

BULL RUN CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

THE STONE WALL

October 1994

October Program

THE BEEFSTEAK RAID

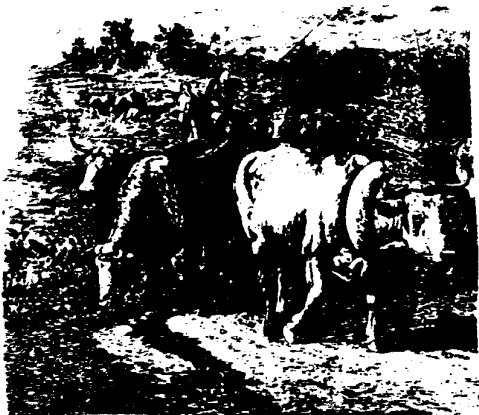
September 14-17, 1864

In a bold raid, Maj. Gen. Wade Hampton led the Confederate cavalry behind Union lines at Petersburg. Hampton captured hordes of supplies, the most notable being the Union Army's herd of cattle.

Shortly thereafter, a visitor to Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's headquarters asked, "When do you expect to starve out Lee and capture Richmond?" Grant replied, "Never, if our armies continue to supply him with beef cattle."

Along the siege lines at Petersburg, Confederate soldiers taunted their Union foes by shouting, "Hello, Yanks! Want any fresh beef?"

John Divine will sketch in the details of this exciting Confederate foray at our October meeting. An octogenarian, Mr. Divine is a living legend who dedicates much of his time helping historians, authors and ordinary people understand the Eastern theater of the American Civil War.



John Divine
The Sage of Loudoun

Thursday, October 13, 1994

7:30 p.m.

Manassas National Battlefield Park
Visitor Center

The President's Desk

BULL RUN CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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Centreville, VA 22020

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Submissions are
welcome. Deadline is the
25th of the month. Send
manuscripts to Karen
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Drive, Manassas, VA
22110.

Preserving Bristoe Station Battlefield

An anyone who has attended BRCWRT meetings over the last year has heard much about the preservation of Bristoe Station battlefield. In addition to the battle fought on these grounds, several Confederate burial sites are nearby.

The battlefield is located in Route 28 south of Manassas in Prince William County, the home of our Round Table. The land is still rural, retaining its integrity better than some other battlefields which have been the focus of preservatin efforts.

Our Round Table has been involved in the work of developing a battlefield park for the last nine months.

We can be the leader in this issue. The battlefield is in our backyard.

In order to generate understanding and support for a Bristoe Station Battlefield Park, BRCWRT must first inform our members and the public about what happened on this land during the Civil War. We must also discuss what will happen there if we take no action.

I have dedicated this newsletter to informing all of us about the Battle of Bristoe Station, including its history and the plans for a park.

I hope this issue will get you excited enough to become involved. When you've finished reading, pass the newsletter along to a friend. People won't stand up for preservation unless they are aware of the events which make the site important.

Scott C. Patchan

Focus On

BRISTOE STATION

October 3-14, 1863

Maybe people don't fully appreciate what happened at and near Bristoe Station because the events were so numerous and complex.

Maybe the campaign and battle of Bristoe station is overshadowed by the more famous engagements at nearby Manassas-Bull Run.

Bristoe Station wasn't a battle of a single afternoon. It was a campaign lasting 11 days. And spread across 50 miles.

After the battle of Gettysburg, the armies crossed the Potomac back to the familiar lands between the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers. Both Meade and Lee were looking for a fight.

The Confederates, outnumbered two to one, lost Longstreet's corps which was ordered west as events in Tennessee heated up. Then Washington sent two of the Union corps west. Lee, standing on Clark's mountain on Oct. 3, Gen. Robert E. Lee examined the Union army's spread across the Northern Virginia countryside, counted his odds as now eight to five. He decided on the course which would end at Bristoe Station. In a move he'd found successful in the past, Lee determined to flank the Union army.

The Army of Northern Virginia began its advance October 6 by fording the Rapidan River above Orange. The Confederates marched northwest to Madison Court House, and then east to Culpeper.

The Army of the Potomac was spread between the Rapidan and Rappahannock rivers. Meade, observing the Confederates crossing the Rapidan, wasn't sure of Lee's objective; but he cautiously ordered his army to move closer to Washington.

Lee hoped to flank the Union army at Madison Court House, but the Confederate infantry arrived too late. However, J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry met the Union rear guard, Kilpatrick's cavalry who fought a delaying action in what was later called Second Brandy. The Union horsemen withdrew across the Rappahannock.

*"My movement [retreat] thus far is successful..
The enemy is advancing from Warrenton, but
will hardly be able to arrest my movements."*

Gen. Meade to Gen. Halleck

Lee pushed hard for Warrenton, the cavalry skirmishing with the Union cavalry. Lee hoped that by turning east along the turnpike running parallel to the Orange and Alexandria Railroad tracks, the Confederates would force a fight.

Ewell's corps attacked Meade's force at Fauquier White Sulpher Springs crossing. Meade abandoned his defenses along the Rappahannock and ordered a retreat, first to Three Mile Station, and then to Centreville Heights. To do this he split the army: one section followed the railroad through Catlett's and Bristoe Station; and the other retreated by way of Three Mile Station, Auburn and Greenwich, in a path parallel to the railroad.

During a reconnaissance on the evening of October 13, Stuart and 3,000 cavalrymen became trapped. Near Auburn they encountered the marching Federals. They hid in woods so near they could hear the enemy conversations as the soldiers moved up the road. He could have made a break for it, if he abandoned their artillery pieces. Instead, he sent couriers to Lee, and suggested a diversionary attack at dawn.

At first light of Oct. 14, Lee sent Ewell's corps to rescue Stuart. The Confederates believed that Stuart faced the Federal supply train. They didn't know that the Union Army's rear guard, Warren's II Corps, had not yet passed through Auburn.

Warren was in a hurry, mindful that he could not allow any gap in the Union line. Stuart and Ewell made his corp's movement difficult. The two forces skirmished all morning, most colorfully at what came later to be known as Coffee Hill, where Stuart's artillery interrupted the breakfast of Warren's lead division, and Stuart's cavalry made their break.

Ewell marched to Greenwich, and met A.P. Hill's corps that had been pursuing French's III Corps.

French managed to cross Broad Run out of Hill's sight. Hill believed French was the Union rear guard. He knew nothing of the two corps following French, those of Sykes and Warren. Meade however, telegraphed Warren of the Confederates in the vicinity of Bristoe Station.

Warren's men moved toward Bristoe at 1 p.m. At 1:30 Hill's lead division, Heth's, arrived at the bridge at Broad Run, one mile north of Bristoe Station. Hill, thinking they were the rear of the Union army, decided to attack, even though his corps was spread out across several miles.

This, the final phase of the Bristoe campaign, is better known than the previous encounters and missed opportunities.

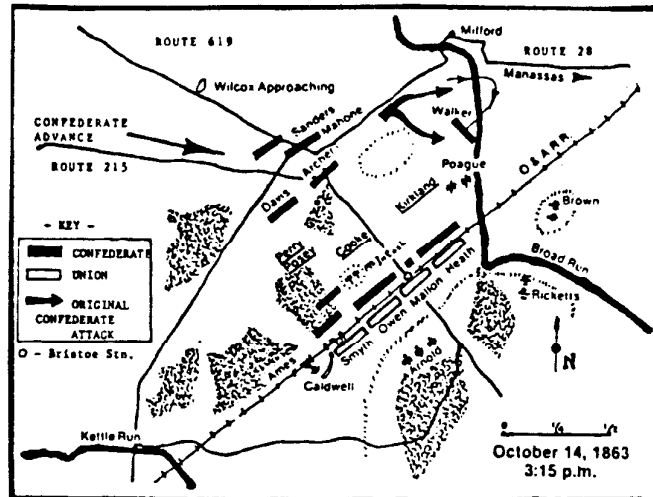
Hill attacked at 2, first with his artillery, then with his infantry.

*"I am convinced that I made the attack too hastily,
and at the same time that a delay of half an hour,
and there would have been no enemy to attack.
In that event, I believe I should equally have
blamed myself for not attacking at once."*

*Gen. A. P. Hill
Bristoe Station Campaign Report*

By then most of the Union forces had crossed Broad Run. Only Warren corps, which Hill knew nothing of, remained.

During the next four hours, Hill's corps battled Warren's on either side of the railroad track between Broad and Kettle Runs.



The first engagement was between four brigades: Br. Gen. Henry Heth's two brigades consisting of North Carolina regiments. They faced Gen. Webb's brigades of New York, Minnesota, Massachusetts, Michigan and Maine regiments.

As Hill fired on the rear guard Syke's corps, Warren placed his first division, under Gen. Webb, in the cuts and fills of the railroads. Two batteries set up on the high ground south of the railroad, where they had an unobstructed line of fire to Heth's brigades as they moved east to Broad Run.

Neither of the Confederate brigades were aware of Warren's forces to the right. Webb fired. The Confederate brigades turned and moved toward the railroad, as Warren anticipated. The Union batteries devastated them, while the infantry hidden in the railroad cuts waited.

The two Confederate brigade commanders fell almost immediately. Those who assumed command had to decide quickly to charge or retreat. The Confederates charged, crossing over the rails under heavy fire, at times fighting with only their bayonets. The battle line extended from just west of the Bristoe-Brentsville road to Broad Run. About 3:30 the Confederates retreated and lost almost as many men as they did during the attack.

Lee arrived with Early's division of Ewell's corps. Warren, concerned he might find himself isolated and outnumbered, ordered an artillery barrage. Confederate artillery responded. The Confederates, Anderson's division, attacked two brigades of Hay's division west of the Bristoe-Brentsville road. The Confederates again pushed across the railroad at Kettle Run, hoping to turn the Union left. The artillery drove Early back and halted any other Confederate attack that day.

The artillery continued, turning sporadic, and eventually stopped. Warren, knowing he now faced the entire Army of Northern Virginia, ordered his men to withdraw in silence. By midnight, Warren's corps had slipped across Broad Run and Lee had missed the last opportunity to turn The Army of the Potomac.

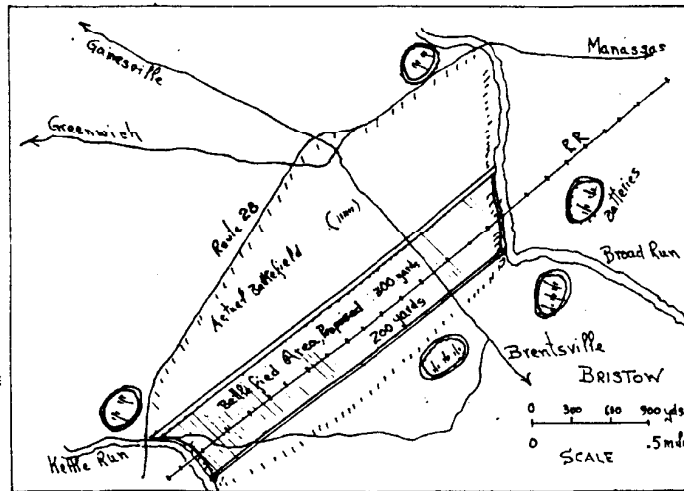
Of the 2,000 casualties who fell that day, most were Confederates. Gen. Cooke's brigade lost 27% of its 2,500 men; 40% of Gen. Kirkland's 1,500 troops were lost. One half to two-thirds of the 27th North Carolina Regiment fell.

Many of the soldiers who died at Bristoe Station were buried where they fell; most lie there still.

Armando Mancini

Preservation Issues

A Park for Bristoe Station Battlefield



The Prince William Board of County Supervisors recently voted that residential building is permitted on the Bristoe battlefield.

The Virginia Historic Resources Board has authorized historical markers at Bristoe Station, one entitled 'Action at Bristoe Station' which describes military activity in the vicinity in August 1862. The second marker describes the battle of October 14, 1863.

Bristoe Battlefield Park could easily fit in with the Manassas National Battlefield Park to expand Northern Virginia's offering of Civil War historical parks.

The smallest area of Bristoe Station to put aside as a historical park is the area from Broad to Kettle Runs, extending 300 yards north and 200 yards south of the railroad. This land would include most, but not all, of the sites of the infantry engagements on the afternoon of Oct. 14. To this we would add several battery sites (see diagram).

Lands to the north were primarily staging areas for the Confederate Army, and/or the initial areas of heavy Confederate losses from artillery fire; this is prime land and too costly. The land near the railroad is less expensive. If this area becomes a park, the land abutting it becomes premium lots, which reduce the park's costs.

The county supervisors, except for Bobby McManus, are indifferent to a park at Bristoe Station.

The Journal Messenger of Manassas writes that the Bristoe battle is considered one of the 50 most important of 400 major Civil War battle sites, and that an estimated 43 Union and 137 Confederate dead are buried on the field.

Write the board members that you believe a battlefield park is in the county's best interests. The Board chairman, Kathy Seefeldt, and the area representative, William Becker, are at No. 1, County Complex Court, Prince William, Va. 22192-9201.

Preservation Update

Commemorative Coins

The United States Mint will offer 3.3 million official, legal tender, Civil War commemorative coins in March 1995. Coin sales will fund the grant program administered by the Civil War Trust. For information, call (202) 326-840.

Brandy Station Sale Approved

A bankruptcy court judge has approved a developer's request to sell land to a Formula One racetrack at the Brandy Station battlefield at \$5,000 per acre for the 425-acre site.

The Brandy Station Foundation has offered \$6,000 per acre, which the developer has rejected.

Writers Alert

The Washington Times invites readers to contribute articles for its Civil War Page, which appears every Saturday. Articles in the 800-900 word range of virtually any topic related to the war are invited.

Here is the chance for budding authors, and for those who wish for a challenge as a writer and historian. Advance inquiries are preferable. Unsolicited articles should be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

The address is The Civil War Page, The Washington Times, 3600 New York Avenue, NE, Washington D.C. 20002.

Current Events

October 15 - SEVEN DAYS BATTLEFIELD TOUR. The incomparable Ed Bearss leads this fund-raising tour benefiting the Glendale-Malvern Hill battlefield acquisition. If you missed our tour in April, here's your chance. Sponsored by APCWS. (703) 371-1860.

Through October 31 - RAILROADS IN THE CIVIL WAR. The B&O Railroad Station Museum in Ellicott City features artifacts, scale-model trains, the Patapsco Guard, lectures and fashion shows. Wednesdays through Mondays, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Ellicott City, Maryland. Admission. (410) 461-1944.

Coming Up at BRCWRT

Historian GREG MERTZ speaks to the Round Table November 10 about the Battle of the Wilderness.

Marching Orders

FORWARD TO KERNSTOWN!

Saturday, October 22

Tour topic: The first battle of Kernstown, fought on March 23, 1862.

Guide: Gary Ecelbarger, BRCWRT Vice President, who spoke about this battle in June.

Highlights:

Bartonsville (Springdale)	Ashby and Jackson move to Winchester
Valley Pike (Kernstown)	Morning action
Opequon Church	Jackson attempts to take Pritchard's Hill
Pritchard's Hill	Union headquarters and artillery action
Sandy Ridge	Infantry action at the stone wall
Neal's Dam site	Confederate retreat
Stone Lane (McGill House)	Consequences of Jackson's escape

Much of this land is on private property. We will be the first organized group to thoroughly tour the area in over 100 years!

In addition to the battle action, the tour also features a view of the 18th and 19th century homesteads that still exist in the battle area.

We will also review the seven court martial charges Stonewall Jackson levelled against Richard Garnett, and attempt a consensus concerning his culpability.

Time of departure: 9 a.m. at the Dogan's Ridge parking lot at Manassas National Battlefield Park (Rt. 234, one half mile north of the Stone House intersection.)

Our first tour stop is less than an hour away. The formal tour ends early in the afternoon. We will return to Manassas by 4 p.m.

A sign up sheet is available at the October meeting.

Rations: Several inexpensive restaurants are in the battlefield vicinity.

Cost: Free.

From the Ranks

The following two excerpts of newspaper accounts describe the battle at Bristoe Station. The first was published in the Richmond Examiner on October 26, 1863. The second appeared in the October 17, 1863 edition of the New York Times.

RICHMOND EXAMINER

Two thousand cavalry were sent down from Warrenton to reconnoitre in the direction of Catlett's. On arriving near the latter place, Tuesday evening, they found the enemy were moving heavy columns of infantry along the railroad toward Manassas; and they thereupon immediately turned to retrace their steps toward Warrenton; but on reaching a road which crossed their route, leading from Warrenton Junction to Manassas, they found that the enemy were also moving infantry in large masses along this road. They were thus hemmed in. Night came on as they reached this road. The heavy tramp of the enemy's infantry and the rumble of their artillery sounded right in front of them. General Stuart withdrew his little force into a thicket of old field pines, hoping that the enemy would pass him by unnoticed, and leave his road to Warrenton clear. The enemy were moving so near our position that every word of command, and even ordinary conversation, could be distinctly heard by us. Our situation was extremely critical; any accident, the accidental discharge of a pistol, would have disclosed our position, and then, in view of the overwhelming force of the enemy, nothing awaited us but destruction or surrender. Stuart gave his officers and men to understand that surrender was not to be thought of, but that the enemy was to be fought to the last. A council of war having been called, it was resolved, as the best thing that could be done under the circumstances, to desert the nine pieces of horse artillery, and for the cavalry in six columns to endeavor to cut their way through the enemy. But after some reflection, Stuart resolved not to abandon his artillery, and struck upon a device for informing General Lee, who was at Warrenton, of his situation. He called for three volunteers to undertake a desperate enterprise. Crockett Eddins, of this city, and two other young men, immediately stepped forth to undertake any thing their General might order. Stuart ordered them to put on infantry knapsacks, and shouldering muskets, to advance in the darkness to the road, fall into the enemy's column, and crossing it, to make their way to Warrenton, and say to General Lee that he was surrounded, and he "must send some of his people to help him out." Eddins and his two gallant comrades obeyed orders, and reached Warrenton in safety....

At daylight Wednesday morning, Stuart was informed, by the cracking of our skirmishers' muskets, that Lee had received his message, and was sending "some of the people" to help him. As Lee's advancing columns attracted the enemy's attention, Stuart, from the rear opened on them with grape and canister. The enemy were much disordered by the cannonade from so unexpected a quarter, and taking advantage of the confusion, Stuart limbered up his guns, and, with the cavalry and artillery, dashed through the hostile ranks and rejoined General Lee...

That evening Hill's corps reached Bristoe Station just after Meade's army had passed that point. What appeared to be a small portion of the enemy was discovered behind along embankment of the railroad, and two brigades of Heth's corps were ordered to dislodge them. Then followed the battle of Bristoe... What appeared to be a trifling force of the enemy turned out to be two full army corps, lying in ambush to gobble up any inconsiderate brigades that might attempt to dislodge them. An hour's experiment convinced our men that a formidable force was in our front, and they withdrew. We had three or four hundred men killed and wounded in the fight. The enemy admit a severe loss, but they left but few dead upon the field. Before the main body of our army could get up, the battle was over. That night our men were drawn up in line of battle, but when the day broke on Thursday morning, the enemy was gone. Our forces followed them as far as Manassas Junction, and resting there a day, began a retrograde movement toward the Rappahannock.

NEW YORK TIMES

...just as the last of the Fifth corps had crossed Kettle Run, near Bristoe Station, Hill opened his batteries upon the Pennsylvania Reserves in rear of the column, killing three men and wounding a number. This attack did not interrupt the advance of the corps. Soon after, the advance of the Second corps approached Kettle Run on the east side of the railroad. In a fit of desperation - for in no other way can so foolhardy an act be accounted for - Hill opened his batteries upon this corps, and there was a grand rush to secure the railroad, the embankment of which formed, in many places, a formidable breastwork. The two divisions (First and Second) of the Second corps advanced and obtained this position. The enemy, led by their officers, as if mad, rushed up to this breastwork, when a fearful slaughter took place in their ranks, our own troops suffering but little, as only their heads were exposed. As one division of the enemy approached, a signal of surrendering was made, when our men withheld their fire, and Capt. Ball, of the Second Minnesota, jumped upon the railroad track to receive them, when a volley was fired at him and he received three serious wounds. This act of treachery had a maddening effect upon our men, and for a time the slaughter was terrible. Three times our men charged across the railroad, driving the enemy before them like frightened sheep on each occasion, capturing not less than 500 prisoners and one battery - all from North Carolina troops. Fifty of these prisoners have already taken the oath of allegiance, and many of them are half convinced that Lee purposely sent them into this trap as a punishment for the well-known want of devotion that exists among the North Carolina troops for the cause of Jeff. Advise....At about dark a lively artillery duel was opened, and kept up for an hour or two without any great damage to either side - the enemy finally withdrawing - Lee, satisfied, no doubt, that the Army of the Potomac was not caught asleep.

Bull Run Civil War Round Table
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