tell."¹⁷⁴ Lyon, on the other hand, never stated that this is how he discovered it was Ramseur inside of the wagon. According to Lyon he heard a "voice from out of the darkness ... General Ramseur is inside and he ordered us to 'move on.'" Certainly, the opportunity to capture a general excited Lyon. The Vermonter maintained his "presence of mind" and ordered the wagon to halt and turn around for army headquarters at Belle Grove. A week after the battle, Lyon was ordered to Washington, D.C., where President Lincoln awarded the courageous cavalryman the Medal of Honor.¹⁷⁵

When Ramseur arrived at Belle Grove, Union doctors along with Confederate surgeon Dr. James Gillespie, tended to Ramseur's wounds. Some of Ramseur's old West Point friends including Custer, Merritt, and DuPont, visited him. After the battle DuPont arrived at Belle Grove and learned of Ramseur's fate from Gen. Torbert. The news "acutely shocked and distressed" DuPont.¹⁷⁶ When DuPont approached Ramseur's death bed, Ramseur extended his hand and grabbed DuPont's. The artillery officer confessed that he had been "deeply moved" by this and that at that moment he did not

¹⁷³W.F. Beyer and O.F. Keydel, eds., *Deeds of Valor* (Detroit: The Perrien-Keydel Co., 1906), 1: 447.

¹⁷⁴A Surgeon in the Confederate Army, "The Battle of Cedar Creek" *Southern Historical Society Papers*, 16 (1888), 446.

¹⁷⁵Beyer and Keydel, eds. *Deeds of Valor*, 1: 448; Phil S. Rogers, ed., *Everlasting Glory: Vermont Soldiers who were Awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for Service During the Civil War 1861-1865* (Hardwick, Vt.: The Vermont Civil War Hemlocks, 2007), 60.

¹⁷⁶DuPont, *The Campaign of 1864*, 174.

view Ramseur as an enemy, but rather as a friend. DuPont recalled that, “strange as it may seem—illogical, if you please—in that supreme moment he turned with content and satisfaction to the one person present who though officially a foe, was still, as he instinctively felt, the steadfast personal friend of former days.”¹⁷⁷ Other Union officers, including Sheridan, did what they could to alleviate Ramseur’s suffering. During his final hours, Ramseur spoke “continually” of his wife and child. Whispering to his adjutant general, Maj. Hutchinson, he asked him to ‘give his love and send some of his hair to his darling wife.’ Ramseur also told Hutchinson that he regretted not being able to see his newborn child at least once before he died. On October 20, at 10:27 a.m., Ramseur died. Maj. Hutchinson wrote to Ramseur’s widow: “He told me to tell you he had a ‘firm hope in Christ, and hoped to meet you hereafter.’ He died as became a Confederate soldier and a firm believer.”¹⁷⁸

The Battle’s Immediate Consequences

Amid the euphoria that spread throughout the ranks of the Army of the Shenandoah, also came horror as men crossed over the field and took stock of the battle’s carnage. Many of Sheridan’s soldiers noticed that some of the Union dead had been stripped of their clothing. “All the way from Middletown to Cedar Creek the debris of battle was scattered over the fields. Here and there were seen the remains of our comrades of the morning, their lifeless bodies stripped by vandal rebels of almost every garment,” recalled a surgeon of the 77th New York. ¹⁷⁹

Although some Union soldiers might have initially concluded that Confederate soldiers had been the ones who plundered the dead, some veterans suggested that a contingent of Confederate women from

¹⁷⁷Henry A. Dupont, *Address by Colonel DuPont Upon the Unveiling of Major General Ramseur’s Monument* (Winterthur, Del.: Henry A. Dupont, 1920), 12-13.

¹⁷⁸Cox, “Major-General Stephen D. Ramseur,” 257-258.

¹⁷⁹Stevens, *Three Years in the Sixth Corps: A Concise Narrative of Events in the Army of the Potomac, From 1861 to the Close of the Rebellion, April, 1865* (Albany: S.R. Gray, Publishers, 1866), 426

Strasburg gleaned the battlefield after Early's initial assault. Some Union veterans believed these women stripped some of the Union dead and brutalized some of the wounded. An Iowa soldier wrote that "many of the women from Strausburg [sic] followed the army for the purpose of pillaging. Our wounded were subject to all manner of insults from these fiends."¹⁸⁰ Worse than insults from either Confederate civilians or Early's soldiers, reports surfaced after the battle of Confederate soldiers shooting wounded Union soldiers during their afternoon retreat from the battlefield. Soldiers from the 30th Massachusetts Infantry reported that their adjutant, wounded earlier in the day, had been shot in the leg by retreating Confederates. After he had been shot, Confederate soldiers "pulled his coat off, and a number tried to pull of his boots."¹⁸¹

As Sheridan's infantry returned to their camps and the cavalry pushed Early to Fisher's Hill, the veterans reflected on the day's activities. Some focused on how Sheridan maintained his promise that the army would return to its old camps by nightfall. Rev. John Adams, the chaplain of the 121st New York, noted after the battle: "True to General Sheridan's promise, we came back to our camp ... before eight at night [it] was announced to us officially that we had recaptured all we had lost."¹⁸²

Others in the army reflected on Sheridan's generalship. Many of his men heaped tremendous praise upon Sheridan for turning the battle's tide. "History must give General Sheridan credit for doing what only such Generals as Napoleon and his kind have been able to do," penned the 29th Maine's John Mead Gould on the night of October 19, 1864.¹⁸³ Even Col. Edward Molineux, who despised Sheridan, attributed the reason for success solely to Sheridan's arrival. "Little as I like Gen. Sheridan personally," Col. Molineux wrote to his sister after the battle, "I cannot but admire his firmness and ability, the

¹⁸⁰Description of Battle of Cedar Creek, Alfred Rigby, 28th Iowa Infantry, Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation Archives, Middletown, Va.

¹⁸¹*Lowell Daily Citizen and News*, Oct. 29, 1864.

¹⁸²Adams, *Memorial and Letters*, 166.

¹⁸³Jordan, ed., *The Civil War Journals of John Mead Gould*, 423.

fortunes of the day which commenced so disastrously for us, turned into a splendid victory.”¹⁸⁴

Cavalryman William F. Mackay believed “that if General Sheridan had not come, our army would have been badly whipped, and the coast left clear for another invasion of Maryland and Pennsylvania.”¹⁸⁵

Feelings of joy over their successes, and Sheridan’s ability to inspire, mixed with despair as the Army of the Shenandoah tallied the battle’s human cost. A soldier in the 22nd Iowa regarded the Battle of Cedar Creek as “the hardest battle [he] ever saw fought.” Casualties in both armies were high.¹⁸⁶ Early suffered nearly 3,100 casualties—1,200 of whom were captured during the battle’s final phase. In addition to losses in men, Early’s army lost twenty-four cannons and numerous battle standards, as well as a number of wagons either abandoned or destroyed during the hasty withdrawal. Sheridan’s army suffered approximately 5,800 casualties, 569 of whom were killed during the battle.¹⁸⁷

For the next several weeks the Army of the Shenandoah remained in its camps along Cedar Creek, and buried the dead. The surgeon of the 77th New York wrote that on the night of October 19 he could clearly hear “the spades of the pioneers ... as they hollowed out the shallow graves.”¹⁸⁸ The number of graves increased on a daily basis throughout the remainder of October and the first week of November. Mary Stickley recalled after the war that a “good many of the dead were buried on our place.”¹⁸⁹ John Helms, a Georgia soldier, was among those buried on the Stickley Farm. During the battle’s opening phase, two Confederates carried Helms into the Stickley’s front yard, where he died. The soldiers—

¹⁸⁴Col. Edward Molineux to sister Nan, October 19, 1864, Fred Molineux private collection, Pittstown, N.J.

¹⁸⁵William F. Mackay, “Sheridan’s Noted Ride” in W.C. King and Derby, comps., *Camp-Fire Sketches and Battlefield Echoes of the Rebellion*, 376.

¹⁸⁶Peter P. Boarts to parents, Oct. 21, 1864, Civil War Misc. Collection, Peter B. Boarts Letter Archives, 22nd Iowa, United States Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pa.

¹⁸⁷Pond, *The Shenandoah Valley in 1864*, 239-240.

¹⁸⁸Stevens, *Three Years in the Sixth Corps*, 427.

¹⁸⁹Johnson, *Battleground Adventures*, 390.

Helms' brothers—buried him in the orchard under an apple tree. The grave is identified today by a small stone marker.¹⁹⁰

A reporter for the *New York Tribune* noted that in many instances individual regiments created their own cemeteries on the battlefield. “The survivors among the different regiments who were engaged on the field of Cedar Creek have been employed since the 20th in collecting together, and burying in separate groups their comrades who fell on that memorable field.”¹⁹¹ The reporter specifically identified the burial ground of the 12th Connecticut. He noted that the regiment’s survivors “selected a knoll in the open field fronting Gen. Sheridan’s headquarters, where they have carefully buried and enclosed with a neat, but rustic railing their comrades who fell near the spot. The graves were marked with the name, rank, company, and regiment, and freshly sodded.”¹⁹²

Moved by the constant burials, the reporter assumed the task of making a map of the battlefield showing the locations of the graves. “To assist in the search hereafter, for the remains of these noble dead,” the reporter penned in his article, “your correspondent has been over a large part of the battle-field ... and has given the location of each plat, group, or single grave.”¹⁹³ As Col. Molineux peered over the battlefield in the days after the fight he became sullen at the increasing number of graves. “Burying parties are at work ... How sad to see the whole ground dotted with graves,” Molineux observed.¹⁹⁴

Union burial parties had a difficult time burying the dead in a timely manner and some soldiers’ remains were placed in coffins and stored behind St. Thomas Episcopal Church, which also served as a makeshift hospital in the battle’s aftermath. An unidentified African American recalled half a century after the war: “They was put in coffins—jus’ long pine boxes—and the boxes was piled up against the

¹⁹⁰Johnson, *Battleground Adventures*, 388-389; Whitehorne, *Battle of Cedar Creek*, 36.

¹⁹¹*New York Tribune*, Nov. 4, 1864. Unfortunately the correspondent’s diagram has not been located to help historians determine the graves’ precise locations.

¹⁹²*New York Tribune*, Nov. 4, 1864.

¹⁹³*New York Tribune*, Nov. 4, 1864.

¹⁹⁴Col. Edward Molineux to sister Nan, Oct. 20, 1864, Fred Molineux private collection, Pittstown, N.J.

back wall of the church and stayed thar near a month.”¹⁹⁵ The slave noted that a number of civilians in the area, himself included, opened up the coffins at night—perhaps out of morbid curiosity or to potentially steal from the dead. “I pried open a number of ‘em and looked in. Some of the dead men was very natural and others wasn’t fit to look at,” noted the African American man, “One man with a blanket wrapped about him was petrified, and his appearance hadn’t changed any since he was buried, only his hair had growed way down, and his beard growed long.”¹⁹⁶

In the battle’s aftermath a number of area civilians visited the battlefield to see what assistance they could offer to the soldiers of both sides. Although some of these civilians held Confederate sympathies, in the aftermath of battle their political allegiance took secondary place to their sense of humanity. Observed Col. Keifer, “Mercy abandons the arena of battle, but when the conflict is ended *mercy* again asserts itself.”¹⁹⁷ Among the locals to visit the battlefield was a member of the Shull family. After the war Annie Shull recalled that her “mother went to the battlefield to care for the wounded and said it was the worst sight she ever saw, men, and mules and horses lay thick on the ground.” Shull even believed that some of the Union soldiers she encountered had actually taken property from her prior to the battle; still she seemed to put aside her differences and aid those who clung desperately to life. Shull remembered that “she saw some that robbed us ... before, and did all she could for all, not many rebels among them.”¹⁹⁸

Regardless of local civilians’ efforts to help the wounded soldiers in the battle’s aftermath, Union doctors still confronted a tremendous burden in caring for the wounded. Area buildings were occupied as makeshift hospitals. St. Thomas Episcopal Church transformed from a house of worship into a hospital and the Stickley home, which had been utilized by Confederate surgeons during the battle’s opening

¹⁹⁵Johnson, *Battleground Adventures*, 416.

¹⁹⁶Johnson, *Battleground Adventures*, 416.

¹⁹⁷Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 2: 153.

¹⁹⁸Shull Reminiscences, Box 14, Belle Grove Collection, Stewart Bell, Jr. Archives, Handley Regional Library, Winchester, Va.

phase, had now been commandeered by Union doctors. The scene inside the Stickley's brick home was horrific. After the war, Mary Stickley recalled that Union surgeons utilized the back porch for amputations and that the blood was so thick on the porch that her father had to clear "the blood off with a shovel."¹⁹⁹ Soldiers stable enough to be transported were sent north to Winchester where a massive field hospital had been established after the Third Battle of Winchester. Union doctors earned the praise of many for their handling of the situation after Cedar Creek. "To an efficient medical corps belongs the chief credit for the good work done in caring for the unfortunate," Col. Keifer penned.²⁰⁰

As the Army of the Shenandoah cared for the dead and wounded, Early's army attempted to make sense of what happened at Cedar Creek. Gen. Early believed that the rank and file of his army lost the battle because of their cowardly behavior. "This was the case of a glorious victory given up by my own troops after they had won it," Early concluded after the war.²⁰¹ When Early informed Lee of his loss at Cedar Creek, he confessed to his superior that to attempt an explanation as to the cause of the defeat was "mortifying." Early accepted none of the blame and explained to Lee that the reversal of fortunes at Cedar Creek was "due to no want of effort on my part."²⁰² Although some former Confederates, such as Gen. Gordon, lambasted Early for his failure to pursue the Army of the Shenandoah in the morning, and his unwillingness to send additional infantry support to bolster the army's left flank, many Confederates, both in the immediate aftermath of Cedar Creek and in the postwar years, defended Early's conduct. One Confederate soldier wrote two days after the battle that Cedar Creek "was a victory and a defeat. Early should be credited with the former—not charged with the latter. God knows I pull for and sympathize with him."²⁰³ Artillerist Milton Humphreys wrote plainly: "The men were to blame and not Early."²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁹Johnson, *Battleground Adventures*, 390.

²⁰⁰Keifer, *Four Years of Slavery and War*, 2: 153.

²⁰¹Early, *Narrative of the War Between the States*, 451.

²⁰²*O.R.* ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 563.

The 13th Virginia's Capt. Samuel Buck echoed his support for Early: "Gen. Early deserved great credit for this battle; won a victory second to none in the war and lost all by no fault of his own. He deserved a better fate." Buck, who published his reminiscences of the Civil War in 1925, believed that Gordon's observations and those of his supporters were unnecessarily abusive to Early's legacy. "Some of Gen. Gordon's admirers claim he planned the battle and would have won the victory had Gen. Early not come upon the field. I do not believe a word of it," Buck concluded.²⁰⁵

In the battle's aftermath Early was greatly troubled by the participation of his troops in plundering at Cedar Creek. Less than a week after the battle Early issued General Orders No. 44, which attempted to make the plundering soldiers accountable for their actions. Early believed that the plundering contributed directly to his army's defeat. Old Jube ordered all of his division commanders to make "out lists of all officers and men who stopped to plunder, threw away their arms, or otherwise misbehaved in the recent battle on Cedar Creek, in order that their names may be published in the newspapers ... charges will be preferred in the most flagrant cases." Early also forbade any future plundering, and he informed his command that anyone who violated this policy "will be brought to trial."²⁰⁶

While Early placed blame and his soldiers either defended or berated the army's commander, the Confederate media initially looked positively upon the Battle of Cedar Creek. Three days after the battle, the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* reported that the Confederates had actually achieved victory against Sheridan's army despite being driven back to Fisher's Hill and losing twenty-four artillery pieces. "Be that as it may, with the exception of the loss of the artillery, we are the victors," the *Dispatch* reported.

²⁰³Daniel Allen Wilson to unidentified recipient, October 21, 1864, Beverly Randolph Wellford Papers, 1773-1907, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va.

²⁰⁴Milton Humphreys Diary, Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.

²⁰⁵ Buck, *With the Old Confeds*, 127.

²⁰⁶ General Orders No. 44, quoted in *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, Nov. 7, 1864.

Additionally, in an effort to maintain morale throughout the Confederacy, the paper reported that spirits among Early's army ran high as the soldiers prepared for future battles against the Army of the Shenandoah. "Early's forces are now in good condition, and are not unprepared to meet any attack which Sheridan may make," reported the Richmond paper.²⁰⁷ Three days later, the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* again reported that Early had achieved victory at Cedar Creek. "Sheridan's official dispatches about a vigorous attack and dashing pursuit are all lies," the *Dispatch* exclaimed, "the enemy were too badly crippled to attack vigorously or pursue to any advantage."²⁰⁸

Not until nearly two weeks after the battle did the Southern media begin to show that Sheridan's army clearly achieved a miraculous victory at Cedar Creek. An unidentified Confederate soldier wrote to the *Dispatch* to set the record straight: "It is useless to disguise the fact that our army was completely stampeded. All attempts to rally the men proved utterly useless, and they crowded down the river like droves of cattle."²⁰⁹

In the North, news of Sheridan's victory spread rapidly and hopes for the conflict's end increased. The *Philadelphia Press* reported two days after the battle that Cedar Creek was one in a long line of recent victories that spelled the Confederacy's imminent collapse. "There is *no* power in Virginia that can defeat the Union armies," the *Press* wrote, "all the rebel force is needed to prolong the struggle, of which the end is certain to be absolute victory."²¹⁰ Other papers in the North believed that victory at Cedar Creek would effectively end fighting in the Valley. Six days after the battle, the *New York Evening Post* reported: "It is generally believed by our officers that there will be no more serious fighting in the

²⁰⁷*Richmond Daily Dispatch*, Oct. 22, 1864.

²⁰⁸*Richmond Daily Dispatch*, Oct. 25, 1864.

²⁰⁹*Richmond Daily Dispatch*, Oct. 29, 1864.

²¹⁰*Philadelphia Press*, Oct. 21, 1864.

Valley, it being impossible for the Richmond authorities to reinforce Early's wasted columns now scattered along the lines of retreat."²¹¹

Sensational media portrayals of Cedar Creek buoyed the North, and inspired the poet Thomas Buchanan Read to write his poem "Sheridan's Ride"—a work which helped place Sheridan in the popular American consciousness. While the exact inspiration for Read's poem is uncertain, its first recitation at Pike's Opera House in Cincinnati, Ohio, by Shakespearean-trained actor James Murdoch, was greeted with tremendous enthusiasm.²¹² On October 31—the day of the poem's reveal—the crowd received Read's poem enthusiastically. "The poem, a ringing, thrilling, dramatic production, was then recited, as only Mr. Murdoch could recite it. Each line picturing the fiery gallop of the fiery Sheridan, won the audience more and more, until it could no longer contain itself, and burst into rapturous applause," recalled an observer.²¹³ Murdoch built intensity during the reading. A listener recalled that, "Peal after peal of enthusiasm punctuated the last three glowing verses, so long was the applause at its end Mr. Murdock [sic] was recalled to the foot lights, and Mr. Read, the author, only escaped the congratulations of the audience by refusing to respond to the clamorous utterance of his name."²¹⁴ Even Murdoch reveled in the constant cheers for Sheridan, Read, and the performance. Recalled Murdoch, "The sound of my voice uttering the last word had not died away when cheer after cheer went up from the great concourse that shook the building to its very foundation. Ladies waved their handkerchiefs and men their hats."²¹⁵

²¹¹*New York Evening Post*, Oct. 25, 1864.

²¹²For lengthier discussions on the genesis of Read's poem see Jonathan A. Noyalas, *The Battle of Cedar Creek: Victory from the Jaws of Defeat* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2009), 80-89; Jonathan A. Noyalas "Regarded as a Species of Apocalypse": Sheridan's Ride in War & Memory" paper presented at the Virginia Forum Conference, University of Mary Washington, Fredericksburg, Va., April 2007. A copy of this unpublished paper was included with Noyalas' research materials to Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park.

²¹³"The Murdoch Testimonial Last Night: Tuesday, November 1, 1864," TBR.

²¹⁴"The Murdoch Testimonial Last Night: Tuesday, November 1, 1864," TBR.

²¹⁵Burr and Hinton, *The Life of Gen. Philip H. Sheridan*, 233.

Read's poem became an instant sensation in the North and emerged as a useful tool for Republicans to garner additional support for the presidential election, held less than one week after the first performance of "Sheridan's Ride." The *New York Tribune*, a strong supporter of Lincoln in the presidential race, decided to print Read's poem in its entirety on page one on election day. While the influence that Read's poem had on the election can never be known, the mere publication illustrated Republican supporters' beliefs that Sheridan's turning of events at Cedar Creek was linked to the Lincoln administration's effective handling of the conflict and finding proper commanders for the various armies.²¹⁶

The Battle's Political Impact

As the 1864 presidential election neared, Lincoln was not confident that he would defeat the Democratic candidate—former Union general George B. McClellan. Sheridan's successes in the Valley, coupled with equal achievements of Gen. William T. Sherman in Georgia that autumn, bolstered Lincoln's political stability. When Lincoln learned of Sheridan's victory, he congratulated him. "With great pleasure I tender to you and your brave army the thanks of the nation, and my own personal admiration and gratitude for the month's operations in the Shenandoah Valley; and especially for the splendid work of October 19, 1864."²¹⁷

Republicans buzzed with optimism after Sheridan's success at Cedar Creek. On the evening of October 21, Lincoln supporters held a torchlight parade in which they cheered Sheridan and defamed McClellan's image at the same time. Some Republican supporters from New Jersey carried a large

²¹⁶John Fleischman, "The Object at Hand" *Smithsonian* (Nov. 1996), 30.

²¹⁷John G. Nicolay and John Hay, eds., *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Francis D. Tandy, 1905), 10: 251.

portrait of McClellan in the parade with the words “Great Failure of the War” emblazoned across it.²¹⁸

The parade concluded in front of the Executive Mansion where a large crowd gathered and cheered for Lincoln. They demanded that the President make a few appropriate remarks. Lincoln had not prepared an address, but he did tell his supporters that they should not necessarily be cheering for him, but rather for the Union general who raised the Republicans’ mood. “I was promised not to be called upon for a speech to-night, nor do I propose to make one. But, as we have been hearing some very good news for a day or two,” Lincoln told the audience, “I propose that you give three hearty cheers for Sheridan.” Lincoln continued in praise of Sheridan: “we may as well consider how fortunate it was for the Secesh that Sheridan was a very little man. If he had been a large man, there is no knowing what he would have done with them.” As Lincoln closed his impromptu speech he also asked those in attendance to praise Gen. Grant, who changed the Valley’s strategic vision by appointing Sheridan to command. “I propose three cheers for General Grant,” Lincoln remarked, “who knew to what use to put Sheridan; three cheers for all our noble commanders and the soldiers.”²¹⁹

Further buoying Republicans’ spirits in Cedar Creek’s aftermath were the Union officers and soldiers who came to Washington, D.C., carrying trophies of war. On October 23, for example, Gen. Custer arrived in Washington with a number of captured Confederate battle flags. Custer entered Washington amid a flurry of fanfare. He rode into the capital on a locomotive that displayed ten captured Confederate battle flags (Insert Image 045N). Eventually, Custer made his way to the War Department where he delivered the captured standards to Secretary of War Stanton. Included among the colors was

²¹⁸Margaret Leech, *Reveille in Washington: 1860-1865* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941), 351.

²¹⁹Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 8: 58-59; For further reading on the political situation Lincoln confronted in 1864 see Charles Bracelen Flood, *1864: Lincoln at the Gates of History* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009).

Gen. Ramseur's headquarters' flag. In addition to the flags, Custer presented Stanton with Confederate cannon captured at the battle.²²⁰

As Election Day neared, Lincoln supporters leaned on Sheridan's success at Cedar Creek. However, not all of the men who fought at Cedar Creek approved of another term for Lincoln. A soldier in the 65th New York wrote to the *New York Sunday Mercury* a week before the election: "We trust our old friends and countrymen will work zealously for the Union on election-day in voting and laboring for General George B. McClellan."²²¹ During the week prior to the election the ballots arrived at the Army of the Shenandoah's camps and the men looked forward to casting their vote. On Election Day, as had been the case throughout much of the Union army, the men turned their attention to politics. One of Sheridan's men noted that, "The boys instead of huddling into their tents, driven there by the cold, are gathered in knots in their company streets discussing politics and other grave questions of the hour and performing the by no means unimportant duty of casting their votes for men and principles that are to govern our country through another period of four years."²²²

Despite Lincoln's fears, he defeated McClellan by winning a majority of the popular vote, including nearly eighty percent of the votes from the Union soldiers in the field—a segment of the electorate McClellan had hoped to capture. With his reelection secured, Lincoln showed his appreciation to those military commanders who played a vital role in prolonging his presidency. On November 14, 1864, Lincoln issued General Orders No. 282, which announced Sheridan's promotion to major general in the regular army. Lincoln specifically cited Sheridan's victory at Cedar Creek as the justification for the promotion. Lincoln explained: "That for the personal gallantry, military skill, and just confidence in the courage and patriotism of his troops, displayed by Philip H. Sheridan, on the 19th day of October, at Cedar

²²⁰Flood, 1864: *Lincoln at the Gates of History*, 350-351; *Harper's Weekly*, Nov. 12, 1864.

²²¹William B. Style, ed., *Writing and Fighting the Civil War: Soldier Correspondence to the New York Sunday Mercury* (Kearny, N.J.: Belle Grove Publishing, 2000), 304.

²²²Emil and Ruth Rosenblat, eds., *Hard Marching Every Day: The Civil War Letters of Private Wilbur Fisk, 1861-1865* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 273.

Run [Creek], whereby, under the blessing of Providence, his routed army was reorganized, a great national disaster averted, and a brilliant victory achieved over the rebels for the third time in pitched battle within thirty days, Philip H. Sheridan is appointed Major-General in the U.S. Army.”²²³

Conclusion

The strategic and political consequences of the Battle of Cedar Creek prompted many of the Valley’s Confederate civilians to confront the stark reality that the war would not end in their favor. Support for the war effort among Confederate civilians, particularly throughout the lower Valley, declined dramatically after Cedar Creek. These civilians, as historian Edward Phillips concluded, saw the Confederacy’s imminent collapse and realized that any continued support for the it might bring further retribution to an already devastated region.²²⁴ As the high command for each force redirected large numbers of troops from the Valley to Petersburg during the final months of 1864, Confederate raider Col. John Singleton Mosby attempted to disrupt Union forces in the Valley. With little support from Confederate civilians, those efforts proved futile and inconsequential to the war’s course.²²⁵ Valley residents, including those of Middletown, essentially abandoned the Confederate cause and began to look toward rebuilding the war-torn region.²²⁶

²²³*O.R.* Ser. 1, vol. 43, pt. 1, 62.

²²⁴Phillips, *The Lower Shenandoah Valley in the Civil War*, 168.

²²⁵Phillips, *The Lower Shenandoah Valley in the Civil War*, 168.

²²⁶Phillips, *The Lower Shenandoah Valley in the Civil War*, 168; Mahon, *The Shenandoah Valley*, 129.

Chapter Six

“Let Loyalty ... Everywhere Prevail”: Postwar Reconciliation at Cedar Creek

Introduction

Among all of the battles fought in the Shenandoah Valley, arguably none achieved more significant results or had wider-reaching consequences than the Battle of Cedar Creek. “I do not believe there is a spot on this continent,” recalled a veteran of the 128th New York during a visit to the battlefield in 1907, “where more for the interests of our nation was concentrated than here at Cedar Creek.”¹ Another veteran of the campaign commented upon Cedar Creek’s place in history: “The battle of Cedar Creek stands out like a lone sentinel, totally unlike any other battle of the war. In one brief day the veteran was plunged in the fathomless depths of crushing defeat, and then as suddenly lifted to the dizzy heights of glorious victory.”² Because of the battle’s importance, veterans longed to immortalize their involvement and visit the battlefields of Sheridan’s campaign. However, for nearly twenty years after the Civil War’s end, postwar remembrance on any battlefield in the South proved an impossible task.

In the Shenandoah Valley, the aggregate impact of war’s devastations left many families financially destitute, which further increased hatred of Union veterans among former Confederates. Mary Stickley, who lived through the battle of Cedar Creek and experienced the war almost daily, recalled that her family was “dreadfully broken up by the war, and [we] had a hard struggle to get started again. We didn’t have anything hardly, and we had to go mighty far away to get our first meat. The fences were all gone ... our only horse was a broken-down army horse that was picked up on that battlefield.”³ When John Trowbridge—a noted author of the time—toured the Shenandoah Valley less than a year after the

¹*Exercises at the Dedication of a Monument Erected on the Battlefield at Cedar Creek, Virginia, by the Survivors of the 128th Regiment, N.Y.S.V.I, October 15, 1907* (Published by the committee, 1907), 7.

²Col. Herbert E. Hill, *Campaign in the Shenandoah Valley*, 1864, 7.

³Johnson, *Battleground Adventures*, 391.

conflict's end, he witnessed the war's impact firsthand. "We passed through a region of country stamped all over by the devastating hell of war. For miles not a fence or cultivated field was visible," Trowbridge noted.⁴ During his train ride into the Valley he conversed with a Valley inhabitant who informed him that these scenes of destruction typified the experiences of many. "It is just like this all the way up the Shenandoah Valley ... the wealthiest people with us are now the poorest. With hundreds of acres they can't raise a dollar," the Valley resident informed Trowbridge.⁵

Former Confederates Place Blame

The scenes of desolation and destruction that Trowbridge witnessed represented the cumulative impact of constant campaigning, occupation by both armies, skirmishes, raids, and a dozen major battles. Despite the fact that the Valley suffered loss from both armies during the Civil War, former Confederates in the Valley blamed only one force—Sheridan's Army of the Shenandoah. Sheridan's veterans became the special focus of hatred, as it was during their time in the Valley that the most widespread destruction of private property occurred in such a short period of time. From late September until early October, Sheridan's scorched earth policy—known as "the Burning"—brought widespread destruction to a region already devastated by incessant warfare. In the campaign's aftermath Sheridan reported that his command destroyed approximately 1,200 barns and in excess of 435,000 bushels of the Valley's wheat crop, and seized nearly 11,000 head of cattle.⁶ After the war former Confederate Henry Kyd Douglas wrote that "I try to restrain my bitterness at the recollection of the dreadful scenes I witnessed ... I saw mothers and maidens tearing their hair and shrieking to Heaven in their fright and despair and little

⁴J.T. Trowbridge, *The South: A Tour of Its Battle-Fields and Ruined Cities, A Journey Through Desolated States, and Talks with the People* (Hartford, Conn.: L. Stebbins, 1866), 69.

⁵Trowbridge, *The South*, 69.

⁶Michael G. Mahon, *The Shenandoah Valley: 1861-1865: The Destruction of the Granary of the Confederacy* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1999), 135.

children, voiceless and tearless in their pitiable terror ... it is an insult to civilization and to God to pretend that the Laws of War justify such warfare.”⁷ Edward A. Pollard, who worked for the *Richmond Examiner* during the war, believed that all of the economic woes that the Valley’s inhabitants confronted resulted unequivocally from Sheridan’s operations. In 1866, Pollard published his *Southern History of the War: The Last Year of the War*, in which he assessed the impact of Sheridan’s campaign in the Valley: “The horror and crime of this devastations was remarkable even in Yankee warfare. They impoverished a whole population; they reduced women and children to beggary and starvation.”⁸

Remembering the Confederate Dead

While Valley Confederates did all they could to recover economically, they also took measures to secure the region’s Confederate legacy. In the spring of 1865, when Valley farmers began to till the soil, they uncovered the remains of both Union and Confederate soldiers. A Middletown resident recalled decades after the conflict that, “We plough up bones out [here] on the fields yet, and bullets, and ... buttons and buckles.”⁹ In the lower Valley the uncovered remains of Union dead were interred in the Winchester National Cemetery, which was dedicated in April 1866. Confederate dead in the lower Valley had no such final resting place until Mary D. Williams, of Winchester, and three other women, created the Winchester Ladies Memorial Association.¹⁰ The association made fundraising appeals throughout the

⁷Douglas, *I Rode with Stonewall*, 302.

⁸Edward A. Pollard, *Southern History of the War: The Last Years of the War* (New York: Charles B. Richardson, 1866), 109.

⁹Johnson, *Battleground Adventures*, 406.

¹⁰For further discussion on the establishment of the Winchester Ladies Memorial Association see *History of the Confederated Memorial Associations of the South* (New Orleans: The Graham Press), 315-316; *History of the Ladies Confederate Memorial Association of Winchester, Virginia* (Winchester, Va.: Farmers and Merchant National Bank, n.d.), 3-4; Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past: Ladies’ Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 39.

South and amassed \$14,000 for the purchase of five acres in Mt. Hebron Cemetery.¹¹ By February 1866, the work of reinterment began and untold numbers of Confederate remains were removed from battlefields in the lower Valley.¹² The cemetery observed its first Confederate Memorial Day on June 6, 1866.¹³

For Union veterans, the only place where any immediate memorial efforts could occur was in the Winchester National Cemetery—located across the street from the Stonewall Cemetery. Veterans of the 14th New Hampshire dedicated a monument to their regiment's service on April 9, 1866, in the cemetery.¹⁴ Beyond that, however, Union veterans who served with Sheridan would not have an opportunity for formal battlefield reunions and monument dedications in the Valley until a spirit of postwar reconciliation emerged across the entire South after the end of Military Reconstruction in 1877.

Early Forms of Remembrance

Although Union veterans could not visit the Valley's battlefields or dedicate monuments during the immediate post-war era, veterans of the Army of the Shenandoah considered alternative methods of memorializing their involvement at Cedar Creek. One of the earliest practices among veterans of both sides involved publication of articles or regimental histories. The large number of regimental histories and other publications released in postwar years emerged not only as a factual record, but as works

¹¹"A History of the Stonewall Cemetery," Stonewall Cemetery Records, Stewart Bell, Jr. Archives, Handley Regional Library, Winchester, Va.

¹²"A History of the Stonewall Cemetery," Stonewall Cemetery Records, Stewart Bell, Jr. Archives, Handley Regional Library, Winchester, Va.

¹³Winchester still observes Confederate Memorial Day on June 6. The date marks the death of Gen. Turner Ashby during a fight on Chestnut Ridge in Harrisonburg on June 6, 1862.

¹⁴Otis F.R. Waite, *New Hampshire in the Great Rebellion: Containing Histories of the Several New Hampshire Regiments, and Biographical Notices of Many of the Prominent Actors in the Civil War of 1861-65* (Claremont, N.H.: Tracy, Chase and Co., 1870), 515.

intended to reap the “laurels of glory” for the survivors of particular units.¹⁵ Regimental historians, not only those of the Army of the Shenandoah but of all armies on both sides, always presented the history of their unit in the most heroic light. Their regiment was always the first to attack and the last to withdraw, and when they did retreat it was usually under great protest and conducted in an orderly manner. While claims such as these became common rhetoric in regimental histories, often in order to achieve the “laurels of glory” in a book or article, a regimental historian tarnished the reputation of other regiments. These attacks on paper generated tremendous postwar animosity among veterans and sparked a war fought with pen and paper that, for many veterans, continued until they died.¹⁶

Veterans of the VI Corps proved particularly venomous in their representations of the remainder of Sheridan’s army at Cedar Creek. VI Corps veterans portrayed the VIII Corps’ defense as cowardly. A chaplain who served with the VI Corps wrote that “it was annoying, it was vexatious and humiliating, to see them [Crook’s VIII Corps] turn their backs ... the men were confused, and instead of forming into line, each one looked out for himself.”¹⁷ Veterans of Crook’s command defended themselves in both regimental histories and the more popularly read *National Tribune*—a national newspaper dedicated to Union veterans’ activities. In regular columns such as “Fighting Them Over,” Crook’s veterans vociferously defended their conduct. “Had the Sixth been in place of the it [the VIII Corps],” one veteran wrote in the *Tribune* in 1894, “they would have acted similarly at Cedar Creek ... The Eighth were completely surprised, and we were compelled to fall back in confusion or be captured.”¹⁸

Veterans of Emory’s Corps also did not fare well in VI Corps’ portrayals of the battle. Col. Joseph Warren Keifer wrote in 1900 that the XIX Corps simply “shared the fate of Crook’s corps, and

¹⁵Waite, *New Hampshire in the Great Rebellion*, 515.

¹⁶For a good general discussion on the controversies and debates among regimental historians in the postwar years see Carol Reardon, “Writing Battle History: The Challenge of Memory” *Civil War History* 53, no. 3 (2007): 252-263.

¹⁷Rev. John R. Adams, *Memorial and Letters* (N.p.: Privately Printed, 1890), 165.

¹⁸*National Tribune*, July 19, 1894.

was soon broken and flying to the rear.”¹⁹ Another VI Corps soldier asserted in the *National Tribune* in 1887 that Emory’s troops “did not fight, and left before they had made any effort to stay the rebels.”²⁰ These attacks were unwarranted as the XIX Corps’ defense allowed the VI Corps the necessary time so that it could organize stout defense on Cemetery Hill. Emory’s men staunchly defended their conduct at Cedar Creek. not only for their own legacy but more for that of their comrades killed at the battle. “We know the jealous dispositions of the Sixth Corps,” noted XIX Corps’ veteran D.C. Anderson, “but the families and friends of our comrades who ‘crossed the dark river’ ... do not know whether the diatribe of these comrades is true or not, and for this reason I have answered them.”²¹

While reunions in Northern cities, and publications, proved the most popular early methods of preserving the Union legacy born at Cedar Creek, art provided another method to immortalize the battle. The earliest postwar painting referencing the Battle of Cedar Creek was Thomas Buchanan Read’s *Sheridan’s Ride*, commissioned by Philadelphia’s Union League shortly after the Civil War. Read spent several weeks in 1865 sketching Sheridan and his horse. The painting debuted at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts in March 1870. In one month, the painting attracted 30,000 visitors, some of Sheridan’s veterans among them. Capt. Laurence Kip recalled: “I consider it a most excellent likeness of my late Chief. You have expressed on canvas all the life and fire he displays upon the day he took his celebrated ‘ride,’ when he turned victory into defeat.”²² [Insert Image 047N]

Other artists attempted to benefit from the popularity of Read’s painting. The firm of Louis Prang published Thur de Thulstrup’s depiction of Sheridan’s Ride in 1886 as a chromo lithograph [Insert Image 048N]. Sheridan did not approve of this representation, as he believed Thulstrup got the history

¹⁹Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 2: 132.

²⁰*National Tribune*, Nov. 24, 1887.

²¹*National Tribune*, Nov. 24, 1887.

²²“Academy of the Fine Arts. The Great National Painting, Sheridan’s Ride, by T. Buchanan Read, Now on Exhibition,” 3, 7-8, 11; Pamphlet in collection of Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, Morristown, N.J.; James G. Barber, ed., *Faces of Discord: The Civil War Era at the National Portrait Gallery* (New York: Collins, 2006), 203; “A Visit to Sheridan’s Ride” *Punchinello* no. 3, 1, (1870), 46.

wrong.²³ Approximately four years later, in January 1890, Charles H. Andrus attempted to portray the events at Cedar Creek by “represent[ing] the actual condition of affairs at that time in order to give the painting a true historical value, rather than to make a pleasing ideal picture.” [Insert Image 049N]²⁴

Across the North, the paintings of Sheridan at Cedar Creek met with approval. However, among some former Confederates, they sparked outrage. While some Confederate veterans attempted to explain what happened at Cedar Creek—either defending or condemning Gen. Early’s decision to halt—through regimental histories and articles in the *Southern Historical Society Papers* as well as *Confederate Veteran* magazine other former Confederates disparaged Sheridan’s legacy. Confederate veterans, including Early—the father of the Lost Cause—utilized typical postwar rhetoric, which stated that if Early’s army had been equal to the size of Sheridan’s he would have soundly defeated the Union force.

Although Sheridan’s Ride proved among the most popular subjects for postwar painting—second only to scenes from Gettysburg and the clash between the ironclads—the state of Vermont took a different approach to the subject in its attempt to memorialize Cedar Creek.²⁵ In 1870, Vermont’s legislature made an appropriation for “an historical painting of some battle scene of the late war” to be hung in the State Capitol. Before the state chose the subject, Vermont’s governor petitioned the Reunion Society of Vermont Officers to discuss the matter during their meeting in January 1871. As more than one hundred Vermont officers gathered in Rutland for its meeting, some suggested scenes from the Battle of Gettysburg. Lt. Col. S.E. Pingree, however, “remarked that the battle of Gettysburg had ... so many delineations” that the group depart from “the beaten path” and choose a different subject. As an alternative he recommended the Battle of Cedar Creek. “On this battlefield were gathered more Vermont

²³Harold Holzer, ed., *Prang’s Civil War Pictures: The Complete Battle Chromos of Louis Prang* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), 61-64, 150; The genesis of Sheridan’s hatred for Thulstrup’s portrayal is derived from “A Misrepresentation,” newspaper clipping, Scott Patchan private collection, Haymarket, Va. For additional discussion of the art of Sheridan’s Ride see Noyalas, “Regarded as a Species of Apocalypse.”

²⁴*Illustrated and Descriptive Catalogue of “Sheridan’s Ride” Andrus Great War Painting, 1890*, 17, booklet in collection of Vermont Veterans Militia Museum and Library, Colchester, Vt.

²⁵Gallagher, ed., *The Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1864*, 23.

troops, as distinctive organizations, than on any other field during the war, and they were all conspicuously engaged in the action,” noted one member of the Society. The Vermont officers voted unanimously to recommend that the state commission an artist to paint the Vermonters at Cedar Creek.²⁶

Vermont awarded the commission to Julian Scott. In addition to Scott’s talents as an artist, his experience as a soldier twice-wounded in battle provided him a soldier’s perspective in creating the painting.²⁷ To assist him in producing this first memorial to the veterans of Cedar Creek, Scott appealed to veterans for photographs. For more than three years, Scott labored on the massive two-hundred-square-foot painting (Insert Image 053N). As Scott painted the Vermonters at Cedar Creek, various officials and veterans visited his New York studio and appeared receptive to its quality. “The painting already wins high praise,” noted Vermont’s *St. Alban’s Daily Messenger* in October 1873, nearly one year before its final completion. When Gen. Sheridan visited the painting during its creation he “declared, after looking at it intently for a while, that it was the only battlepiece to his mind that he had seen. He liked it, he said, because it ‘made the boys as they were, going in.’”²⁸ As individual reports praised the painting, the anticipation among Vermont’s veterans who served at Cedar Creek increased. Unable to wait any longer for the unveiling, the Vermont veterans asked if Scott could bring the unfinished painting to their annual reunion in August 1874 being held in Burlington. Scott obliged. When the veterans viewed it, they approved. A Vermont paper stated simply that it was “admired ... during the Soldiers’ reunion.”²⁹ In October, 1874, Scott’s masterpiece was framed in a one ton gold-gilt frame and placed in the State Capitol, where it still hangs today. Despite the painting’s popularity and its immortalization of Vermont’s role in the Shenandoah Valley’s greatest battle, the Vermont veterans, and undoubtedly all

²⁶*Proceedings of the Reunion Society of Vermont Officers, 1864-1884, With Addresses Delivered at Its Meetings* (Burlington, Vt.: Free Press Association, 1885), 142-144.

²⁷Harold Holzer and Mark E. Neely, Jr., *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: The Civil War in Art* (New York: Orion Books, 1993), 283, 286-287.

²⁸*St. Albans Daily Messenger*, Oct. 9, 1873.

²⁹Robert J. Titterton, *Julian Scott: Artist of the Civil War and Native Americans* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1993), 109-110.

who served with Sheridan in 1864, longed to immortalize, on the battlefield itself, the deeds that defined their military legacy.

The Path to Reunion and Reconciliation in the Valley

The ability of Union veterans to return to their old battlegrounds in the Valley took a major step forward with the end of military Reconstruction following the ascendancy of Rutherford B. Hayes to the presidency in 1877. Additionally, economic stability returned to the Valley by the late 1870s as Valley crop outputs rose to prewar levels. With Reconstruction's end and renewed economic stability, many former Confederates in the Valley began to accept the war's results and look forward, with the rest of the nation, to a period of national reconciliation.³⁰ Moreover, Northern attitudes toward the former Confederacy changed by the late 1870s as Union veterans and their families visited the South as a vacation destination. By the 1880s, among Northerners, the South had emerged as a location for vacation and relaxation.³¹ Numerous springs and hotels attracted Northerners to the Valley by the early 1880s. One Northern visitor to the Valley wrote: "They have a valley rich and fertile and are gradually recovering what they lost. Instead of a battle-field the Valley of Virginia has been changed to an immense summer resort. Numerous springs and summer hotels dot the mountain sides and there is no more imposing mountain scenery anywhere."³²

By 1881 clear signs emerged in the Valley that veterans of blue and gray could put aside their wartime differences for the sake of national unity. For example, on July 21, 1881, ex-Confederates from

³⁰Kenneth E. Koons, "The Colored Laborers Work as Well as When Slaves: African Americans in the Breadbasket of the Confederacy, 1850-1880," in Clarence R. Geier and Stephen R. Potter, eds., *Archaeological Perspectives on the American Civil War* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 241-242. For a discussion on the emergence of postwar reconciliation sentiment see David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2001), 198-206.

³¹For discussion of a changing view of the South see Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 66-70).

³²W.C. King and W.P. Derby, comps., *Camp-Fire Sketch and Battle-Field Echoes*, 513.

Luray invited members of the Captain Colwell G.A.R. Post in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, to the Valley for a Blue-Gray reunion. Members of the Colwell Post noted that their former enemies treated them “accordingly” in the Shenandoah Valley.³³

The Sheridan’s Veterans Association Visits the Valley in 1883 and 1885

Amid this new climate, veterans who served in Sheridan’s Valley army saw a great opportunity to connect with their past and honor the sacrifices of both sides on the ground that defined their Civil War service. During the meeting of the 14th New Hampshire Volunteers Veterans Association in the autumn of 1882, some of the veterans conceived the idea to organize the Sheridan’s Veterans Association. The New Hampshire veterans hoped the association could organize a reunion on the battlefields of September and October 1864 where nearly 20,000 soldiers of blue and gray became casualties in the Shenandoah Valley’s bloodiest campaign. The idea of the trip excited the men of the 14th as it would be “the opportunity of a lifetime ... to revisit the scenes of their triumphs, to contrast the dreadful past with the happy present and experience the sincere and royal welcome which generous Southern hearts could extend to former foes.”³⁴

Under the leadership of the 14th’s Col. Carroll D. Wright, president of the Sheridan’s Veterans’ Association, the veterans prepared to visit the Valley in mid-September 1883, coinciding with the anniversary of the Third Battle of Winchester (Insert Image 054N).³⁵ As the veterans planned their visit, they exercised great caution in how they defined their visit. Rather than utilize the term “reunion,” the

³³*The Century Magazine* 36, no. 3 (1888): 440-441. For further discussion of Blue Gray reunions throughout the South see Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 201-205.

³⁴Francis Henry Buffum, *Sheridan’s Veterans: A Souvenir of their Two Campaigns in the Shenandoah Valley, the One, of War, in 1864, the Other, of Peace, in 1883, Being the Record of the Excursion to the Battle-Fields of the Valley of Virginia, September 15-24, 1883* (Boston: W.F. Brown and Co., Printers, 1883), vii.

³⁵For a short biographical treatment of Wright see James Leiby, *Carroll Wright and Labor Reform: The Origin of Labor Statistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

veterans stated it would be an “excursion”—a word more consistent with the South’s emergence as a vacation destination. When the veterans arrived in the Valley in mid-September they received a warm welcome. In Winchester, the United Confederate Veterans Camp No. 4 greeted them along with hundreds of area citizens. A correspondent from a Charlestown, West Virginia, newspaper noted that the former Confederates greeted Sheridan’s veterans with “distinguished honors.”³⁶

During their weeklong excursion in the Valley, the 200 members of the Sheridan’s Veterans Association held ceremonies in the Winchester National Cemetery, and offered prayers and laid flowers on the graves in the Stonewall Confederate cemetery. On September 22, the veterans made their way to the Cedar Creek battlefield. The veterans first gathered at Belle Grove where James Smellie—the property’s owner—greeted them warmly. Following a noon meal at Belle Grove, the veterans visited their old battle lines (Insert Image 055N). As they walked across the fields they noted that little had changed since 1864. “The topography has changed but little,” recalled one veteran, “and there was no difficulty in finding the sites of the old camps, the temporary breastworks thrown up in places, and also so many souvenirs and relics of the fight.” (Insert Image 056N)³⁷

Veterans of the 14th New Hampshire Infantry followed their regimental historian Francis H. Buffum to the XIX Corps’ trench line. When Buffum came to the Valley in 1881 to do conduct research on the regimental history, he marked the location of the regiment with a small pile of stones, inside of which he placed a note. When the veterans reached the small pile of stones, Buffum reached inside, discovered the paper, added an inscription to it, and reburied it in among the stones (Insert Image 057N).³⁸

³⁶*Spirit of Jefferson*, Sept. 25, 1883.

³⁷Buffum, *Sheridan’s Veterans*..1883, 87.

³⁸Francis Henry Buffum, *Sheridan’s Veterans No. II: A Souvenir of their Third Campaign in the Shenandoah Valley, 1864-1883-1885, September 15-25, 1885* (Boston: W.F. Brown & Co, 1886), 100.

As the veterans fanned out over the old killing fields they encountered some area civilians who had been there during the war. The veterans reminisced with the civilians of Middletown and were undoubtedly shocked when some of them “spoke quite well of the general conduct of the men” during the course of the war.³⁹ With such a positive experience visiting Cedar Creek, the men regretted that time was too short to reflect on the campaign’s most significant field. “It was already apparent that the time included within the limits of the excursion was altogether too short for any thorough exploration ... the wonderful field of Cedar Creek was not satisfactorily traversed by the veterans.”⁴⁰ Both Sheridan’s veterans and Valley residents reflected positively on the visit. One Valley newspaper noted that: “the behavior of the excursionists is highly extolled by all, and it is to be hoped that the visit will go far toward exciting friendly feelings between the two sections of the country.”⁴¹

Two years later, the Sheridan’s Veterans’ Association returned to the Valley to continue their work of postwar reconciliation. On September 21, 1885, they returned to Cedar Creek. For this visit, veterans decided to plan formal activities to commemorate the battle’s twenty-first anniversary. Eleven members of the association decided to reenact Sheridan’s ride. They rented horses in Winchester and followed Sheridan’s storied path. Francis Buffum, who took part in the ride, recalled that the men rode “over the General’s course to the point where he rallied his troops to their magnificent victory.” The reenacted ride, however, bore no resemblance to Sheridan’s journey to save his army. “It was a jolly ride,” Buffum recalled, “and some of the valiant knights got left—behind.”⁴²

Dedication of the 8th Vermont Monument

³⁹Buffum, *Sheridan’s Veterans...1883*, 88.

⁴⁰Buffum, *Sheridan’s Veterans...1883*, 89.

⁴¹*Winchester News*, Sept. 1883.

⁴²Buffum, *Sheridan’s Veterans No. II*, 86.

Once the veterans arrived in Middletown they all made their way to the wooded ridge on the east side of the Valley Pike defended by the 8th Vermont on the morning of October 19. The Vermonters determined to permanently mark the spot of their valor and immortalize their role at Cedar Creek with a simple block of Vermont marble. While the monument contained no fanciful bronze statues or ornate carvings, the Vermonters believed their simple monument adequately symbolized their regiment's experiences that morning. One Vermonter noted that, "in design it is most appropriate—a massive block of marble standing on the ground without base or adjunct of any kind, rough on three sides but smoothed on the fourth for the inscription." Col. Herbert E. Hill who gave the monument as a gift, delivered a dedicatory address before not only Sheridan's veterans but before Confederate veterans who fought at Cedar Creek as well (Insert Image 058N). Hill pointed out to his listeners that the monument's three rough sides represented three important elements of the 8th Vermont's service on that ridge. First, each of the three rough sides symbolized the three regimental standard bearers "who were shot down in the terrible hand-to-hand conflict and who died." Secondly, the three rough sides served as a reminder that at one point during the fight the regiment took enemy fire from three directions—front and both flanks. Last, the three rough sides denoted the nearly three-fourths of the regiment who became casualties at Cedar Creek.⁴³

Beyond the monument's symbolic meaning, it also served as an emblem of reconciliation in the Valley. Capt. S.E. Howard, who had been wounded on that spot, informed the crowd during his address that the veterans of the 8th Vermont also placed the marble stone there as a "pillar stone which shall forever mark an era of genuine fraternal feeling between us. Let it be an everlasting covenant that we will not pass over this stone to thee, and thou shalt pass over this pillar to us, for harm."⁴⁴ During the

⁴³Buffum, *Sheridan's Veterans No. II*, 88-89. The 8th Vermont Monument at Cedar Creek was the second monument that the regiment's survivors dedicated during the 1885 reunion in the Valley. The first was dedicated on September 19, 1885, in honor of the 8th Vermont's charge at the Third Battle of Winchester. The monument was placed "upon the ground where the charge terminated which broke the rebel centre." At some point after 1885, the monument was moved from the Winchester battlefield and placed in the Winchester National Cemetery. The precise date of this movement is not yet known. See Buffum, *Sheridan's Veterans No. II*, 56.

⁴⁴Buffum, *Sheridan's Veterans No. II* 92.

dedication, another veteran urged all to: “let loyalty and fraternity everywhere prevail, and all the social and moral virtues have a high rating with us as a people, then will there be ground for the hope that the future of our beloved country may be worthy of its glorious past.”⁴⁵ Remarks such as these proved typical of monument dedications throughout the South during this period of reconciliation. What Howard did not say during his address also proved typical of the era of reconciliation. At no time during his remarks did he address the war’s causes or the role that slavery played in it. While some former Union veterans, such as Albion W. Tourgee, condemned other Union veterans who refused to acknowledge slavery’s role, a large portion of Union veterans understood, as historian David Blight has pointed out, that casting up the causes of the war, particularly slavery, stood as an obstacle to postwar reconciliation. For Union veterans at monument dedications, either in the Valley or throughout the South, the themes of dedication addresses always focused on the gallantry and heroism of soldiers on both sides.⁴⁶

14th New Hampshire Impromptu Memorial

Following the 8th Vermont dedication, veterans of the 14th New Hampshire visited their impromptu memorial in the XIX Corps’ trenches and determined to erect something larger than a simple pile of stones. When the veterans reached the spot, they discovered that it had not been disturbed and inside remained “one of Sutler Farr’s dilapidated fruit cans,” which contained the “entirely legible” handwritten message of Francis Buffum. After the veterans determined to mark the spot more durably, five individuals, including Buffum, took off their coats and stacked stones over the original pile of stones.

⁴⁵Buffum, *Sheridan’s Veterans No. II*, 99. During the dedication of the 8th Vermont monument at Cedar Creek Gen. W.W. Grout also provided direction for the preservation of the battlefield when he stated “Then let us remember that upon us and upon all of us this day an generation rests the high duty of preserving and transmitting unimpaired this priceless legacy.” Buffum, *Sheridan’s Veterans No. II*, 99. That was realized with the creation of the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation in 1989 and finally the establishment of Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park with Public Law 107-373 on December 19, 2002.

⁴⁶Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 218-219.

“The original pile was enclosed in a monument well laid up, about three feet base and five feet high.” Although the veterans determined to mark the spot more permanently in the future, the feat was never accomplished. The reasons for this are still unclear.⁴⁷

One of the other mysteries of the New Hampshire monument is its fate. When the New Hampshire veterans departed the Valley in 1885 they apparently had a verbal agreement with Belle Grove’s owner, James Smellie, “to secure its preservation.”⁴⁸ Although the monument no longer stands in its position along the XIX Corps’ trench line, it is plausible that remnants of it remain. In a study performed by James Madison University in 2006, a substantial pile of stones in the XIX Corps’ trench lines was discovered and identified as “an apparent chimney hearth and footer that is rectangular in shape and made of cut limestone blocks put in place with no evidence of mortar.” While this structure may in fact be a chimney, its location and temporary construction make it reasonable to surmise that it might be the remnant of the 14th New Hampshire monument. It is recommended that the National Park Service pursue future study of this rock pile as it might prove to be the lost monument.⁴⁹

As the veterans from New Hampshire built their monument, the entire Cedar Creek battlefield bustled with activity as veterans of the blue and gray visited and reminisced. Veterans of both armies “walked side by side, if not arm in arm ... and these men who then thought of themselves enemies now meet as friends,” recalled one veteran. Another noted of the scene in 1885: “Horsemen are galloping from point to point, an interested group is over inspecting the Vermont monument; veterans and ladies are roaming up and down the pike; Sixth Corps men are reconnoitering their old position; the Nineteenth

⁴⁷Buffum, *Sheridan’s Veterans...1885*, 100.

⁴⁸Buffum, *Sheridan’s Veterans No. II*, 100.

⁴⁹Clarence Geier and Phoebe Hardin, *An Overview and Assessment of Cultural Resources and Landscapes Within the Legislated Cedar Creek—Belle Grove National Historical Park* (Harrisonburg, Va.: James Madison University, 2006) 2: 262-263. In addition to mystery of the 14th New Hampshire’s impromptu memorial, there was another monument placed on the battlefield in 1905. Identified ambiguously as the Widham Monument, it was initially believed to have been placed in the area of Thoburn’s earthworks and then at some point removed and placed in the Stonewall Jackson Museum at Hupp’s Hill which no longer exists. The monument’s whereabouts at this point are uncertain, as is its history.

Corps breastworks and the rolling plain are dotted with excursionists.”⁵⁰ The day’s activities closed with a meal at Belle Grove.

After the 1885 visit of the Sheridan’s Veterans Association in, the group continued to hold annual reunions, but never made a return trip to the Valley as a group. However, each year, various regimental associations held reunions in the Valley and always made Cedar Creek one of their stops. President William McKinley—a veteran of the battle—visited the battlefield in mid-May, 1899. McKinley’s train stopped in Middletown near Miller’s Mill—the scene of Ramseur’s mortal wounding. “The train stopped at Cedar Creek near the old mill which that battle made famous. The scene was recognized by the president who made several comments on it.” According to various newspaper sources, Valley residents—including those in Middletown—greeted him warmly. “Everywhere the President was received with an enthusiasm that has never been aroused by the presence of any other Republican President in the Southern States,” noted a reporter.⁵¹ McKinley’s visit illustrates the emerging acceptance of reconciliation in the Valley, and that the Spanish-American War helped heal the war’s wounds. A correspondent for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* wrote of the conflict’s impact on reconciliation: “The war with Spain has been worth to the United States a thousand times its cost.”⁵²

Dedication of 128th New York Monument

Five years after McKinley’s visit to Cedar Creek, veterans of the 128th New York—a regiment from the XIX Corps—organized a committee of Lt. B.T. Benson, B.W. Van Wyck and D. Brown to solicit funds for the construction of a monument and the purchase of a parcel of land on the Cedar Creek battlefield. Two years after the committee formed, it had raised enough funds to purchase a piece of land on the west

⁵⁰Buffum, *Sheridan’s Veterans No. II*, 100.

⁵¹*Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 22, 1899.

⁵²*Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 22, 1899.

side of the Valley Pike at the left end of the XIX Corps' trench line. With the land purchased, the committee then commissioned Henry P. Rieger of Baltimore, Maryland, to craft the monument from Barre granite.⁵³ Rieger's firm completed work on the monument by the autumn of 1907 and veterans of the regiment gathered at the Cedar Creek battlefield for its dedication on October 15, 1907. Thirty-eight New Yorkers made the trip to the Valley and when they arrived they received a warm reception. Included in the welcome party at Cedar Creek were members of the Stover Camp of Confederate veterans from Strasburg.⁵⁴ The Confederate veterans, recalled a New Yorker, "came in a body and in uniform to give the visitors a welcome and fraternal greeting. These Confederate veterans were among the most interested spectators. They gladly received the button that had been made for the occasion, and they distributed a large number of souvenirs among the visitors."⁵⁵

Derrick Brown, the master of ceremonies, gathered the crowd and delivered opening remarks typical of reconciliation (Insert Image 059N). He informed the onlookers that the New Yorkers' monument stood not only to honor the regiment, but to honor the gallantry of all who fought at Cedar Creek—regardless of what uniform they wore. Brown stated that the monument "marks the spot where men met men and Americans met Americans ... it will serve the broader and purer purpose of memorializing every effort and every sacrifice made upon this soil, hallowed as it is by the blood here shed forty-three years ago."⁵⁶

Following Brown's opening speech, the American flag covering the monument was pulled off by Mrs. B.W. Van Wyck to the "loud cheers" of the crowd, including the Confederate veterans.⁵⁷ When the cheers died down, Herbert S. Larrick, a lawyer from Winchester, addressed the audience. While Larrick

⁵³*The Evening Enterprise*, Oct. 12, 1907; *Exercises at the Dedication of a Monument Erected on the Battlefield of Cedar Creek, Virginia, by the Survivors of the 128th Regiment, N.Y.S.V.I., October 15, 1907* (N.p.: Published by the Committee, n.d.), 4.

⁵⁴*Baltimore Sun*, Oct. 16, 1907.

⁵⁵*Exercises at the Dedication of a Monument*, 4.

⁵⁶*Exercises at the Dedication of a Monument* 6.

⁵⁷*Exercises at the Dedication of a Monument* 9.

told the New Yorkers that he would not apologize for the war, nor encourage anyone to forget the Confederate cause, he recognized the importance of not living in the past and putting aside differences for the sake of national unity. He encouraged all to identify no longer as Northerners or Southerners, but rather as American. Larrick stated: “you should teach our young men that there is no north for the northerner, no south for the southerner, but one grand and glorious America for the patriotic and liberty-loving Americans.”⁵⁸

Dedication of Gen. Stephen D. Ramseur Monument

Thirteen years later veterans of both armies gathered on the Cedar Creek battlefield to dedicate a monument to Gen. Stephen D. Ramseur. The North Carolina Historical Commission and the North Carolina Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy conducted fundraising efforts for the monument and dedicated it on September 16, 1920. The monument’s granite pillar was given as a gift by Col. Peter H. Mayo of Richmond, Virginia. The historical commission and U.D.C. provided the base and bronze tablet. The cannon balls that capped the monument’s pillar—perhaps in a symbolic gesture of reconciliation—came from the Portsmouth, New Hampshire, navy yard.⁵⁹ After welcoming remarks from Philip Williams, the city solicitor of Winchester, Gen. Ramseur’s daughter Mary—who had been only several days old at the time of her father’s death—removed two Confederate flags that covered the monument (Insert Image 060N). One flag was a North Carolina flag owned by the family of Holmes Conrad of Winchester; the other was a flag from the Stonewall Brigade owned by the General Turner Ashby camp of Confederate veterans.⁶⁰

⁵⁸*Exercises at the Dedication of a Monument* 14-15.

⁵⁹*Charlotte Observer*, September 17, 1920.

⁶⁰*Charlotte Observer*, September 17, 1920.

Included among the ceremony's seven speakers was Col. Henry A. DuPont, a West Point classmate of Ramseur's and commander of Crook's artillery at the battle. More importantly, DuPont was one of several Union officers who sat by Ramseur's deathbed in an early sign of reconciliation. DuPont stated: "As a close friend of my youthful days I held him in most affectionate remembrance, and as I happened to have been personally concerned in much, if not all, that occurred from the time he fell mortally wounded...until the end came during the early hours of the following day, I was exceedingly desirous that the information in my possession should be imparted to his immediate relatives and friends."⁶¹

The dedication of Ramseur's monument illustrated the effectiveness of postwar reconciliation, albeit with amnesia of the war's emancipationist legacy (Insert Image 062N). The work of the Sheridan's Veterans Association and joint participation in dedications in the Valley and at Cedar Creek caught the attention of many who viewed these interactions in the Valley as positive. Among those to realize the importance of these activities was former Confederate Gen. Fitzhugh Lee, a veteran of the 1864 Valley Campaign and powerful Virginia politician. Lee wrote that: "such reunions result in producing fraternal feeling among the sections and strengthening the union of States ... the South is marching steadily forward and ... she is not chanting miseries over a struggle of a quarter century ago, but is waving the star-spangled banner and hopes the 'bloody shirt' will be furled forever."⁶²

Conclusion

After the dedication of Ramseur's monument, the number of veterans visiting the Cedar Creek battlefield declined with each passing year.⁶³ Evidence suggests, however, that by the early twentieth century Cedar

⁶¹Henry A. DuPont, *Address by Colonel DuPont Upon the Unveiling of Major General Ramseur's Monument* (Winterthur, Del.: H.A. DuPont, 1920), 1-2.

⁶²Fitzhugh Lee to Veterans at Winchester, Sept. 18, 1885, quoted in *Winchester Times*, Sept. 23, 1885.

Creek might have actually started to attract tourists by the time veteran gatherings began to decline.

Around the turn of the century, the Baltimore and Ohio R.R. published *The Blue and the Gray:*

Battlefields on or near the Baltimore & Ohio. Among the battles included in the tour was Cedar Creek.⁶⁴

Photographer Frances Benjamin Johnston also helped foment early tourism of Cedar Creek with her spread “The Country of Sheridan’s Ride,” which appeared in the July 1901 issue of *Ladies’ Home Journal*.⁶⁵

Today, thanks to the preservation efforts begun by the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation in 1989, followed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (owners of the Belle Grove Property), the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, and finally by the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Park established in 2002, the efforts of the veterans to make certain that the battle’s sacrifices and spirit of postwar reconciliation would live on in perpetuity will be honored for future generations.

⁶³No formal records have yet been discovered that denote specific Confederate veteran reunions on the Cedar Creek battlefield. The only evidence of formal Confederate veteran activities at the battlefield, aside from the Ramseur monument dedication, is the presence of Confederate veterans during the Union reunions and monument dedications on the battlefield. Postwar newspapers indicate that annual reunions of Confederate veterans were held at Fisher’s Hill. For example see *Baltimore American*, July 29, 1906. This could be an avenue of investigation for future researchers.

⁶⁴*The Blue and the Gray: Battlefields on or Near the Baltimore & Ohio*, 21-23, pamphlet in Jonathan A. Noyalas private collection, Martinsburg, W.Va. The brochure uses the event of Sheridan’s Ride as the main attraction to the battlefield.

⁶⁵Geraldine Wojno Kiefer and James K. Bryant II, “Strategy and Sublimity: A Gallery of Valley Pike Images during the Civil War” in Warren R. Hofstra and Karl Raitz, eds., *The Great Valley Road of Virginia: Shenandoah Landscapes from Prehistory to the Present* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 150-151.

[This is a marker page—Noyalas' figures should be placed here.]

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Bibliographic Essay, Part II

In 1883, George Pond, the associate editor of *The Army and Navy Journal*, observed of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley during the Civil War: "Looking at the Shenandoah Valley in history, we observe that it was the scene of constant maneuvering ... whether on a large scale ... or on a smaller one ... from the first it was a tempting field for the strategists of both armies."¹ While the Shenandoah Valley's myriad strategic benefits led to frequent fighting there, it also caused people living in some portions of the region to experience the war mostly as a front line rather than a home front. As armies passed, plundered, and fought, they left behind the ravages of war for civilians of all allegiances. Although no Valley community could escape the conflict's reach, some of them experienced the war to a greater degree than others. Among the Valley communities touched by the war's cruel hand, was Middletown.

Situated in the lower Shenandoah Valley, where nearly 75 percent of all major battles in the region occurred, for much of the conflict Middletown found itself between the lines of opposing armies making it a border community. Only recently have scholars delved into the war's social aspects and impact on civilian populations. While no study—save this historic resource study—examines the conflict's impact on the residents living within the present day Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, several important studies provide broad contextual background for generally understanding the experiences of civilians—Union, Confederate, slave, and free black. The beginning point for any study of the civilian experience during the war is Stephen V. Ash's *When the Yankees Came: Conflict & Chaos in the Occupied South, 1861-1865*. Published in 1995, Ash's study examines the war's impact by dividing the South into three distinct areas of occupation—garrisoned towns, the Confederate frontier, and the no-man's land in between. "The afflictions of occupation assumed a different form in each of these arenas and struck with differing intensity. Truly there were three occupied

¹George E. Pond, *The Shenandoah Valley in 1864* (New York, 1883), 3.

Souths, each with its own story,” Ash contends in his book.² The community of Middletown fit, for most of the war, into Ash’s latter category.

Although Ash’s book provides categories for regional or community level analysis, localized studies of the Valley provide an important foundation for interpreting the experience of Middletown’s civilians. In 1958 Edward H. Phillips completed his dissertation and nearly four decades later his study was published posthumously as *The Lower Shenandoah Valley in the Civil War: The Impact of War Upon the Civilian Population and Upon Civil Institutions*. Phillips’ study focuses on the complete Valley experience from the secession crisis through the conflict’s end. Another fine study of the overall experience of Valley civilians during the same era is Jonathan M. Berkey’s Ph.D. dissertation “War in the Borderland: The Civilians’ Civil War in Virginia’s Lower Shenandoah Valley,” completed in 2003. Berkey analyzes the population categorically with chapters on Confederates, Unionists, and African Americans. Also in 2003, Berkey published an essay entitled “In the Very Midst of the War Track: The Valley’s Civilians and the Shenandoah Campaign,” which appeared in Gary W. Gallagher, ed., *The Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1862*. In this essay, Berkey focuses on how civilians, including slaves, dealt with and were impacted by Stonewall Jackson’s Valley Campaign. Michael G. Mahon’s *The Shenandoah Valley 1861-1865: The Destruction of the Granary of the Confederacy*, published in 1999, also provides a sweeping view of the war’s impact on the Valley’s inhabitants, especially its agricultural resources. Additionally, Edward L. Ayers’ *In the Presence of Mine Enemies: War in the Heart of America, 1859-1861*, a comparative history that addresses the war through the prism of the residents of Franklin County, Pennsylvania, and Augusta County, Virginia, provides useful information about the war in the Valley, including the impact of John Brown’s raid and the secession crisis.

Each of the previously mentioned publications provide sweeping studies of life in the Valley but they lack detailed attention to the discussion of the secession crisis in the region. Two more recent essays—Andrew J. Torget’s “Unions of Slavery: Slavery Politics, and Secession in the Valley of

²Stephen V. Ash, *When the Yankees Came: Conflict and Chaos in the Occupied South, 1861-1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), x.

Virginia,” in *Crucible of the Civil War: Virginia From Secession to Commemoration*, and “The Shenandoah Valley of Virginia,” by Michael Mahon in *Virginia at War: 1861*— provide thorough examinations of the complexities of changing attitudes about secession. Both Torget and Mahon contend that popular opinion about severing from the Union changed gradually from the time Lincoln won the presidential election of 1860 through the firing on Fort Sumter in April 1861. Valley inhabitants, including those of Middletown, held a more pragmatic approach to secession. They cast their lot with the newly formed Confederacy only after they believed that the Federal government had exceeded its authority.³

Several publications provide localized context for understanding the war in the Valley. As Winchester—located only eleven miles north of Middletown—was the most targeted location in the Valley during the war, so too has it become a prime target of authors. Four books have been published about Winchester’s story, beginning with Garland Quarles’ *Occupied Winchester*, followed by Roger U. Delauter, Jr.’s *Winchester in the Civil War*, and Jonathan Noyalas’ *Plagued by War: Winchester, Virginia, During the Civil War*. The most recent volume on Winchester, Richard R. Duncan’s *Beleaguered Winchester: A Virginia Community at War, 1861-1865*, builds upon the work of the three previously published volumes to present a clear picture of the defiance of Confederate civilians to Federal incursions into their region, and the passive nature of most Unionists in the lower Valley. None of these works, however, adequately address the complexities of “freedom” that confronted slaves in the lower Valley.

Aside from Berkey’s dissertation, only three studies—all by Jonathan Noyalas—seek understanding of “uncertain freedom” for slaves in the lower Valley. Noyalas’ *“My Will is Absolute Law”: A Biography of Union General Robert H. Milroy*, examines Milroy’s enforcement of the

³Andrew J. Torget, “Unions of Slavery: Slavery, Politics, and Secession in the Valley of Virginia” in Edward L. Ayers, Gary W. Gallagher, Andrew J. Torget, eds., *Crucible of the Civil War: Virginia From Secession to Commemoration* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 9-34; Michael G. Mahon, “The Shenandoah Valley of Virginia” in William C. Davis and James I. Robertson, Jr., eds., *Virginia at War: 1861* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2005), 131-148.

Emancipation Proclamation in Frederick County, from January to June 1863. Also helpful is Noyalas' study of Newtown (present-day Stephens City, located five miles north of Middletown), entitles *Two Peoples, One Community: The African American Experience in Newtown (Stephens City), Virginia, 1850-1870*. This volume examines how African Americans in that community interacted with its white inhabitants, how they reacted to the secession crisis, how they dealt with the uncertainties of the Civil War, and, after the war, how former slaves integrated themselves into a local society that rejected them as social equals. "'Lord God Almighty Will Fight on Our Side': Enforcing Emancipation in Frederick County, Virginia, 1863" published in the 2009 edition of the *Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society Journal*, also by Noyalas, describes and analyzes how slaves, free blacks, and whites (both Confederate and Unionist sympathizers) reacted to Milroy's enforcement of emancipation. Finally, Noyalas' essay, "Uncertain Freedom: The African Americans' Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley," in *Home Front to Front Line: The Civil War Era in the Shenandoah Valley*, likewise addresses the complex and tenuous nature of freedom for African Americans during the Civil War.

Just as extant studies do not detail the impact of the conflict on the civilian population of the area within Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, no stand-alone studies cover the military operations in the area prior to the Battle of Cedar Creek. Despite the paucity of site-specific studies, several important works provide context for the action at Middletown that occurred as part of Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks' retreat from Strasburg, to Winchester on May 24, 1862. Robert Tanner's often overlooked *Stonewall in the Valley: Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson's Shenandoah Valley Campaign, Spring 1862*, the first classic study of Jackson's campaign, offers basic information about the action, as does James I. Robertson Jr.'s. *Stonewall Jackson: The Man, The Soldier, The Legend* . However, the two best studies of the fight on May 24, 1862, are Peter Cozzens, *Shenandoah 1862: Stonewall Jackson's Valley Campaign*, and Gary Ecelbarger's *Three Days in the Shenandoah: Stonewall Jackson at Front Royal and Winchester*. Cozzens provides excellent analysis of the attitudes of Gen. Banks' contraband wagon drivers—many of whom were Valley slaves who sought refuge with Banks' army. Ecelbarger's

study, on the other hand, presents a detailed study of the fighting as it ebbed from the bridge over Cedar Creek through Middletown into the farm fields around Miller's Mill. Edward J. Hagerty's *Collis Zouaves: The 114th Pennsylvania Volunteers in the Civil War*, published in 1997, provides detailed information concerning the Zouaves D'Afrique—the primary infantry force that secured the bridge over Cedar Creek.

Despite the comparatively few studies detailing the experiences of Middletown's inhabitants previous to the Battle of Cedar Creek, there is an abundance of material on the battle itself. Regarded by one observer as "the most dramatic battle of the war," no Valley battle had more wide-reaching consequences than the Battle of Cedar Creek.⁴ The battle finally wrested the Shenandoah Valley—the "Breadbasket of the Confederacy"—from a once firm Confederate grip, thus eliminating it as a source of provender to Confederate forces operating in Virginia. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan's victory at Cedar Creek also prevented Confederate use of the Valley as an avenue of invasion into the North, or a place from which Confederate forces could threaten Washington, D.C.. Also, the timing of Sheridan's success, coupled with that of Gen. William T. Sherman's army in Georgia, proved a great boon to President Abraham Lincoln's bid for reelection in November 1864.

The battle's significance prompted many who were involved in it to commit their accounts to paper. From the late 1860s through the early part of the twentieth century, veterans of Early's army published their observations on the battle in publications such as *The Southern Historical Society Papers*, *Confederate Veteran*, postwar reminiscences, and, occasionally, unit histories. A number of trends are observable in these writings. Authors either placed blame on Gen. Jubal A. Early for the defeat at Cedar Creek, or upon the Confederate soldiers who left the ranks to plunder Union camps during the battle's morning phase. Also, the authors did what they could to diminish the importance of Gen. Philip Sheridan, in particular, and his famous ride from Winchester to his army at Cedar Creek.

⁴Charles Carleton Coffin, *Freedom Triumphant: The Fourth Period of the War of the Rebellion, From September 1864, to its Close* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1890), 62.

Union veterans published their accounts in places such as *The National Tribune* or in regimental histories. Although these sources provide good primary material from which historians can reconstruct the events of the Battle of Cedar Creek, they are by no means objective. Soldiers of both sides utilized these early publications as a way of defining their legacy. In the writings by Union veterans, the publications commonly were used to protect and enhance the legacy of their units, but also to diminish that of others.⁵ Many regimental historians portrayed their regiment's service in the most positive light in an attempt to crown the veterans with "laurels of glory." Other veterans' regimental histories or published personal reminiscences directly attacked the memory of other units.⁶ Among the two most venomous veteran-authors after the war were George T. Stevens—surgeon of the 77th New York—and the 14th New Hampshire's Francis Henry Buffum. Stevens' *Three Years in the Sixth Corps: A Concise Narrative of Events in the Army of the Potomac, from 1861 to the Close of the Rebellion, April, 1865*, was published in 1866. In it, he attacked the VIII and XIX Corps for its conduct at Cedar Creek, and argued that the VI Corps saved the day at Cedar Creek. Buffum, however, who served in the XIX Corps, had a different view. In his *Memorial of the Great Rebellion: Being a History of the Fourteenth Regiment New-Hampshire Volunteers*, published in 1882, Buffum attacked authors such as Stevens and asserted that "Altogether too much has the Sixth Corps arrogated itself the credit of doing the principal part of the fighting on that occasion ... That corps did well—after they got to do anything: it always fought splendidly; yet few of its members can be trusted to write history—of themselves."⁷ Those veterans who did not produce book-length accounts of their involvement in the war argued their case in *The National Tribune*, a postwar newspaper that allowed Union veterans to share their versions of history. Veterans of

⁵For a general discussion on the controversies and debates among regimental historians in the postwar years see Carol Reardon, "Writing Battle History: The Challenge of Memory" *Civil War History* 53, no. 3 (2007): 252-263.

⁶George N. Carpenter, *History of the Eighth Vermont Volunteers, 1861-1865* (Boston: Press of Deland and Barta, 1886), 164.

⁷Francis Henry Buffum, *A Memorial of the Great Rebellion: Being a History of the Fourteenth Regiment New-Hampshire Volunteers, Covering Its Three Years of Service, with Original Sketches of Army Life, 1862-1865* (Boston: Franklin Press: Rand, Avery, and Co., 1882), 281.

the Army of the Shenandoah regularly attacked others or defended their conduct at Cedar Creek in one of two regular columns in the *Tribune*, “Fighting Them Over” and “Picket Shots.” For example, on March 1, 1894, R. Hannaford, a cavalry veteran from Ohio, noted in the *Tribune* that: “All know that there has been no end of wrangling between the Eighth and Nineteenth, and Sixth Corps, the latter hold that the former failed, to a certain extent, in their duty, and had they, the Sixth Corps, been in their place, the result would have been different.”⁸ In article after article, veterans from each corps claimed to have “saved the day at Cedar Creek.”⁹

Amid the various postwar writings aimed at personal legacy, several authors attempted to write objective histories of the Battle of Cedar Creek as components of larger volumes on the Civil War. The first attempt came from William Swinton when he published in 1886, his *Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac: A Critical History of the Operations in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania from the Commencement to the Close of the War, 1861-5*. Swinton, a wartime correspondent for the *New York Times*, praised the Army of the Potomac as the most important Union army during the conflict. Since the VI Corps of the Army of the Potomac was on detached service in the Valley, Swinton made every effort to build up that corps’ reputation along with that of its commander—Gen. Horatio Wright—who had temporary command of the Army of the Shenandoah on the morning of October 19 and presided over the surprise attack. Swinton provides a succinct overview of the tactical situation at Cedar Creek, but denigrates the contributions of the VIII and XIX Corps in favor of those of the VI Corps. Additionally, Swinton contends that Gen. Wright did not receive enough credit for his role and that Sheridan might have received too much.¹⁰ William W. Bergen’s “The Other Hero of Cedar Creek: The ‘Not Specially Ambitious’ Horatio G. Wright,” recently published in Gary W. Gallagher’s *The Shenandoah Valley*

⁸*National Tribune*, Mar. 1, 1894.

⁹*National Tribune*, Oct. 8, 1896.

¹⁰William Swinton, *Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac: A Critical History of Operations in Virginia Maryland and Pennsylvania from the Commencement to the Close of the War 1861-5* (Secaucus, N.J.: The Blue & Gray Press, 1988), 560-564.

Campaign of 1864, follows the tradition of admiration for the VI Corps and fails to address Wright's mistakes as temporary army commander.

Nearly two decades after Swinton's volume was published, George Pond published his comprehensive study of the entire campaign in the Valley, entitled, *The Shenandoah Valley in 1864*. Pond provides a twenty-three page account of Cedar Creek, beginning with the spring of 1864. In this straightforward tactical discussion of the battle, Pond gives equal credit to the various elements of the Army of the Shenandoah and even defends the conduct of Crook's VIII Corps—a frequent target of postwar authors: "An attack like Kershaw's, successfully initiated at that hour, against a single unarmed division, as thoroughly surprised as if it had had no pickets out, could not have resulted otherwise than it did, no matter what troops might have been thus assaulted."¹¹ In 1890, seven years after Pond's study appeared, Charles Coffin, a wartime newspaper correspondent, published *Freedom Triumphant: The Fourth Period of the War of the Rebellion From September, 1864, to its Close*. With colorful prose, Coffin spent approximately twenty pages discussing the circumstances of the Battle of Cedar Creek. Like Pond, Coffin also attempted to correct the record on the VIII Corps' performance at Cedar Creek. Although these and other early histories of Cedar Creek present the strategic situation and discuss the tactical evolution of the battle, they have many deficiencies. They do not address all of the circumstances that led to the battle or discuss the strategic implications of the fight; they do not analyze why the Confederates lost the advantage; they forego discussion of how this battle defined Gen. Sheridan's legacy; and they do not examine what Union victory meant politically to President Abraham Lincoln.

New corpus of Civil War scholarship emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. Retired general Edward J. Stackpole's *Sheridan in the Shenandoah: Jubal Early's Nemesis*, published in 1961, treated the entire campaign in the Valley. Stackpole, acknowledging that he was a "novice," relied largely on published secondary sources a few published primary accounts. The latter included the 128 volumes of *The War of the Rebellion: The Official Records of Union and Confederate Armies*, as well as

¹¹Pond, *The Shenandoah Valley in 1864*, 227.

memoirs and postwar reminiscences of men such as Gen's. Sheridan, John B. Gordon, and Jubal A. Early.¹² Touted as a definitive study of the Civil War, historian Jeffry Wert's *From Winchester to Cedar Creek: The Shenandoah Campaign of 1864*, published in 1987, disputes Stackpole's assertion that Early's decision to halt was "fatal" as Gen. Gordon suggested after the conflict in his *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, and that the commander decided to halt because his army had achieved "glory enough for one day." Stackpole's assertion that Gordon made "a strong case" against Early has been disproved in Wert's study. Wert argues persuasively that other circumstances, including the condition of his troops, coupled with a reorganized Army of the Shenandoah and a strong presence of Union cavalry on the Federal left flank that had not been there earlier in the morning, compelled Early to halt his force during the late morning.¹³ Keith S. Bohannon's "'The Fatal Halt' versus 'Bad Conduct': John B. Gordon, Jubal A. Early, and the Battle of Cedar Creek," in Gary W. Gallagher's *The Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1864*, reasserts Wert's conclusion that other circumstances at play contributed to Early's decision to halt, not merely his belief that the battle had been won. Two book-length studies of the battle, Thomas A. Lewis' *The Guns of Cedar Creek* and Theodore C. Mahr's *The Battle of Cedar Creek* also support these conclusions thereby rendering Stackpole's once classic study outdated.

Despite the excellent coverage of strategy and tactics in extant scholarly work on Cedar Creek, there is a general failure to include adequately detailed analysis of the political impact of the battle. Wert devotes only one paragraph to this issue and Stackpole does not even address it. Many of Lincoln's biographers, including David Herbert Donald, make passing mention of how Cedar Creek helped propel Lincoln to reelection in 1864, but the most complete examination of the battle's political impact is Charles Bracelen Flood's, *1864: Lincoln at the Gates of History*. Flood contends that Sheridan's victory

¹²Edward J. Stackpole, *Sheridan in the Shenandoah: Jubal Early's Nemesis* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1961), vii-ix.

¹³Jeffry D. Wert, *From Winchester to Cedar Creek: The Shenandoah Campaign of 1864* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1997), 216-217; Stackpole, *Sheridan in the Shenandoah*, 317-318.

at Cedar Creek occurred at the most opportune moment for the presidential election and that this was one of several seminal events that aided in Lincoln's reelection bid.

Also, none of the published studies on the Battle of Cedar Creek adequately address the impact of the battle on civilian populations. Theodore Mahr's study, *The Battle of Cedar Creek*, although highly detailed (and at times Confederate-centric), only occasionally references civilians such as the Cooley family who resided in Belle Grove, and offers only minimal discussion of civilian's roles either during or after the battle. Despite the increasing popularity of scholarly examination of the war's impact on the civilian populations of North and South no study, save this historic resource study, has examined how the civilians reacted to and dealt with the Battle of Cedar Creek.

Another issue raised by Cedar Creek's history is the role it played in defining Gen. Philip Sheridan's legacy. While the studies by Stackpole, Wert, Lewis, and Mahr, show that Sheridan became a popular figure in the North after news of Cedar Creek spread, none adequately addresses how this one event, more than any other of Sheridan's life, defined his legacy and placed him among the pantheon of elite generals in the history of the United States.

Among the earliest book-length biographies of Sheridan, *The Life of Gen. Philip H. Sheridan: Its Romance and Reality*, by Frank A. Burr and Richard J. Hinton, published in 1888, greatly romanticizes Sheridan's ride and his role at Cedar Creek. P.C. Headley's much shorter biography, *Fighting Phil: The Life and Military Career of Lieut-Gen. Philip Henry Sheridan*, published in 1883, presents a similar tone in its discussion of the ride as does Gen. Henry E. Davies in his 1895 biography, *General Sheridan*. Less romantic perspectives of Sheridan's ride emerged in 1931 with the publication of Joseph Hergesheimer's *Sheridan: A Military Narrative*. Hergesheimer concluded: "The whole question of General Sheridan's ride from Winchester to the battle of Cedar Creek is, actually, of minor importance."¹⁴ Two other major biographies of Sheridan, Roy Morris, Jr.'s, *Sheridan: The Life and War of General Philip Sheridan*, and Paul Andrew Hutton's, *Phil Sheridan and His Army*—provide only minimal coverage of Cedar Creek and

¹⁴Joseph Hergesheimer, *Sheridan: A Military Narrative* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931), 252.

briefly outline the importance of the ride to the battle. These works do little to establish how the battle defined his legacy. The most recent work on Sheridan, *Little Phil: A Reassessment of the Civil War Leadership of Gen. Philip H. Sheridan*, by Eric J. Wittenberg, is less of a biography of Sheridan than it is a vengeful and capricious indictment of Sheridan's shortcomings as a commander. He, too, fails to analyze the vital role this battle played in creating and molding Sheridan's legacy.

The Battle of Cedar Creek shaped Sheridan's legacy also, but it also helped to define the legacy of Sheridan's veterans. The only publication that addresses issues of postwar memory and reconciliation at Cedar Creek is Noyalas' article "Peace in the Valley," which appeared in the November/December 2009 issue of *America's Civil War*. Other general studies of postwar memory and reconciliation such as David W. Blight's *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, and Nina Silber's *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900*, provide contextual background necessary for a full and proper analysis of the various reunions and monument dedications held on the Cedar Creek battlefield during the era of postwar reconciliation.

While much has been written about the Battle of Cedar Creek, interest in the war as it played out in this part of the Shenandoah Valley remains constant. As someone observed at the dedication of the Sheridan equestrian statue in Albany, New York, in 1916, The Battle of Cedar Creek "will never die, its story never grow old."¹⁵

¹⁵*Unveiling of the Equestrian Statue of General Philip H. Sheridan: Capitol Park, Albany, New York, October 7, 1916* (Albany: State of New York, 1916), 80.

Suggestions for Further Research, Part II

- 1) The “lost” monument/obelisk that once sat upon the site identified as Thoburn’s earthworks.
- 2) Confederate reunion activities—independent of Sheridan’s Veterans—at Cedar Creek.
- 3) Early tourism at Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historic Park.