

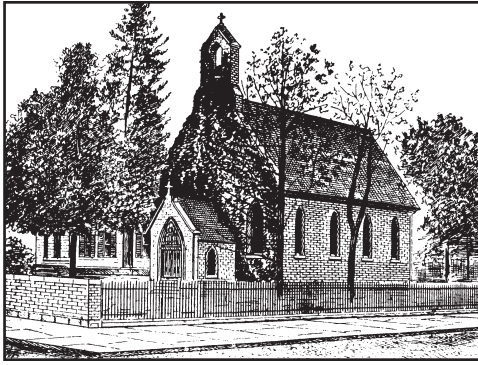


A small but extremely important cavalry skirmish took place in Westminster on June 29, 1863. The clash on the edge of town between General J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry and a small unit of the Delaware cavalry was a significant factor in slowing down the General's march. Instead of proceeding into Pennsylvania to inform General Robert E. Lee about the major Union troop movements, Stuart's cavalry was delayed long enough to make it advisable to spend the night in the Westminster area. Historians have often wondered whether the results of the Battle of Gettysburg might have been different if Stuart had arrived before July 2nd.

On June 27th, General J.E.B. Stuart crossed the Potomac into Maryland at Rowser's Ford with three brigades of Confederate cavalry, numbering nearly 6,000 men. On June 28th, Stuart entered Rockville for the purpose of destroying the telegraph and procuring supplies, and learned of the approach from Washington of a large Union wagon train. He succeeded in capturing 125 new supply wagons and their contents, badly needed by the Confederate forces. This was a handsome prize, but the wagon train and prisoners slowed the cavalry to a walking pace. A brief encounter with Maryland Militia occurred at Cooksville. In an attempt to cut off communications between Washington and the Army of the Potomac, two columns tore up tracks of the B&O Railroad at Hood's Mill and Sykesville, and set fire to two small bridges, one of them at Piney Run. The Howard Cotton Factory was raided and the Confederate soldiers gladly used the belts from the factory's machinery to replace the soles of their worn boots.

Stuart continued north to rendezvous with General Early and came into Westminster in the afternoon.

Shortly before Noon on June 28th, units of the 1st Delaware Cavalry, numbering less than 100 men of Companies C and D, arrived in Westminster to guard the important rail and road junction. They were commanded by Major Napoleon B. Knight, with Capt. Charles Corbit and Lt. Caleb Churchman as company commanders. They had moved from Baltimore



*Ascension Episcopal Church illustration.*

Confederates was brought to the Union troops by a doctor visiting a patient in the country. In Major Knight's absence, Capt. Corbit immediately gathered his men and led a charge through the streets of Westminster toward the Washington Road. They expected to overcome a small unit of Confederates, but instead found themselves in the midst of a large body of Stuart's veteran cavalry. A fierce skirmish ensued, but the little unit of green but gallant troopers were quickly overpowered, many were captured, including Corbit and Churchman. Two were killed, 11 were wounded, and a few managed to make their escape down the Reisterstown Road, pursued closely by Confederates. Two prominent Confederate officers were killed and ten men badly wounded. The wounded on both sides were cared for in improvised hospitals in Westminster by local physicians and citizens.

That night, Stuart's five-mile long column bivouacked along the Littlestown Pike between Westminster and Union Mills. Brigadier General Fitz Lee spent the night sleeping in the orchard at the Shriver Homestead. Men and horses rested for four hours; the first time since crossing into Maryland on June 27th. General Stuart spent the night in Westminster and rode on to Union Mills early the next morning.

On June 30th, the Union VI Corps arrived at the outskirts of Westminster. Randol's Battery fired several shells over the town and the 3rd Pennsylvania cavalry dashed in and captured the Confederate stragglers and their wounded.

During the last days of June, 1863, the "Horrors of War" had literally come to the doorsteps of the citizens of Westminster.

through Reisterstown on the previous day, and made their headquarters on the "Old Commons", a high point which commanded a fine view of the country for many miles. A detachment of the 150th New York Infantry had occupied Westminster as a Provost Guard for several months before their arrival.

Westminster remained quiet until about 4 p.m. on June 29th, when the report of approaching

## The "Battleground"

### "Old Commons"

Now the campus of McDaniel College. For many years before the Civil War, the site for July 4th celebrations, picnics, and political rallies. Site of the camp of the 1st Delaware cavalry. It was selected because of the commanding view of the surrounding countryside to detect the approach of Rebel forces.

### Railroad

The Western Maryland R.R. connected Baltimore with Westminster and had just been extended to the area in 1861. Stuart dispatched Horse Artillery and the 3rd Virginia cavalry units to this point to "cut off the retreat" of the Delaware cavalry.

### 71 East Main

Now Westminster Union Bank. Site of the Abner Neal home. His sons, Henry and Frank, returned with Stuart's advance guard. This was the last time they would return home because of their Southern sentiments. A plaque is located on the side of the building noting this event.

### 140 East Main

The "Odd Fellows Hall", circa. 1854. Headquarters of Lt. Bowman, Provost Guard, Co. F, 150th New York Infantry and his detachment of 16 men.

### East Main & Court Streets

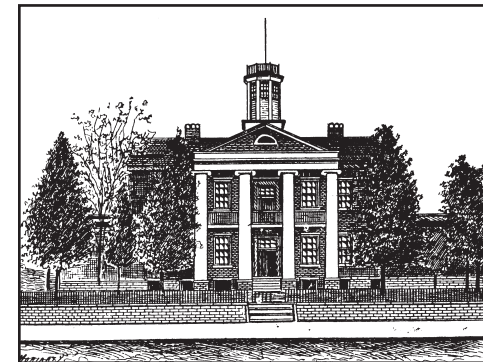
Now a service station. Site of the Westminster Hotel & Tavern. "Headquarters" of Major Napoleon B. Knight, 1st Delaware cavalry prior to the engagement.

### 206 East Main

Shellman House, circa. 1807. The Historical Society of Carroll County.

### East Main & North Bishop Streets

Site of Michael Baughman Blacksmith Shop. Delaware cavalrymen were having horses shod here just prior to the engagement. They were surprised, and men and horses were captured by the Rebels.



*Court House illustration*

### 297 East Main

Trumbo/Chrest House, circa. 1830. This home was in the line of fire of the charging Confederate cavalrymen on the Washington Road to East Main Street. The side of this home has bullet marks from the battle.

### 325 East Main

Crouse House, circa. 1850. This home was used as a temporary hospital.

### East Main Street & Washington Road

Location of the Historical Marker commemorating "Corbit's Charge." Opposite, now a seafood carry-out, is the site of the undertaking establishment of F.A. Sharrer & Son. Union and Confederate casualties fell near his establishment and were carried in to be prepared for burial.

### 45 Washington Road

Near here was the first encounter by Lt. Clark and the 12 trooper advance for the 1st Delaware cavalry and the Confederates.

### North Church Street

Westminster Cemetery - Site of the Union Meeting House used as a hospital. The wounded of both sides were treated here by local physicians. The site is marked by an iron urn near the flag pole.

### 23 North Court Street

Ascension Episcopal Church, circa. 1844. In the cemetery is the grave of 1st Lt. John William Murray, Co. E, 4th Virginia cavalry, C.S.A. killed in the engagement.

### Court Square

Carroll County Court House, circa. 1838. A large Union flag flew from the cupola. The flag was torn down and carried away by Stuart's men following the engagement. Thirteen ladies of the town of Westminster had sewn the flag and signed their names on the stars.