

“Civil War Markers Erected in 1901”

Carroll County Times Article for 19 August 2001

by Jay A. Graybeal

In recent months the Commissioners of Carroll County have continued their support for the developing Civil War Heritage Area comprised of Washington, Frederick and Carroll Counties. A century ago, their counterparts allowed the Gettysburg National Park Commission to erect a pair of cast iron tablets in front of the Carroll County Court House. The story was published in several issues of the American Sentinel newspaper. The first mention of the marking effort appeared in the June 8, 1901 issue of the paper:

“E. B. Cope, engineer of the Gettysburg National Park Commission, has written to Mayor O. D. Gilbert, of this city, stating that he, with Col. John P. Nicholson, chairman; Major Wm. M. Robbins and Major Charles A. Richardson, of the Commission, will visit Westminster about the middle of June to make arrangements to erect an itinerary tablet to mark the positions and movements of the Army of the Potomac in the Gettysburg campaign. Tablets for this purpose have been substantially made and appropriately lettered and Mr. Cope requests the mayor’s co-operation, particularly in locating the tablet to be erected in this city. The Sixth Corps, under Gen. Sedgwick, passed through here on its march to the Gettysburg fight, going by way of the Manchester road. A fight also occurred in the town between a force of Delaware Cavalry and a detachment of Gen. J. E. B. Stuart’s Confederate Cavalry.”

A second article from the June 20th issue of the Sentinel included the Commissioner’s resolution and the text of the markers:

“To Mark an Army’s Movements. At their meeting on Monday the County Commissioners of this county passed the following order: Be, and it is hereby, ordered that The United States Commission, E. B. Cope, engineer, are authorized to erect two tablets, one on either side of [the] Main entrance to Court House grounds, in commemoration of the movements of the Army of the Potomac from June 29th to July 3rd, 1863, inclusive.

JESSE LEMON

DANIEL S. DIEHL

JACOB N. DAYHOFF,

County Commissioners of Carroll County.

Engineer Cope has been visiting various places in this county during the past week, selecting sites at which to place tablets to mark the movements of the army during the eventful period immediately preceding the battle of Gettysburg, and while in the city gave to Mr. John J. Reese the following itinerary of the movements of the various organizations comprising the entire Army of the Potomac:

‘June 29.-Headquarters Army of the Potomac moved from Frederick to Middleburg; First and Eleventh Corps marched from Frederick to Emmitsburg; Second Corps from Monocacy Junction, via Liberty and Johnsville, to Uniontown; Third Corps from near Woodsborough to Taneytown; Fifth Corps from Ballinger’s Creek, via Frederick and Mt. Pleasant, to Liberty; Sixth Corps from Hyattstown, via New Market and Ridgeville to New Windsor; Twelfth Corps from Frederick to Taneytown and Bruceville.

First and Second Brigades, First Cavalry Division, from Middletown, via Boonsborough, Cavetown, and Monterey Springs, to near Fairfield; Reserve Cavalry Brigade, of the First Division, from Middletown to Mechanicstown, (now Thurmont); Second Cavalry Division from New Market and Ridgeville to New

Windsor; Third Cavalry Division from New Market and Ridgeville to New Windsor; Third Cavalry Division from Frederick to Littlestown, Pa.; and the Artillery Reserve from Frederick to Bruceville.

'Skirmishes at Muddy Branch and Westminster, Md., and at McConnellsburg and near Oyster Point, Pa.

'July 3.-First and Second Brigades, First Cavalry Division, marched from Taneytown to Westminster; the Reserve Brigade of First Cavalry Division from Emmitsburg to the field of Gettysburg; and the Second Brigade, Second Cavalry Division, from Manchester to Westminster.

'Battle of Gettysburg (third day) and fight at Fairfield, Pa.'

The Sixth Corps passed through this city July 1st and marched out by way of the Manchester road. At Manchester and this side and it turned toward Gettysburg and two of its brigades participated in the battle."

A final article in the August 24th issue of the Sentinel described the erection of the markers:

"The Commission to establish the movements of the Army of the Potomac in the Gettysburg campaign is now erecting tablets at a number of points in this county to mark the movements on the 29th of June, 1863, and of several cavalry organizations on July 3rd. Tablets giving an itinerary of these movements were erected on Thursday in the grounds in front of the court house in this city. These tablets are substantial but not very ornamental. They are of iron or steel and are fixed at an angle, on posts of the same material, firmly attached to stone sunk to a considerable depth in the ground. They measure 3 ½ feet in width and 3 feet from top to bottom. The itinerary, which is inscribed on their surface in raised white letters, was published in full in the SENTINEL of July 20, and need not be repeated here."

Since 1901 the markers have hopefully educated some judicial system staff, visitors and "guests" about the significant events that took place in Westminster during the Gettysburg Campaign. Similar markers in other Carroll communities have helped residents understand events that took place in their towns.

The 1901 marking project was only the beginning of efforts to identify historic sites in the county. Other historical markers were later erected by the Carroll County Civil War Centennial Committee, the State Roads Commission or by the Maryland Civil War Centennial Commission. High quality illustrated historic markers are also planned for selected sites in the county as part of the Maryland Civil War Trails Project.



*One of two cast iron Civil War markers describing troop movements during the Gettysburg Campaign is visible in the lower right hand corner of this c.1915 image of the Carroll County Court House. Historical Society of Carroll County, gift of J. Leland Jordan, 1954.*