

**“My will is absolute law”  
General Robert H. Milroy and Winchester, Virginia**

Jonathan A. Noyalas

Thesis submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and  
State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
in  
History

James I. Robertson, Jr., Chair  
William C. Davis  
Richard F. Hirsh

April 10, 2003  
Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: Robert Huston Milroy, Civil War, Emancipation, Winchester,  
Military Occupation

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#### (ABSTRACT)

Situated in Virginia’s Lower Shenandoah Valley, Winchester, Virginia, endured numerous occupations during the Civil War. Arguably the worst the townspeople endured was General Robert Huston Milroy’s—January 1, 1863-June 15, 1863. A staunch abolitionist and fervent supporter of the Union, Milroy fought a war not only against Confederate troops, but against the Confederate population as well. He firmly believed that only an Old-Testament style scourge of the land could rid this country of slavery and restore the Union. Milroy’s strong convictions moved him to inflict his will on Winchester’s population. Exiles, arrests of civilians (women and children included), secret detectives, and widespread destruction of property, were the norm during Milroy’s occupation.

While this study examines Milroy’s biography from birth to death, its focus is on his six month tenure as military commander in Winchester. General Milroy has never before been the subject of an in depth biographical study. His military career was plagued by his constant bickering with West Point graduates. Ultimately it was his contempt for West Pointers that brought a rapid conclusion to his military career. He despised professional soldiers and spent his Civil War career trying to prove that non-professional volunteer officers were equal or better in ability to graduates of the United States Military Academy.

“My will is absolute law” also serves as a valuable tool for scholars interested in understanding the undying Confederate spirit on the home front and how Federal soldiers initially enforced President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation in occupied areas.

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## Introduction

The story of Winchester, Virginia during the Civil War revolves around repeated military occupation. Situated in Virginia's Lower Shenandoah Valley, Winchester thrived as a business community prior to the Civil War. All of the area's major roads converged on the town, and the strategic location that made Winchester thrive also led to its wartime tribulations. Throughout the Civil War, Winchester changed hands scores of times. Historians have debated the exact number of times that the town changed hands—the figures range from seventy-two to ninety-six.<sup>1</sup> From the moment Virginia seceded on April 17, 1861, Winchester served as a main thoroughfare for Confederate troops *en route* to Harpers Ferry for muster into the Confederate army. While Winchester endured numerous occupations by the Federal army, arguably the worst confronted by the civilians of the town was General Robert H. Milroy's—January 1, 1863-June 15, 1863.

The census of 1860 for Winchester listed 4,403 inhabitants, among them 3,040 whites, 655 freedmen, and 708 slaves.<sup>2</sup> Winchester's population declined steadily throughout the war years because of men enlisting in the Confederate army and refugee flight. This constant reduction in population makes it difficult to determine precisely the population of the town during Milroy's tenure in Winchester. A soldier in the 110<sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry estimated that the population of Winchester in January 1863, at the beginning of Milroy's occupation, stood around 1,500.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to Milroy's arrival, Winchester's civilians endured numerous occupations, raids, skirmishes and battles. However, Milroy's occupation embedded itself in the minds of the civilians, who remembered his harshness well after the war. It was because

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<sup>1</sup> The number seventy-two is the number most frequently cited for the amount of times that Winchester changed hands. Roger U. Delauter in his study of Winchester suggests that the town may have changed hands as many as ninety-six times. See Roger U. Delauter, Jr., *Winchester in the Civil War* (Lynchburg, Va., 1992), 108-18.

<sup>2</sup> United States Government, *The Eighth Census of the United States* (Washington, D.C., 1854) Census numbers for Winchester, Virginia.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas E. Pope, *The Weary Boys: Colonel J. Warren Keifer and the 110<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry* (Kent, Oh., 2002), 35.

of his harshness that while politicking in 1868, Milroy was jeered at and forced out of town.<sup>4</sup>

This study is part biography and part community study. It centers on Milroy's Civil War exploits, focusing on his time at Winchester, and the wartime experiences of Winchester, under Milroy's occupation. This study reveals a tremendous deal of biographical information about Milroy, who has never before been the subject of a biography. Milroy does not hold a place in the pantheon of famous Union commanders. Yet, he does rank among the most eccentric in battlefield behavior, one of the cruelest toward Confederate civilians, and one of the strongest advocates of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Milroy was the first to actively enforce Lincoln's proclamation at Winchester during the early days of January 1863. Without a doubt Milroy stood as one among a handful of Union generals who initially supported Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Northerners, for the most part, opposed freeing the slaves as a primary war aim. News of Lincoln's proclamation alienated many soldiers and Union generals. Among the more notable Union generals who did not support the idea of emancipation of slaves as a war aim were Maj. Gens. George B. McClellan and Major General Fitz-John Porter.<sup>5</sup>

A study of this nature also reveals much about the relationship between commander and men. Milroy's men adored him as exhibited by their frequent gifts and support of him after his defeat at the Second Battle of Winchester in June 1863. Milroy's men did not always approve of his policies. Many troops under Milroy's command detested his cruelty to civilians. Some hated his active enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation. While Milroy built a strong rapport with his men, the men under his command had very much the Federal soldiers' attitude toward slavery; they were not fighting for emancipation.<sup>6</sup> One soldier under Milroy's command at Winchester stated

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<sup>4</sup> Frederic Morton, *The Story of Winchester in Virginia: The Oldest Town in the Shenandoah Valley* (Strasburg, Va, 1925), 186-87.

<sup>5</sup> T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals* (New York, 1952), 170; Geoffrey Perret, *Ulysses S. Grant: Soldier and President* (New York, 1997), 244-46.

<sup>6</sup> For more on Union soldiers attitudes toward fighting for the freedom of slaves see: James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York, 1997), 120-21; James M. McPherson, *What They Fought For: 1861-1865* (Baton Rouge, 1994), 46, 56-69.

emphatically: “This Nigrow freedom is, what is playing hell this is a rong thing this will destroy our army we never enlisted to fight for Nigrows.”<sup>7</sup>

This study also examines the effect of Milroy’s policies and war on the civilian population of Winchester. Only recently have scholars attempted to understand the impact of war upon civilians, especially those in occupied towns. The attitudes of Winchester’s population, comprised mostly of women and children during Milroy’s occupation, reaffirms Gary Gallagher’s conclusion that the Confederate spirit never wavered among the staunch Confederate women.<sup>8</sup> Excerpts of diaries, letters, and journals of Winchester’s “devil diarists” taken from the period of Milroy’s occupation provide excellent examples of an undying Confederate spirit.<sup>9</sup>

Milroy’s occupation was unlike any other the townspeople had witnessed prior to 1863, and at war’s end stood out as the most horrid. While a study of Milroy’s occupation is significant in itself to Civil War history, a study of Milroy’s six-month tenure in Winchester reveals a great deal about Milroy, the undying Confederate spirit of Winchester, and the plight of the civilians of that worn-torn town who endured so much.

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<sup>7</sup> Thomas O. Crowl to sister, Jan. 28, 1863, Thomas O. Crowl Letters, Pennsylvania State University.

<sup>8</sup> Gary W. Gallagher, *The Confederate War: How Popular Will, Nationalism, and Military Strategy Could Not Stave Off Defeat* (Cambridge, 1997), 164.

<sup>9</sup> The sobriquet of “devil diarists” fell on Winchester’s women diarists after the Civil War and was a play on words. After the First Battle of Kernstown on March 23, 1862, Secretary of State William Seward visited Winchester and the battlefield at Kernstown. When President Abraham Lincoln inquired as to the sentiment of the women of Winchester Seward replied that the “women are the devil”. See Garland Quarles, *Occupied Winchester: 1861-1865* (Winchester, 1991), 13-14.

## Chapter 1

### Chasing a Reputation

Standing more than six feet tall, with a broad chest, a head “of white, shocky, stiff hair,” and an ever present pomposity, Robert Huston Milroy possessed all of the physical attributes of a battlefield general.<sup>10</sup> The Civil War would be Milroy’s opportunity to win the fame and glory that he so desired as a child. While Milroy never attained the military status he sought, he gained a reputation as a narcissistic and tyrannical commander. All of the attributes that Milroy exhibited during the Civil War, and in particular in his time in the Lower Shenandoah Valley, he acquired through life experiences with his father, connections with the Presbyterian Church, and his academic pursuits.

The same year that Indiana entered the Union, 1816, Robert H. Milroy was born in Washington County. He took great pride in being “as old as the State of Indiana.”<sup>11</sup> As a child Milroy grew up listening to the heroic exploits of his father Maj. Gen. Samuel Milroy, who served in the Indiana militia during the War of 1812.<sup>12</sup> Listening to his father’s stories of battle and adventure intrigued young Milroy. From a very tender age he wanted nothing more than to become a soldier and to have an opportunity to develop his own stories and heroic image. As a young boy studying in the log school house at Delphi, Milroy dreamed of attending the United States Military Academy. He wrote later: “I have from the very earliest boyhood been ambitious and intensely desirous of military fame and renown as a general...”<sup>13</sup> Yet, Milroy received resistance from his father, who did not believe in a standing national army, nor did his father believe in training officers for such. Samuel Milroy would not hear of his son attending West Point, nor did he want Robert to have a career in the military. This would not stop the pugnacious Milroy from achieving his goal.

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<sup>10</sup> Joseph Warren Keifer, *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, 1900), 1:311; William J. Miller, “Grey Eagle on a Tether,” *America’s Civil War*, 15, no. 5 (2000): 46.

<sup>11</sup> Margaret B. Paulus (comp.), *Papers of General Robert Huston Milroy*, (n.p., 1965), 4:216.

<sup>12</sup> Cary C. Collins, “Grey Eagle: Major General Robert Huston Milroy and the Civil War,” *Indiana Magazine of History*, XC (1994): 50.

<sup>13</sup> Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 4:42.

From a very young age Samuel Milroy instilled in his son hatred for regular army officers and, in particular, West Point graduates.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps Samuel Milroy despised graduates of the United States Military because of his own thwarted military ambitions. This contempt grew in Milroy throughout the years. Undoubtedly it contributed to his rash behavior on the battlefield because he wanted to prove that non-professional volunteer officers could fight. His disdain for professional officers also led him to bicker constantly during the Civil War with generals who graduated from West Point—most notably Union Gen.-in-Chief Henry W. Halleck. In fact, Milroy’s hatred for West Point graduates helped put a rapid end to his mediocre military career at the 1863 Second Battle of Winchester.<sup>15</sup>

After visiting an uncle’s farm in Pennsylvania in 1840, Milroy convinced his uncle to pay for his higher education at a private military academy.<sup>16</sup> Without informing his parents of his intentions, he went from Pennsylvania to Vermont and enrolled in Captain Partridge’s Military Academy in Norwich. The academy was second only to West Point in the number of officers supplied to the Union army during the Civil War.<sup>17</sup>

While at the academy Milroy excelled in every academic endeavor. He graduated in 1843 as valedictorian with degrees in Master of Arts, Master of Military Science, and Master of Civil Engineering.<sup>18</sup> Upon graduation, however, Milroy could not attain the one thing that he had worked so hard to achieve—a commission in the United States Army. He began to recognize what his father preached to him about West Pointers as a child and what Milroy viewed as favoritism to “the royal priesthood of West Point.”<sup>19</sup>

Unable to obtain a commission and proceed on his path to military glory, Milroy went back to Indiana in 1844 to study law. The following year he journeyed to Texas and took the oath to the new republic. While Milroy never explained his reason for going to

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<sup>14</sup> Collins, “Grey Eagle,” 51.

<sup>15</sup> While at Winchester, Milroy ignored the strategic opinion of Halleck that Winchester was not the important place. Throughout the spring of 1863, Halleck tried to convince Milroy to withdraw to Harpers Ferry. Milroy would not do it. Milroy’s contempt for West Pointers and how this may have impacted his debacle at the Second Battle of Winchester will be discussed at a later point in detail.

<sup>16</sup> Collins, “Grey Eagle,” 51.

<sup>17</sup> Al Nofi, “From the Grapevine,” *North & South*, no. 1 (November 1997): 8. Captain Partridge’s Military Academy provided twelve generals, twenty-five colonels, ninety majors and lieutenant colonels, and 198 company officers to the Union during the Civil War.

<sup>18</sup> Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 4:13, 20.

<sup>19</sup> Milroy to Maj. Gen. Robert Schenck, Jan. 18, 1863. Robert Schenck Papers, University of Miami, Ohio.

Texas, he may have done so to seek some sort of military post with his mother's second cousin, Sam Houston who was then serving his second term as the republic's president.<sup>20</sup> After a brief time in Texas, Milroy's father and brother convinced him to return home.<sup>21</sup> Unhappy with life, the moment that Milroy waited for had arrived in 1846—war.

When the United States went to war with Mexico, Milroy's longing for military action became apparent. He immediately volunteered his service and in early June 1846 became captain of Company C, 1<sup>st</sup> Indiana Volunteers, which bore the soubriquet of the "Wabash Invincibles."<sup>22</sup> Milroy's zeal for combat caught the attention of a subordinate officer in the 1<sup>st</sup> Indiana, Lew Wallace, later a Union general (and famed author of *Ben Hur* after the Civil War). Wallace wrote of Milroy: "he was one of the very few whom I have met actually lovers of combat. Eager, impetuous, fierce in anger."<sup>23</sup> Dr. E.M.H. Beck, also serving in the same regiment, noted of Milroy's eagerness: "Rob is very anxious for a fight."<sup>24</sup>

With sixty-one men under his command, Milroy longed for action, but the long-awaited moment for combat never materialized. Throughout the Wabash Invincibles' service the company guarded posts at Matamoras and Monterey. Milroy grumbled that Mexico was a "miserable cheerless place."<sup>25</sup> He and his command soon learned what all veteran soldiers knew—military life, except on the battlefield, was very mundane.<sup>26</sup> The only action that Milroy's command witnessed was on a foraging expedition from Monterey to Matamoras. During the mission Mexican guerillas killed three men of the Wabash Invincibles.<sup>27</sup>

As the enlistments of the company neared expiration in June 1847, Milroy attempted to organize a cavalry company to take part in what he envisioned would be the climactic battle of the war with Mexico. Much to Milroy's dismay the company was

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<sup>20</sup> Collins, "Grey Eagle," 50.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>22</sup> Oran Perry, (comp.), *Indiana in the Mexican War* (Indianapolis, 1908), 46, 347.

<sup>23</sup> Lewis Wallace, *Lew Wallace: An Autobiography* (New York, 1906), 1:117.

<sup>24</sup> Dr. E.H.M. Beck to ? , October 1846 in "Mexican War Letters," *Indiana Magazine of History*, XXV(1929): 170.

<sup>25</sup> Collins, "Grey Eagle," 53; Robert H. Milroy to James Milroy, October 19, 1846, in "Mexican War Letters," 169.

<sup>26</sup> Milroy to Mrs. A.A. Grimes, May 9, 1847, in *ibid.*, 172. In this letter Milroy moaned: "We have the same daily routine of military duty to perform each day."

<sup>27</sup> Wallace, *Lew Wallace*, 1:145-47.

never fully organized and he, along with the rest of his company, was discharged in June 1847. The absence of combat experience prevented Milroy from making an epic name for himself. Disgusted, Milroy lamented: “I unfortunately got into a Regiment [1<sup>st</sup> Indiana]...that was cursed by an incompetent Colonel...the shortness of [the] war prevented me from acquiring any reputation.”<sup>28</sup>

Again unable to establish any sort of military career, he returned to the study of law. In 1850 Milroy graduated from the University of Indiana at Bloomington with a law degree.<sup>29</sup> The year prior to graduation, he married Mary Jane Armitage, a native of Pennsylvania.<sup>30</sup>

During the period between graduation from law school and the outbreak of the Civil War, Milroy occupied himself with the practice of law. He served on the Indiana State Constitutional Convention of 1851 and also was appointed judge of the 8<sup>th</sup> district that same year.<sup>31</sup> As the years waned and the political divide between North and South widened, Milroy began to shape his personal politics and ideology that would ultimately influence his actions at Winchester, Virginia, in 1863.

In 1854, almost immediately after the formation of the Republican Party, Milroy became a staunch supporter of it and an ardent abolitionist. Throughout the Civil War, Milroy’s strong convictions as an abolitionist and strong advocate of union manifested themselves through his tyrannical decrees. The 110<sup>th</sup> Ohio’s Joseph Warren Keifer, who would himself earn a reputation as a battlefield commander and politician after the war, served under Milroy at Winchester and noted of his superior regarding blacks: “The colored people of America should erect a monument to his memory. He was their friend when to be so drew upon him much adverse criticism.”<sup>32</sup>

When South Carolina seceded from the Union in December 1860, followed by six other Deep South states soon thereafter, Milroy issued a call for volunteers to suppress

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<sup>28</sup> Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 1:488.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 4:20.

<sup>30</sup> Collins, “Grey Eagle,” 55.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 2:21; For biographical information on Colonel Joseph Warren Keifer see Pope, *The Weary Boys*.

secession.<sup>33</sup> In the interim between February and April of that fateful year, Milroy mustered only two recruits.<sup>34</sup>

The news of the attack on Fort Sumter reached Jasper County. Robert Milroy rushed to the county court house to recruit men for a volunteer infantry company. This time it was not difficult to find recruits as the war spirit spread throughout both North and South. He organized Company G, 9<sup>th</sup> Indiana, and on April 25, 1861, was commissioned colonel of the regiment.<sup>35</sup>

During the early months of the war Milroy's 9<sup>th</sup> Indiana, referred to as "Milroy's Swamp Devils," served in the western Virginia campaigns under McClellan.<sup>36</sup> Milroy's command earned a respected reputation in the early battles at Grafton, Philippi, Carrick's Ford, and Laurel Hill.<sup>37</sup> In September 1861, for his courageous action on the battlefield during these early engagements, Milroy was promoted to brigadier general and afterward assigned to the "Cheat Mountain" district of northwestern Virginia. The command was a part of the Mountain Department commanded by Gen. John C. Fremont who bore the nickname "Pathfinder" for his renown as an explorer with the Army topographical corps.

Milroy earned his sobriquet, "The Gray Eagle of the Army" during this early campaign.<sup>38</sup> A variety of reasons exist for the nickname. One suggested is that Milroy's long sharp nose, watchful gaze, and overbearing demeanor made him appear as an eagle. An officer who served with Milroy believed that he was named thusly because he "was tall and of commanding presence."<sup>39</sup> Col. Joseph Warren Keifer believed that it was Milroy's "head of white, shocky, stiff hair that led his soldiers to dub him the 'Gray Eagle'."<sup>40</sup> Milroy's command saw little action throughout the winter of 1861-1862, but the coming spring held many combat opportunities for Milroy.

As spring approached, Union forces in western Virginia began mobilizing for the spring campaign. On March 12, 1862, Maj. Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks seized Winchester, Virginia. This was the first of many times that the town would be occupied by Federal

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<sup>33</sup> Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 4:14.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 4:14; Collins, "Grey Eagle," 56.

<sup>35</sup> Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 4:14.

<sup>36</sup> David L. Phillips, ed., *War Stories: Civil War in West Virginia* (Leesburg, Va., 1991), 7.

<sup>37</sup> Collins, "Grey Eagle," 56.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Miller, "Gray Eagle on a Tether," 46.

<sup>40</sup> Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 1:311.

troops.<sup>41</sup> After the defeat of Gen. Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson’s command at the Battle of Kernstown on March 23, Banks was confident in his army’s ability to keep the Valley out of Confederate hands, while at the same time protecting the nation’s capital. Jackson spent the next month and a half reorganizing his bruised, but not demoralized command. He prepared to engage the Federals by early May.

In the meantime Confederate partisans, officially endorsed by the Confederate Congress since April 1862, wreaked havoc on the Union supply lines and troops in western Virginia where Milroy’s command operated.<sup>42</sup> Sizable bodies of Union sympathizers in central and western Virginia feared for their personal safety as spring blossomed. Fremont’s Mountain Department was at the epicenter of Confederate partisan activity. He aimed to do something about it. Fremont sent Milroy with four infantry regiments and one cavalry regiment to hunt down and destroy the partisan forces.<sup>43</sup> Milroy, with a penchant for adventure approached this task with the same vigor as he would with all of his other military duties.

During the first month of the official existence of Confederate partisan forces in April, a small band of “bushwhackers” (as they were called by Federal soldiers) ambushed a body of Union soldiers near Williamsville. Milroy deployed a force of 250 men to find the Rebel guerillas. It would be several weeks until the soldiers of the Mountain Department captured any Confederate partisan.<sup>44</sup>

With the assistance of cavalry and Milroy, Fremont finally began to round up some Confederate partisans. The first one captured was Frederick W. Chewning, a noted bushwhacker.<sup>45</sup> Chewning initially stood at the mercy of General Milroy who wanted to have him executed by hanging. He did not get his wish. Chewning served time in prison.<sup>46</sup>

Throughout the spring season of 1862, Milroy’s command guarded the Union supply lines and aided, albeit futilely, in retarding the activities of Confederate partisans.

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<sup>41</sup> Rev. Benjamin F. Brooke Journal, Mar. 12, 1862, Handley Library, Winchester, Va.

<sup>42</sup> Richard O. Curry and F. Gerald Ham, eds, “The Bushwhackers’ War: Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in West Virginia,” *Civil War History*, X (1964): 424.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 427. Milroy’s command to hunt down Confederate partisan forces consisted of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Virginia (U.S.) Infantry and the 6<sup>th</sup> Virginia (U.S.) Cavalry.

<sup>44</sup> Collins, “Grey Eagle,” 60.

<sup>45</sup> Virgil Carrington Jones, *Gray Ghosts and Rebel Raiders* (New York, 1956), 89.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 89, 92. The length of the prison sentence is not mentioned.

Milroy should not shoulder all of the blame for being unable to stop the major partisan activity, chiefly that of Col. John Imboden. No Federal commander in western Virginia or the Shenandoah Valley effectively put an end to partisan operations at any point during the war in western Virginia or the Shenandoah Valley.<sup>47</sup>

While Confederate partisans plagued Union forces after the First Battle of Kernstown in March 1862, Stonewall Jackson prepared to strike the Federals. Jackson knew that Banks' force of 19,000 was positioned near Harrisonburg, and that a force of 20,000 under Fremont was located to the west of the Shenandoah Valley in the Allegheny Mountains.<sup>48</sup> The positions of these Federal armies threatened the vital railroad center in the southern end of the Valley at Staunton.

Aware that Milroy's desire for combat could not wait much longer, Fremont released the Gray Eagle in early April. Fremont told Milroy to advance no farther than Monterey, located approximately forty miles west of Harrisonburg. Milroy disobeyed Fremont's orders. By April 13, Milroy occupied the small Virginia hamlet of McDowell, more than ten miles east of Monterey.<sup>49</sup> In the days that followed, Confederate forces under Brig. Gen. Edward "Old Allegheny" Johnson stood between Milroy and Staunton. Throughout mid-April until the first week of May, Milroy constantly deployed troops to observe Johnson's movements and provoke Johnson. Fearing an attack, Fremont ordered Milroy to curb his aggressiveness and wait for the reinforcements of Brig. Gen. Robert C. Schenck, who would become Milroy's superior during the occupation of Winchester in 1863 and one of Milroy's closest confidants in the Union Army.<sup>50</sup> Milroy acquiesced and returned his command to the village of McDowell. He left troops behind, east of McDowell as advance pickets to alert him to any activity from Jackson.

During the morning hours of May 8, Schenck's reinforcements, which numbered about 1,500 arrived in McDowell, bringing the aggregate Union force there to about 5,000. Schenck and Milroy conferred about what to do. Both saw the indefensibility of

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<sup>47</sup> No Federal commander in western Virginia or the Shenandoah Valley were able to halt effectively the activities of Confederate partisans. Federal troops did capture Col. Harry Gilmor, albeit in February 1865. Units under command of partisans such as John S. Mosby were never put out of service.

<sup>48</sup> James I. Robertson, Jr. *Stonewall Jackson: The Man, the Soldier, the Legend* (New York, 1997), 366.

<sup>49</sup> Miller, "Gray Eagle on a Tether," 49.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

the village and decided that they would withdraw under cover of darkness that night. Johnson and Jackson, however, did not allow their counterparts the option.

By early afternoon Milroy had received continuous reports that Confederates were building strong defenses atop Sitlington's Hill, a commanding rise just east of McDowell. Milroy feared that if the Confederates put artillery atop Sitlington's Hill, his and Schenck's troops would face certain defeat. As a result, Milroy launched an attack of 2,300 troops on the commanding position, which was defended by nearly 3,000 Confederates.<sup>51</sup> The Confederate line seemed impenetrable. Johnson, whose troops held the hill, felt uneasy about the defensibility of the place, especially the center. As a result of this perceived weakness, Jackson ordered Brig. Gen. William B. Taliaferro's brigade to the center of the line. The brigade arrived just in time as the 12<sup>th</sup> Georgia, positioned in the center, began to give way under pressure from Milroy's attack.<sup>52</sup> Despite Milroy's initial success in breaking the Confederate line, Jackson's position remained intact. By 9 p.m. Milroy's force had withdrawn to Franklin, about twenty-five miles north of McDowell.<sup>53</sup>

Although driven from the field, Milroy felt that his men had fought ably. Milroy complemented his men on a frequent basis at all points throughout his career. Even though he was defeated at McDowell, he had nothing but praise for his men. He wrote of them: "Our force engaged with undaunted bravery a force of the enemy...displaying courage and zeal which has merited the thanks of the country and proven them true representatives of the American citizen soldier."<sup>54</sup>

After McDowell, Milroy remained in the mountains of western Virginia chasing after Confederate partisans. In the meantime Stonewall Jackson achieved victory after victory. Jackson won at Front Royal on May 23, and liberated Winchester two days later. He then put the final twist on the Federal forces in the Valley and concluding his Valley Campaign on June 8 and 9, after victories at Cross Keys and Port Republic.

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<sup>51</sup> Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 374.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 374-375.

<sup>53</sup> U.S. War Department (comp.), *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* Ser. I, XII, Pt. 1 (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), 465, Cited hereafter as *O.R.*; Miller, "Gray Eagle on a Tether," 51-2.

<sup>54</sup> *O.R.* Ser. I, XII, Pt. 1, 467.

Milroy, meanwhile, sitting idly by throughout the remainder of Jackson's Valley Campaign must have been infuriated. However, he would soon have another chance to earn a reputation on the battlefield. During mid-summer Milroy was transferred to command of an independent brigade in the Union Army of Virginia's First Corps, commanded by German-born Maj. Gen. Franz Sigel.<sup>55</sup> Until the Second Battle of Bull Run on August 29-30, Milroy performed admirably in his new post.

On August 22, 1862, Milroy's brigade faced Confederate cavalry under command of the flamboyant cavalier Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart at Freeman's Ford. The ford provided a vital location for either army to cross the Rappahannock River, and Milroy's brigade needed to hold it. Milroy acted coolly in the engagement. His men defended the ford stubbornly and drove off Stuart's cavalry.<sup>56</sup> In the days that followed the Union army advanced closer to Manassas Junction as battle on the fields of the war's first major land engagement appeared imminent.

On August 29, the Union army stood poised to strike the Confederates who were entrenched in an unfinished railroad bed at the southwest end of the line. The northeastern edge of the Rebel position formed parallel to the Groveton-Sudley Road and was held by Jackson—Milroy's nemesis from McDowell. That morning Milroy's command stood in line of battle in Groveton Woods, opposite the center of Jackson's line.<sup>57</sup> Hearing fire on his right, and without any orders, he decided to reinforce Maj. Gen. Carl Schurz's division with two of his regiments—the 82<sup>nd</sup> Ohio and 5<sup>th</sup> Virginia (U.S.) Infantry. With his remaining two regiments Milroy planned to charge the Rebel artillery positions to his front. The plan did not materialize in the grand fashion that Milroy envisioned. Before his remaining two regiments could get organized to attack the Confederate guns, the 82<sup>nd</sup> Ohio and 5<sup>th</sup> Virginia withered under a destructive fire from Jackson's troops. Now Milroy had to abandon one rash plan and employ another reckless one. He rushed his two other regiments to the help of the troops from Ohio and western Virginia and reorganized his command, which had already lost twenty five percent of its number due to Milroy's foolishness. With the support of Brig. Gen. Julius Stahel's

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<sup>55</sup> Collins, "Grey Eagle," 57. Milroy was given command of the independent brigade on August 9, 1862.

<sup>56</sup> John Hennessy, *Return to Bull Run: The Campaign and Battle of Second Manassas* (Norman, Ok., 1993), 66.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

brigade Milroy reformed his battered command and held his position in the Groveton Woods.<sup>58</sup>

The following day Milroy's brigade received orders to stop the retreating Federals Maj. Gen. Fitz-John Porter's V Corps. Porter's corps launched a massive and savage attack on August 30, against Jackson's line but it proved futile. In an effort to halt Porter's fleeing troops Milroy ordered his brigade to fix bayonets.<sup>59</sup> Milroy, no doubt, gained enormous satisfaction in being tasked with holding back a retreating corps commanded by a West Point graduate.<sup>60</sup> Milroy's men could not halt the panic-stricken soldiers. Unable to prevent Porter's men from withdrawing, Milroy's brigade was forced to retreat and take up defensive positions atop Henry House Hill.

On Henry House Hill Milroy exhibited, for the first time in the war, an erratic behavior that caught the attention of both officers and soldiers in the ranks. He tried not only to command his troops, but others as well. He attempted to rally Lt. Col. Robert C. Buchanan's brigade of United States Regulars, but Buchanan promptly put Milroy in his place. After the battle Buchanan remarked of Milroy's behavior: "General Milroy's manner was excited, so much as to attract the especial attention of those present, and induced many to inquire who was rushing about so wildly and what he wanted."<sup>61</sup> Even soldiers in the confusion of battle noticed Milroy's irregular conduct. A private in the 21<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts wrote that Milroy was "frantic with joy as he welcomed us; and, as we dressed our lines, rode along our front, shouting like a crazy man."<sup>62</sup>

Milroy felt that the Second Battle of Bull Run foreshadowed disaster for the Union. After the battle he lamented: "I felt that all blood, treasure, and labor of our Government and people for the last year had been thrown away... and that most probably the death-knell of our glorious Government had been sounded by it [the Second Battle of Bull Run]."<sup>63</sup> Perhaps Milroy's feeling of certain peril for the preservation of the Union may explain the stark change in his behavior toward the Confederate civilian population

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<sup>58</sup> Hennessy, *Return to Bull Run*, 212-14, 237.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 360.

<sup>60</sup> Patricia L. Faust, ed., *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War* (New York, 1986), 594. Gen. Fitz John Porter graduated 8<sup>th</sup> in the West Point class of 1845.

<sup>61</sup> *O.R.* Ser. I, XII, Pt. 1, 320

<sup>62</sup> Charles F. Walcott, *History of the Twenty-first Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers* (Boston, 1882), 148-49.

<sup>63</sup> *O.R.* Ser. I, XII, Pt. 2, 323.

after Second Bull Run. Prior to the battle Milroy had some contact with the Confederate civilian population, but it was not comparable to the contact that he would have with them after Second Bull Run.

After Second Bull Run Milroy assumed command of the Cheat Mountain Division of western Virginia. Here Milroy added to his reputation as a demented and frantic battlefield general by emerging as one of the most notorious Federal commanders due to his harsh policies directed at the Confederate civilian of western Virginia.

Milroy confronted the same problem in the late fall of 1862 as he had experienced earlier that spring—Confederate partisans. By the fall of 1862 Imboden's partisans plagued Union forces in western Virginia. Unable to suppress the partisans directly Milroy attempted to defeat them indirectly through threatening the Confederate civilian population with fines and death.

In early November 1862 Milroy issued an order that levied a fine on Confederate sympathizers to compensate for the loss of property and life of a Union sympathizer lost as a result of Imboden's partisans.<sup>64</sup> Milroy directed his subordinates to follow his law to the letter. In an order to Capt. Horace Kellogg, commanding the post at Saint George, Virginia, Milroy stated:

If they fail to pay at the end of the time you have named their houses will be burned and themselves shot and their property all seized, and be sure that you carry out this threat rigidly and show them that you are not trifling or to be trifled with. You will inform the inhabitants for ten or fifteen miles around your camp on all the roads approaching the town upon which the enemy may approach that they must dash in and give you notice, and that upon failure of any one to do so their houses will be burned and the men shot.<sup>65</sup>

Milroy's controversial order came to Imboden's attention in early December after Job Parsons, a resident of Tucker County, Virginia, was assessed \$14.25 and went to Imboden's camp to enlist with the partisans.<sup>66</sup> Parsons also told Imboden of two other penalties levied by Milroy, one on Parsons' father for \$300 and another on a relative for

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<sup>64</sup> Spencer C. Tucker, *Brigadier General John D. Imboden: Confederate Commander in the Shenandoah* (Lexington, Ky., 2003), 102.

<sup>65</sup> *O.R.* Ser. II, V, 810.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 810.

\$700.<sup>67</sup> Perhaps no penalty infuriated Imboden more than the one issued against Adam Harper, fined in the amount of \$285. It was not the monetary amount that Imboden may have found intolerable; it was the physical condition of the man upon whom Milroy levied the penalty. Over eighty years old, crippled and infirmed, Harper could neither read nor write.<sup>68</sup> The harsh policies Milroy directed against Confederate sympathizers emerged as one of his hallmarks of military governance.

Upon learning of these cruel edicts Imboden dispatched the information to Richmond. Imboden's letter first reached Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Davis forwarded the correspondence to Gen. Robert E. Lee and directed Lee to send a note to Union Gen.-in-Chief Henry Halleck to investigate Milroy's actions. Halleck never reprimanded Milroy for issuing the order.

Despite Milroy's harsh threats toward the Confederate civilians of western Virginia, Imboden continued to plan operations and wreak havoc on Union supply lines in the region. He planned a raid into Tucker County, Virginia, in early November. At the same time Milroy planned a movement to Staunton to capture the strategic rail center. Imboden reached the town of St. George in Tucker County, the home of Job Parsons, on November 9. There the Union garrison of a captain and thirty-three men surrendered to Imboden, who paroled them. The Union garrison at St. George, however, would be the last Union troops that Imboden paroled. After learning of Milroy's harsh order in early December Imboden vowed never to parole any Union soldier until Milroy relented.

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Milroy learned of Imboden's raid he abandoned his plan to take Staunton and instead marched his men, about 2,000 strong, to intercept Imboden. Confederate partisans eluded Milroy's force and escaped safely.<sup>69</sup> The entire affair infuriated Milroy because not only did he fail to capture Imboden, but Imboden disrupted Milroy's Staunton operation.

The feud between Milroy and Imboden continued throughout the remainder of 1862. Imboden continued to hamper Union operations in the region throughout the first half of 1863. Occasionally Milroy ordered the execution of Confederate partisans and

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<sup>67</sup> Tucker, *Brigadier General John D. Imboden*, 102.

<sup>68</sup> *O.R.* Ser II, V, 811.

<sup>69</sup> The information about Imboden's St. George, Virginia, raid can be found in Tucker, *Brigadier General John D. Imboden*, 103-06.

even the execution of two civilians near Philippi for failing to comply with his orders.<sup>70</sup> He also arrested fifteen Confederate sympathizers after Imboden arrested a Union sheriff and sent him to Richmond. Milroy ordered the sheriff's immediate release. If Imboden failed to secure the sheriff's release Milroy was prepared to execute the hostages. Imboden replied to Milroy's threat that if any Confederate civilians were killed, two of Milroy's men would die for every civilian. The Gray Eagle countered Imboden's warning by stating that he had far more Confederate prisoners than Imboden had Union detainees.<sup>71</sup> Luckily, neither side executed any soldiers or civilians as a result of this particular affair.

As Confederate partisans continued to harass Union operations in western Virginia, a portion of Milroy's division made a raid into the Lower Shenandoah Valley and occupied the strategically important town of Winchester.

Winchester had not been occupied by Federal soldiers since September 2, 1862, when Union forces under command of Gen. Julius White evacuated the town and fled to Harpers Ferry.<sup>72</sup> The following day the 5<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry commanded by Lt. Col. John H.S. Funk arrived in Winchester. Funk secured the town as a base of operations for Lee's invasion of Maryland, culminating in the Battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862.<sup>73</sup> The battle lasted about twelve hours and ended in a tactical draw, providing President Abraham Lincoln with as near to a Union victory as Federal forces experienced in the east that season. It afforded Lincoln the political opportunity he needed to issue the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation (the Proclamation did not become effective until January 1, 1863). This proclamation heavily influenced Milroy's policy in the first half of 1863 during his occupation of Winchester.

After the Battle of Antietam, Winchester remained in Confederate hands through mid-November 1862. By mid-November Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside had replaced McClellan as commander of the Army of the Potomac and Burnside's army was moving toward the Rappahannock River and Fredericksburg, Virginia. Lee needed to concentrate his troops there. Lee began moving troops east of the Blue Ridge Mountains in late

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<sup>70</sup> Tucker, *Brigadier General John D. Imboden*, 107.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *O.R.*, Ser. I, XII, Pt. 2, 767.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, XIX, Pt. 1, 139.

October, beginning with Gen. James Longstreet's First Corps. Jackson's corps remained in Winchester. On November 22, with an ominous threat against Richmond from the north, Lee ordered Jackson out of Winchester.

After Jackson's departure only a token Confederate force remained under the command of Brig. Gen. William "Grumble" Jones and troops of the Maryland Line under Brig. Gen. George H. Steuart.<sup>74</sup> This token force would not be enough to hold off any Federal attempts to capture the town. On December 3, Federal forces under command of Brig. Gen. John Geary occupied Winchester with little opposition from Confederate forces. After learning of a smallpox epidemic in the town Geary withdrew quickly.<sup>75</sup> Confederate forces returned to Winchester after Geary's withdrawal, but on December 13, Jones withdrew his command to Strasburg.<sup>76</sup> In the week and a half that followed, Winchester enjoyed a peaceful, unoccupied tranquility.

Aware of Winchester's availability Milroy decided to strike. He finalized the plans for the raid to Winchester and deployed 2,000 infantry, cavalry, and artillery to occupy the town. Initially Col. Keifer of the 110<sup>th</sup> Ohio took command of the expedition. Before any Union troops left Moorefield, the place where the force camped, command was given turned over to Brig. Gen. Gustave Paul Cluseret. A native of France, Cluseret came to America in 1862 to fight for the Union. He was an experienced military officer, having served in the French army and the cause for Italian liberation in 1860. Although a capable leader, many Union officers including Milroy perceived Cluseret as a soldier of fortune.<sup>77</sup>

Cluseret entered Winchester unopposed on Christmas Eve with a force of about 3,000.<sup>78</sup> Winchester resident Laura Lee could only write: "The wretched, horrible

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<sup>74</sup> Robert J. Driver Jr., *First and Second Maryland Cavalry, C.S.A.* (Charlottesville, Va., 1999), 27; Delauter, *Winchester in the Civil War*, 45.

<sup>75</sup> For accounts of Geary's entrance into Winchester see *O.R.* Ser. I, XXI, 33-34

<sup>76</sup> Delauter, *Winchester in the Civil War*, 46.

<sup>77</sup> Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 1:313; For more information on Cluseret see Lowell L. Blaisdell, "A French Civil War Adventurer: Fact and Fancy," *Civil War History*, XII (1966):246-57; Philip M. Katz, *From Appomattox to Montmartre: Americans and the Paris Commune* (Cambridge, 1998).

<sup>78</sup> Delauter, *Winchester in the Civil War*, 46.

Yankees are here again!”<sup>79</sup> The Union force set up camp on the property of the colonial founder of Winchester, James Wood.<sup>80</sup>

While in command at Winchester, Cluseret implemented a 7 p.m. curfew and threatened to imprison anyone who defied his order. On Christmas Day he ordered the search of homes for any bacon, arms, or liquor.<sup>81</sup> Even though Cluseret actively enforced martial law he did not see any point in needlessly harming the Confederate civilian population. In a number of instances Cluseret prevented looting and other acts of destruction by posting guards at the homes of victimized citizens.<sup>82</sup> Despite his efforts he could not prevent all acts of destruction. Federal soldiers tore down outbuildings and fences throughout Winchester for material to build winter quarters.<sup>83</sup>

Even though Cluseret came to the United States to fight for the cause of union he did not favor President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. Milroy and Cluseret clashed over this issue shortly after Milroy’s arrival in January. Mary Lee, a resident of Winchester who witnessed much of the wartime tribulations of the town wrote of Cluseret in her diary: “...he did not come here to fight for negroes, & to arrest women, & [believed] that it is contrary to the usages of war, to refuse to feed prisoners.”<sup>84</sup>

With Winchester securely in Union hands and both armies preparing for winter camp, Milroy decided to move the remainder of his command to Winchester. Early on the morning of January 1, 1863, Milroy’s command marched east across the Allegheny Mountains and descended on Winchester. The remainder of his command arrived throughout New Year’s Day. As the long blue column crossed the mountain Col. Keifer heard shouts coming from the head of it. As he investigated the cause of this ruckus he observed the men cheering. Keifer noticed Milroy riding up and down the lines, halting momentarily as if delivering some message to the men, and then riding to another portion of the line. Milroy was delivering a message to the troops. He stated:

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<sup>79</sup> Laura Lee Diary, Dec. 24, 1863, Manuscripts and Rare Books Department, Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

<sup>80</sup> Mincrose C. Gwin, ed., *A Woman’s Civil War: A Diary with Reminiscences of the War from March 1862: Cornelia Peake McDonald* (Madison, Wi., 1992), 102.

<sup>81</sup> Laura Lee Diary, Dec. 25, 1862, Swem Library, College of William and Mary; Roger U. Delauter, *Winchester in the Civil War*, 46.

<sup>82</sup> Gwin, *A Woman’s Civil War*, 106.

<sup>83</sup> Laura Lee Diary, Dec. 27, 1862, Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

<sup>84</sup> Mary Lee Diary, Jan. 10, 1863, Handley Library.

This day President Lincoln will proclaim the freedom of four millions of human slaves, the most important event in the history of the world since Christ was born. Our boast that this is a land of liberty has been a flaunting lie. Henceforth it will be a veritable reality. The defeats of our armies in the past we have deserved, because we waged war to protect and perpetuate and to rivet firmer the chains of slavery. Hereafter we shall prosecute the war to establish and perpetuate liberty for all mankind beneath the flag; and the Lord God Almighty will fight on our side, and he is a host, and the Union armies will triumph.<sup>85</sup>

Finally Keifer, who had noted upon meeting Milroy that the Gray Eagle was subject to rash behavior, asked Milroy about the reason for his excitement.<sup>86</sup> Milroy, with a speech impediment he always had when excited, exclaimed to Keifer: “Colonel don’t you know this is Emancipation Day, when all slaves will be made free?”<sup>87</sup>

As the men crossed the Alleghenies and entered Winchester the spirits of Milroy’s men were high. Yet, the spirits of the civilians of Winchester, who had endured so much, plummeted. The battles and harsh occupations the townspeople endured during the opening years of the war had not prepared them for the harsh winter and spring under Federal control. Indeed, nothing could have prepared them for the next six dreadful months under the watchful eye of the Gray Eagle.

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<sup>85</sup> Milroy’s speech to his men on Jan. 1, 1863, en route to Winchester in Keifer, *Slavery and Four Year of War*, 1:316.

<sup>86</sup> Pope, *The Weary Boys*, 32.

<sup>87</sup> Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 1:313. Keifer noted that when Milroy became excited he stumbled over words and had difficulty speaking.

## Chapter 2

### “To play the tyrant among these traitors”

Milroy's entrance into Winchester on New Year's Day marked the beginning of arguably the worst occupation that Winchester's townspeople endured throughout the war. As parts of Milroy's division entered town that morning, the sun burned brightly and the sky was cloudless. Milroy viewed these clear skies as a sign that God had in some way ordained him to enforce the Emancipation Proclamation. He wrote his wife Mary: "New Year's morning was a bright clear, pleasant glorious morning. A sure augery that President Lincoln's immortal Proclamation had enlisted God almighty on our side and that he will soon clear away the storms and tempests of war occasioned by that mighty curse, slavery."<sup>88</sup>

By the time the lead elements of Cluseret's command arrived on Christmas Eve as the van of Milroy's division, Winchester had already witnessed much death and destruction. Lt. James Hartley of the 122<sup>nd</sup> Ohio described the town's deplorable condition: "A few days ago I took a walk through the ruins of Winchester to see what had been destroyed here... The railroad that runs from Harpers Ferry here is torn up to Charlestown, a distance of over 20 miles and all of the buildings connected with the road are burned... besides a great many buildings of other kinds with an immense amount of property."<sup>89</sup> Milroy's command would only make the town's condition worse.

Without a doubt Milroy was the exception rather than the rule when it came to the Emancipation Proclamation. Many Federal officers did not approve of Lincoln's Proclamation; yet at the time the final proclamation was issued on January 1, many enlisted men in the Union army appeared happy to be fighting to put an end to slavery because they viewed its eradication as a valuable weapon in ending the rebellion.<sup>90</sup> Although Milroy's men actively enforced his policies, some soldiers did so begrudgingly.

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<sup>88</sup> Milroy to wife, Jan. 5, 1863, in Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 1:226-27.

<sup>89</sup> Davidson, *James J. Hartley*, 24-5.

<sup>90</sup> While it is true that a large portion of enlisted Union soldiers disapproved of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, larger number of soldiers viewed it in a positive manner, for more on soldiers' attitudes toward the Emancipation Proclamation see William C. Davis, *Lincoln's Men: How President Lincoln Became Father to an Army and a Nation* (New York, 1999), 103.

A member of the 87<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania wrote his sister from Winchester: “I never intend to stay here and risk my life for these damned niggers.”<sup>91</sup>

When Milroy arrived in Winchester, his reputation preceded him. Winchester’s townspeople already knew of Milroy’s activities in western Virginia and feared that they might suffer the same fate. His harsh treatment of the civilian population made many Confederates liken him to Union Maj. Gen. Benjamin F. Butler. Winchester resident Kate Sperry noted of Milroy in her diary: “He’s a second Butler and \$100,000 is the price the Confederacy (some people in the Confederacy) has placed on his head—I wish I could get it.”<sup>92</sup>

Milroy’s force at Winchester served as part of Gen. Robert Schenck’s Middle Department. Milroy controlled the Lower Shenandoah Valley with nearly 7,000 men quartered around Winchester, while, Gen. Benjamin F. Kelley controlled the Union defenses of the upper Potomac River with his headquarters at Harpers Ferry. From his position at Winchester, Milroy deployed detachments on a constant basis to contend with Confederate raiders threatening the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. A ring of fortifications around Winchester protected Milroy’s command.

While Milroy confronted many problems at Winchester, his first and longest-lasting was disease. Smallpox, typhoid fever, and mumps plagued Milroy’s division and some of the townspeople. Disease remained a constant threat to both armies during the war and claimed more lives than bullets on the battlefield. Throughout the occupation, smallpox cases were reported, but luckily never gained epidemic proportions. Milroy informed his wife during the first week of the occupation that “the small pox is here but I think will not spread among the troops much. My health is excellent.”<sup>93</sup> A typhoid epidemic plagued the townspeople and soldiers under Milroy’s command in April. In one regiment, the 110<sup>th</sup> Ohio, nearly 115 men contracted the disease. Col. Keifer of the 110<sup>th</sup> Ohio lambasted the Union surgeons for not properly caring for the sick and even threatened to expose their inept abilities to authorities in Washington, D.C.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Thomas O. Crowl to sister, Jan. 28, 1863, Pennsylvania State University.

<sup>92</sup> Kate Sperry, *Surrender? Never Surrender*, Jan. 21, 1863, Handley Library. Comparisons between Milroy’s and Butler’s policies are on made on pages 43 and 46 of this study.

<sup>93</sup> Milroy to wife, Jan. 5, 1863, in Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 1:227.

<sup>94</sup> Pope, *The Weary Boys*, 34.

Aside from fighting disease and protecting the vital Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, Milroy's self-appointed duties at Winchester were to enforce actively Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and to do whatever necessary to help bring about a speedy end to the war. The Hoosier would let no one stand in his way, Union or Confederate.

Three days after Milroy entered Winchester, he reportedly received a copy of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Seeing that the proclamation encompassed his military district, Milroy issued his own decree to the citizens of Winchester the following day. It was entitled "Freedom to Slaves!"<sup>95</sup> Even though Milroy swore he waited to issue "Freedom to Slaves!" until he received an official copy of Lincoln's proclamation, Col. Keifer lamented after the war that Milroy issued his proclamation before receiving an official copy.<sup>96</sup> The Gray Eagle's decree read in part: "... I expect all citizens to yield a ready compliance with the Proclamation of the Chief Executive, and I admonish all persons disposed to resist its peaceful enforcement, that upon manifesting such disposition by acts, they will be regarded as rebels in arms against the lawful authority of the Federal Government and dealt with accordingly."<sup>97</sup>

Winchester's Confederate inhabitants looked upon Milroy's and Lincoln's proclamations with scorn. Milroy did not care. He gained tremendous satisfaction from being the first to enforce emancipation in a town that claimed as natives Senator James Mason, author of the Fugitive Slave Law, and Judge Richard Parker, who presided over John Brown's trial.

Federal troops immediately began to enforce Milroy's proclamation. Officers and men went about town reading Milroy's circular and Lincoln's proclamation to tell all slaves they were free.<sup>98</sup> In the days that followed, many "freed people" gathered what little property they owned, boarded trains and headed north. No riotous behavior occurred as a result of the "freedmen" departing; rather, many departures of servants from masters were filled with tears. Former masters offered tokens of remembrance to house servants, and compassion was reportedly expressed by both parties in numerous instances.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Handwritten Manuscript of Milroy Autobiography, 7, Jasper County Public Library, Rensselaer, Ind. Milroy never completed his autobiography and this is the only draft that exists.

<sup>96</sup> Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 1:318.

<sup>97</sup> "Freedom to Slaves!", Jasper County Public Library.

<sup>98</sup> Laura Lee Diary, Jan. 7, 1863, Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

<sup>99</sup> Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 1: 318,320.

News of Milroy's emancipation caused anxiety in Richmond. Officials in the Confederate government already knew about Milroy because of the Gray Eagle's harsh policy against the civilian population in western Virginia, in response to which the Senate of Virginia claimed Milroy's "acts and doings are contrary to the usages of civilized and honorable warfare."<sup>100</sup> Milroy's proclamation in Winchester created a much greater hatred toward the Hoosier general and prompted more legislative action.

Alexander R. Boteler represented the Winchester district in Virginia's House of Delegates. He received a copy of Milroy's "Freedom to Slaves!" shortly after Milroy issued it. Boteler immediately forwarded the circular to Virginia's Governor John Letcher.<sup>101</sup> The governor sent a message to the Senate and House of Delegates the day following receipt of Boteler's message.<sup>102</sup> Letcher's communiqué lambasted both Milroy and President Lincoln for their proclamations. Letcher referred to Milroy's policy as "brutal" and noted that "Lincoln had violated all principles of humanity."<sup>103</sup> Virginia's governor took both Lincoln's and Milroy's measures as attempts to incite slave insurrections.<sup>104</sup> Although Milroy and Lincoln could not have cared about Letcher's policy, Letcher did not care about Milroy's or Lincoln's. In Letcher's eyes, a free person who conspired with a slave to revolt should be "punished with death."<sup>105</sup>

Both the state of Virginia and the Confederate Congress combined their resources to post a \$100,000 reward for Milroy's capture. None of these threats worried Milroy. He truly believed that since he was performing the work of God the Almighty would protect him. As an elder of the Presbyterian Church, Milroy had a strong religious foundation and may have thought, as did Stonewall Jackson, that he was an instrument of God on this earth. Milroy was convinced that only an Old-Testament-style scourge of the land could rid the country of slavery and end the rebellion. He expressed this sentiment to his wife in a letter:

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<sup>100</sup> "Journal of the Senate of Virginia", Jan. 10, 1863, Jasper County Public Library.

<sup>101</sup> A.R. Boteler to Governor John Letcher, Jan. 19, 1863, John Letcher Papers, Library of Virginia.

<sup>102</sup> Executive Communication to the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates, Jan. 20, 1863, in *ibid*; *Journal of the House of Delegates of the State of Virginia for the Adjourned Session, 1863* (Richmond, 1863), 43.

<sup>103</sup> Executive Communication to the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates, Jan. 20, 1863, Letcher Papers.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> Executive Communication to the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates, Jan. 20, 1863, Letcher Papers

In ancient times the cry of a nation of slaves went up to a God out of Egypt and He heard them and sent Moses and Aaron to reason with the slave holders and try to get them to emancipate their slaves...but all the arguments and reasoning...were received by the slave holders with scorn and ridicule. God then commenced sending plagues on them... A long bitter cry has went up to that same 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 slave holders who held these slaves in bondage to try to get them to emancipate... but the slaveholders have met all arguments... with scorn, contempt, abuse and persecution and even insulted God by trying to prove that Slavery was his institution. War, devastation, want, Misery, disease, terror and death are everywhere around them, but still they defy God and refuse to let their slaves go free and will probably persist... Hell deserving iniquity until like the Pharaoh and his host, they will overwhelm in total destruction.<sup>106</sup>

The governments of the Confederacy and Virginia hoped to instill fear into Milroy. Yet it did not work. A reward for his capture was the farthest thing from his mind. Other pressing military matters occupied Milroy's attention.

During the first several weeks of his occupation, Milroy felt vulnerable at Winchester. He received intelligence that Confederate cavalry under Brig. Gen. William "Grumble" Jones and Brig. Gen. John D. Imboden roamed the vicinity around Strasburg and Winchester.<sup>107</sup> As a result of this perceived threat of a cavalry attack on Winchester, Milroy pleaded with his superiors to be reinforced. He sent a message to Gen. Kelley at Harpers Ferry to send him the 13<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Cavalry.<sup>108</sup> Unexplainable delays kept the cavalry from arriving until February 13, more than one month after Milroy sent his plea.<sup>109</sup>

In the meantime Milroy did everything to bolster his position at Winchester through both military policy and physical labor. Milroy thought that he could garner the support of the townspeople of Winchester by rewarding those who took the oath of

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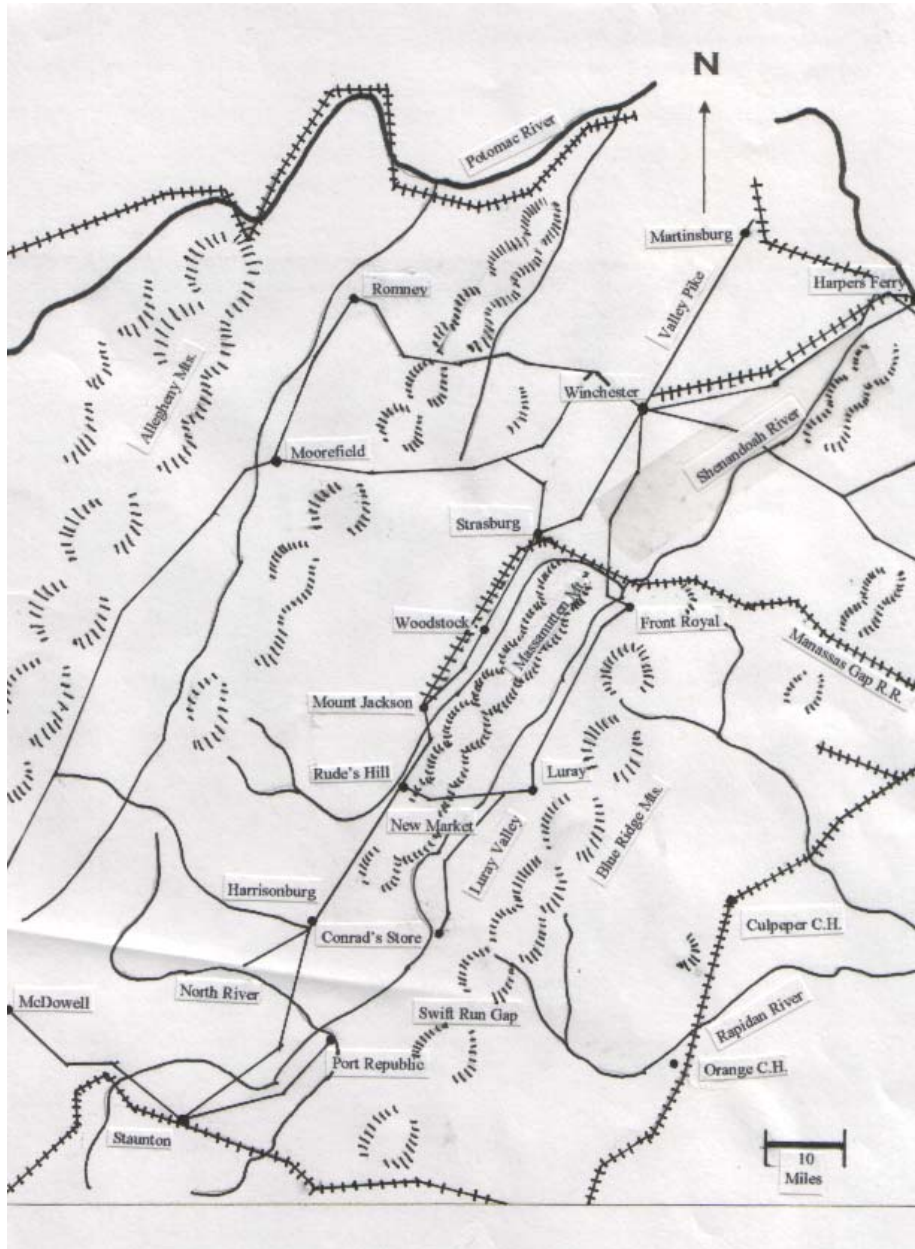
<sup>106</sup> Milroy to wife, Feb. 10, 1863 in Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 1:237.

<sup>107</sup> For more biographical information on Jones see Dobbie Edward Lambert, *Grumble: The W.E. Jones Brigade of 1863-1864* (Wahiawa, Ha, 1992), 1-9.

<sup>108</sup> *O.R.* Ser I, XXV, Pt. 1, 42.

<sup>109</sup> Harold Hand, Jr. *One Good Regiment: The 13<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Cavalry in the Civil War, 1861-1865* (Victoria, British Columbia, 2000), 22.

allegiance to the United States with special privileges and withholding necessities from those who did not. Some soldiers disagreed with Milroy's notion, among them Gen. Cluseret.



Map of Shenandoah Valley (Drawn by author)

Cluseret and Milroy did not see eye to eye on a number of issues, including slavery and indecent treatment of civilians. As a result of this constant tension between Milroy and the “French soldier of fortune,” Milroy pushed for Cluseret’s dismissal during the first two weeks of Milroy’s tenure at Winchester.<sup>110</sup> Undoubtedly the major reason for ill-feelings between the two was Cluseret’s lack of enthusiasm for Milroy’s policies. Winchester resident Mary Lee noted of Cluseret’s disapproval of both Lincoln’s and Milroy’s proclamations: “he did not come here to fight for negroes, & to arrest women, & that it is contrary to the usages of war to refuse to feed prisoners.”<sup>111</sup>

Even though Milroy never emphatically spelled this out in any correspondence to his superior, Gen. Schenck, it is quite evident that Milroy despised the Frenchman. Milroy described Cluseret in a letter to Schenck as a “hasty tempered impatient insulting tyrannical & overbearing to those under him.”<sup>112</sup> While Milroy eventually forced Cluseret to relinquish his command during the second week of January, Cluseret did not officially resign until March 1863.<sup>113</sup>

Aside from contending with Cluseret during the first weeks of occupation, Milroy did everything to ensure the safety of his position at Winchester. Throughout his tenure, Milroy ordered frequent raids to Berryville, Strasburg, and Front Royal. Anywhere Milroy’s command went, the inhabitants of that town felt his wrath. During Milroy’s first ten days in the Shenandoah Valley, several regiments of his command made two raids into Berryville, several miles east of Winchester. Milroy’s soldiers looted, pillaged, and also arrested at least six Confederate sympathizers.<sup>114</sup>

During a raid to Front Royal on January 12-13, Milroy’s soldiers learned that many of the Lower Valley’s citizens held contempt for anyone in a blue uniform and were not afraid to exhibit their disdain. Five companies of the 110<sup>th</sup> Ohio marched to Front Royal and captured four Confederate soldiers during the expedition.<sup>115</sup> The Ohio troops also seized mail, tobacco, and other luxury items. While the men of the 110<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 1:312.

<sup>111</sup> Mary Lee Diary, Jan. 10, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>112</sup> Milroy to Schenck, Jan. 17, 1863, Schenck Papers, University of Miami, Ohio.

<sup>113</sup> There seems to be some discrepancy as to when General Cluseret actually left Milroy’s command at Winchester. Mary Lee in her diary noted that Cluseret resigned on January 10, whereas Cornelia McDonald wrote that Cluseret resigned on Jan. 9; Katz, *Appomattox to Montmartre*, 8.

<sup>114</sup> Treadwell Smith Diary, Jan 3 and Jan. 10, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>115</sup> Pope, *The Weary Boys*, 36.

roamed Front Royal, the regimental officers arranged to have dinner at the home of a local Confederate sympathizer. Even though their host sympathized with the Confederacy, he treated the Federal officers cordially. As the officers ate, they got their first taste of the defiant spirit of the Valley's Confederate women. In a parlor that adjoined the dining room, several ladies gathered around a piano and sang songs of the Confederacy.<sup>116</sup> This scornful display amused the Federal officers.

While small parties of Milroy's division reconnoitered on a frequent basis, Milroy maintained the bulk of his command at Winchester to help him keep a tight reign on the civilian population and to strengthen the town's defenses. He established three lines of pickets around Winchester. All stood within calling distance of each other.<sup>117</sup> Aside from the large amounts of troops needed to form a human wall around the town, Milroy also constantly strengthened the town's defenses. Milroy's men rebuilt Fort Garibaldi in the northwestern portion of town and renamed it Fort Milroy. Union soldiers also strengthened West Fort, located northwest of town and constructed a new fortification, Star Fort. Federal troops built Star Fort on the old site of Fort Alabama, a series of gun emplacements constructed earlier in the war by Stonewall Jackson's men.<sup>118</sup> Not only did Milroy gain a strong sense of security because of the forts, but he also gained gratification in knowing that some of the materials used to build these defensive works came from the home of Senator James Mason.<sup>119</sup>

Work on the forts consumed one day per week for soldiers in Milroy's division throughout the nearly six-month occupation. The other days of the week involved three days of guard duty and three days dedicated to camp chores.<sup>120</sup> Among the many tasks soldiers had to perform on a weekly basis included collecting firewood, gathering material to build winter quarters, and construct fortifications.

Since much of the wood supply had been exhausted by soldiers from previous occupations, the men under Milroy's command took any pieces of wood they could find. Soldiers razed all of the wooden houses, barns, fences, and stables on the outskirts of town during the opening weeks of the occupation. Federal troops also demolished a

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<sup>116</sup> Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 1:323.

<sup>117</sup> Gwin, *A Woman's Civil War*, 119.

<sup>118</sup> Robert M. Rhodes, "Our Forts," *The Story of Frederick County* (Winchester, Va., 1989) 33.

<sup>119</sup> Gwin, *A Woman's Civil War*, 117.

<sup>120</sup> Pope, *The Weary Boys*, 35

number of buildings within the town limits, including the Winchester Academy and the Quaker Church.<sup>121</sup> Disgusted at these acts, Winchester's Portia Baldwin Baker wrote: "They are foot by foot and plank by plank destroying our property... I am always wishing them in their homes."<sup>122</sup>

Even though Milroy's command destroyed considerable amounts of property during the occupation, he did place some restrictions on his men. Milroy ordered his men, except those on guard duty in town, out of town by six o'clock in the evening.<sup>123</sup> He also forbade the possession of liquor for men of his division. He only allowed surgeons to use it for medicinal purposes.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, Milroy appointed a "Board of Survey" on several occasions to examine damage done to the property of Winchester's civilians.

While no evidence exists as to action taken on Milroy's part to reconcile property damage, evidence does exist to indicate that Milroy appointed these "Boards of Survey" to investigate destruction done to property whose owners possessed Union sentiment. For example, Milroy appointed a commission to assess the damage done to Mary E. Hollingsworth's property on February 19, 1863.<sup>125</sup> Strong evidence exists to suggest that Hollingsworth may have had Union sympathies and at one time swore allegiance to the United States. She filed a claim with the Southern Claims Commission in 1878 for damage done to her property during the war, perhaps the damage done during Milroy's occupation.<sup>126</sup> Hollingsworth must have been a loyalist, as only those loyal to the Union were allowed to file claims with the Southern Claims Commission.<sup>127</sup> Nevertheless, the commission denied her claim for compensation by stating that her property was destroyed as a result of the fortunes of war.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Laura Lee Diary, Jan. 11, 1863, Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

<sup>122</sup> Portia Baldwin Baker Diary, Jan. 1, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>123</sup> Mary Lee Diary, Jan. 2, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>124</sup> Milroy to wife, Feb. 11, 1863, in Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 1:237..

<sup>125</sup> Special Order Number 25, RG 393, Vol. II, #4906, National Archives and Records Administration, cited hereafter as NARA.

<sup>126</sup> Gary B. Mills, *Southern Loyalists in the Civil War: The Southern Claims Commission* (Baltimore, 1994), 284.

<sup>127</sup> Since Hollingsworth's claim was "disallowed" and not "dismissed" she must have proven her loyalty to the United States. More information about how the Southern Claims Commission worked can be found in Frank W. Klingbers, *The Southern Claims Commission* (Berkeley, Ca., 1955), vii, 115.

<sup>128</sup> Mills, *Southern Loyalists*, 284.

As Milroy bolstered his defenses of Winchester and prepared for a possible attack from Confederate forces in the Shenandoah Valley under Grumble Jones, Gen. Robert E. Lee planned to strike and dislodge Milroy from Winchester. Lee worried about the lack of provisions available to his troops for the winter. In a letter to President Jefferson Davis in late January, Lee wrote: “The want of supplies for the troops...causes me the greatest uneasiness.”<sup>129</sup> The Shenandoah Valley, known as the “Breadbasket of the Confederacy,” naturally became a place from which Lee wanted to obtain subsistence. He knew that he could not obtain it easily with Milroy at Winchester, so he devised a plan to dislodge the Hoosier’s garrison.

On February 2, Lee directed Jones to prepare and collect supplies for an additional 2,000 men. Lee informed Jones that if the Army of the Potomac, under command of Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker, did not move, now would be the time to strike Milroy.<sup>130</sup> Lee planned to dispatch approximately 2,000 men to the Valley from Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart’s cavalry to join with Jones in the Valley. On February 13, Lee ordered Stuart to deploy Brig. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee’s cavalry brigade to Upperville, enter the Valley via Snickersville, and rendezvous with Jones near New Market.<sup>131</sup> Lee also informed Stuart that if he could afford the loss of extra men, to detach a portion of Brig. Gen. Wade Hampton’s cavalry brigade to join the effort.<sup>132</sup> Lee’s plan was short-lived. On February 15, two days after Lee sent out his plan, he informed Stuart that a Union corps was massing near Newport News, Virginia, and that the plan would have to be abandoned.<sup>133</sup>

Even though Lee abandoned his plan to reinforce Jones, Grumble Jones continued to gather supplies in preparation for an offensive against Milroy. Uneasy about Jones’ whereabouts Milroy wrote to Schenck on February 17, and asked for the 1,385 troops under command of Col. James Washburn to move from Romney to Winchester.<sup>134</sup> Throughout the previous week, Milroy received information that Jones had been replaced and that Jones’ former command had been reinforced by infantry and Imboden’s

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<sup>129</sup> *O.R.* Ser. I, XXI, 1110.

<sup>130</sup> Bigelow, *Chancellorsville*, 123.

<sup>131</sup> Dowdey, *War-time Papers of R.E. Lee*, 402. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee was Robert E. Lee’s nephew.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 402.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 403. The Union Corps was believed to be that of Maj. Gen. W.F. Smith.

<sup>134</sup> *O.R.* Ser. I, XXV, Pt. 2, 85.

cavalry.<sup>135</sup> The reports about Jones' command and reinforcements turned out to be erroneous, but nonetheless they created some apprehension with Milroy.

Milroy had further reason to fear an attack. Twice in January, Confederate forces under Imboden raided the railroad between Winchester and Martinsburg. The Gray Eagle wanted badly to pursue Imboden aggressively, yet his superiors would not let him.<sup>136</sup> Throughout his tenure at Winchester, Milroy made constant pleas with Schenck to turn him loose, as Fremont did early in the spring of 1862. Milroy wrote Schenck: "You will do me a very great favor if you will get the embargo on my movements removed and let me be free to act pro bono."<sup>137</sup> Schenck never lifted the "embargo" on Milroy's movement.

As Milroy pleaded with his superiors to be allowed to attack, Jones prepared to strike. Early in the morning of February 26, a small force of about 150 troopers attacked Milroy's cavalry pickets on the southern edge of Winchester along Cedar Creek Grade.<sup>138</sup> The assault soon turned into an embarrassing defeat for Milroy's cavalry. About half an hour after the attack commenced, Milroy ordered the 13<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Cavalry to drive the enemy away. The Pennsylvanians, known for their lax behavior, did not begin their pursuit until 6 a.m., nearly an hour and a half after Milroy issued the order. Eventually the 1<sup>st</sup> New York Cavalry reinforced the 13<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania and both began the pursuit of their Rebel counterparts.

The Federal horseman followed their foe for nearly thirty miles to Woodstock. At Woodstock two of Jones' regiments—the 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry—greeted the Federal troopers. Milroy's cavalry did not put up much of a fight against the Virginia horsemen and withdrew north in a hasty and confused manner. Disgusted, Milroy wrote that the behavior of his troopers "was disgraceful and cowardly."<sup>139</sup> Col. Keifer noted of the Pennsylvanian's reputation: "the 13<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania's officers sustain their reputation of drunkenness and cowardice; as a body they are most unreliable men in word and act."<sup>140</sup> Milroy tried to do everything in his power to punish the officers of the 13<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> *O.R.* Ser. I, XXV, Pt. 2, 85

<sup>136</sup> Milroy to Schenck, Jan. 26, 1863, Schenck Papers, University of Miami, Ohio.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, Mar. 19, 1863.

<sup>138</sup> *O.R.* Ser. I, XXV, Pt. 2, 27.

<sup>139</sup> See *Ibid.*, 27, 30, 32.

<sup>140</sup> Pope, *The Weary Boys*, 37.

Pennsylvania. While he took no immediate action, two of the regiments officers—Capt. Samuel Speese and Maj. Martin Byrne—were discharged from the service later that year.<sup>141</sup> The reason for the men’s dismissal does not appear in any record.

Less than a week after the disastrous retreat of Milroy’s cavalry from Woodstock, Imboden proposed to Lee a plan to destroy the bridges and trestles of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad from Oakland to Grafton, west of Winchester. Imboden wanted Grumble Jones to move out of the Shenandoah Valley and capture Romney, New Creek, and Cumberland. Lee liked the idea because he felt that it would force Milroy from Winchester and leave the door open for Lee to drive out the remaining horses and cattle from the Shenandoah Valley. Jones wanted to act in concert with Imboden to strike the Baltimore & Ohio simultaneously. Lee approved the plan and ordered J.E.B. Stuart to make a diversion east of the Blue Ridge to distract Milroy.<sup>142</sup>

Nearly a month and a half passed before the famed Jones-Imboden raid commenced. The raid lasted from April 20 to May 27, 1863.<sup>143</sup> During the raid, reinforcements were sent to the Federals in West Virginia from Milroy’s command at Winchester. While Milroy’s aggregate strength at Winchester was depleted momentarily during the raid, he did not pull out of Winchester or at all become shaken by it.

While Confederate forces planned operations to distract Milroy, his superiors kept a tight reign on his movements in the Valley, but did nothing to control his occupation. For five and a half months Milroy kept a tight reign over the inhabitants of that beleaguered town. Milroy established martial law as was customary with any occupying force, yet Milroy’s martial law was markedly different from many other Union generals. Oftentimes Milroy’s occupation has been likened to Gen. Benjamin F. “Beast” Butler’s occupation of New Orleans in 1862. While neither men acted “saintly,” Butler’s martial law was much more lenient than Milroy’s. For example, upon entrance into New Orleans Butler kept the civilian government intact, and only after the town’s leaders refused to cooperate with Butler did he establish martial law.<sup>144</sup> On the other hand Milroy established martial law from the beginning and did not care about maintaining harmony

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<sup>141</sup> Hand, *One Good Regiment*, 34.

<sup>142</sup> Bigelow, *Chancellorsville*, 123-25.

<sup>143</sup> For a detailed study of the Jones-Imboden raid see Tucker, *Brigadier General John D. Imboden*, 111-38.

<sup>144</sup> Hearn, *When the Devil Came Down to Dixie*, 80, 84-86, 88, 97, 103, 130, 134.

with Winchester's Confederate civilian population. He expressed the sense of power he possessed in a letter to his wife: "I can now realize something of the weighty and unpleasant responsibility that rests on a king... my will is absolute law—none dare contradict or dispute my slightest word or wish... both male and female tremble when they come into my presence... I feel a strong disposition to play the tyrant among these traitors."<sup>145</sup>

Even though Milroy treated the civilians of Winchester harshly, and some of his officers may have seen his practices as negative, Milroy actually may have justified his harsh policies based on recommendations that had come from Halleck and Quartermaster Gen. Montgomery C. Meigs. Meigs' year-end report for 1862 stressed the need for occupying forces to live off of the land and to forage while in enemy territory.<sup>146</sup> Halleck's and Meigs' recommendations that occupying forces live off the land was ambiguous. The vagueness of the order was not defined until April 1863 when General Order No. 100 (more commonly referred to as "Lieber's Code") was issued. It clearly pointed out that property could only be confiscated as military necessity and that churches and schools ought to be protected. While the code helped clear up some uncertainties, it still left some, among them how to deal with disloyal civilians.<sup>147</sup>

Milroy passed numerous edicts to make life difficult for the civilian population. Anytime they wanted a favor, they had to make a trip to his office. In several instances Milroy behaved rather civilly toward the civilians, but only in matters that did not present a security threat to his operations. Milroy never granted permission to the townspeople for anything that might help the cause of the Confederacy.

One of the most common practices in a town under martial law consisted of mail censorship.<sup>148</sup> Provost clerks read all mail going in or out of Winchester. Numerous examples exist of Milroy arresting or exiling citizens, mainly women, for carrying letters with the slightest anti-Union feeling. During the first week of Milroy's tenure, one of

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<sup>145</sup> Milroy to wife, Jan. 18, 1863 in Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 1:228.

<sup>146</sup> Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (Cambridge, 1995), 144.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 148-51.

<sup>148</sup> For an excellent example of mail censorship as a practice under Union martial law see Lee C. Drickamer and Karen C. Drickamer, eds., *Fort Lyon to Harper's Ferry: On the Border with "Rambling Jour", The Civil War Letters and Newspaper Dispatches of Charles H. Moulton 34<sup>th</sup> Mass. Vol. Inf.* (Shippensburg, Pa., 1987).

Mary Lee's closest friends, Lal Dinkle, was exiled from Winchester for carrying letters with Confederate sentiment.<sup>149</sup> Even though Milroy's provost clerks censored all letters, some were still smuggled through the lines. To intercept these defiant civilians, Milroy hired several professional detectives.<sup>150</sup>

During the winter months of his occupation Milroy made it quite clear that his will would be law. He established a military commission headed by Col. Keifer. Numerous cases ranging from petty theft to espionage were brought before Keifer's. The court also held trials for civilians of Winchester and the surrounding area that had violated the oath of allegiance in some manner or had attempted to purchase goods from a sutler without a proper permit.<sup>151</sup> Keifer's military court became an institution of Milroy's command and convened on a regular basis. One of many cases brought before the court involved George W. Kitchen, a citizen of Frederick County charged with entering a Federal camp as a spy.<sup>152</sup> Undoubtedly Milroy wanted Kitchen convicted; however, Keifer's court found the man not guilty.<sup>153</sup>

Milroy did not permit any civilian to insult officers or soldiers under his command. This rule was directed mainly at the female population of Winchester. Winchester's women, wrote Lt. James Hartley, "are generally worse than the men, they would spit in your face if they dared."<sup>154</sup> Milroy proposed a much harsher penalty for women who insulted a Union soldier than did his peer, "Beast" Butler. In New Orleans Butler issued his famous "Woman Order" which stated that any woman who insulted a Federal soldier "shall be regarded and be held liable to be treated as a woman of the town plying her avocation."<sup>155</sup> While this punishment for insulting a Federal soldier may have seemed harsh for etiquette of the Victorian age, Milroy's punishment for insulting a Union officer was either imprisonment or exile.<sup>156</sup> According to the diary of the staunch Confederate Mary Lee, conditions under imprisonment may have been akin to the

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<sup>149</sup> Mary Lee Diary, Jan. 3, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>150</sup> Margaretta Barton Colt, *Defend the Valley: A Shenandoah Family in the Civil War* (Oxford, 1994), 16; Larry B. Maier, *Gateway to Gettysburg: The Second Battle of Winchester* (Shippensburg, Pa, 2002), 64.

<sup>151</sup> Pope, *The Weary Boys*, 35-36.

<sup>152</sup> Special Order Number 42, RG 393 Vol. II, NARA.

<sup>153</sup> Pope, *The Weary Boys*, 35.

<sup>154</sup> Davidson, *James J. Hartley*, 31.

<sup>155</sup> Hearn, *When the Devil Came Down to Dixie*, 103.

<sup>156</sup> Mary Lee Diary, Jan. 2, 1863, Handley Library.

treatment accorded by Milroy to Confederate prisoners of war—little or no food and horrid living conditions.<sup>157</sup>

Milroy continued to play the role of tyrant when refused to allow farmers from outside of the town to sell their produce. Later during the occupation, he forbade sutlers who received any supplies from the North from selling goods to any man, woman, or child, without their first taking the oath, and also securing a permit from the provost. Milroy vowed to imprison any violator of his law.<sup>158</sup>

The prohibition of selling farm produce to the civilians without permits was not only an attempt to force the Confederate civilian population to take the oath, but also a means by which Milroy could help deplete any existing supplies of livestock owned by the townspeople of Winchester. Milroy knew that if he did this, and later was driven from the Valley, there would not be much livestock available to the Confederate army. Livestock died daily from starvation because their owners could not obtain enough grain to feed them.

One day Winchester resident Emma Cassandra Riely went to Milroy's office to plead with him to get feed for her livestock. As she sat in a waiting room, she heard yelling coming from Milroy's office. He was shouting at a woman who had come there for the same purpose. Milroy declared: "You all brought on this devilish rebellion and ought to be crushed and deserve to starve with the cows!"<sup>159</sup> Knowing that her plea would also fall on deaf ears, Riely left the general's office without speaking to him.

Milroy also made it difficult for civilians to move about town. He placed a curfew on all townspeople—8 p.m. every day except Sunday when the curfew was extended to 9 p.m.<sup>160</sup> He also forbade inhabitants from gathering in groups of two or more in the streets. Cornelia McDonald noted in her diary that "we are oppressed on every side, even little school girls are dispersed if more than two stop to talk on the street on their way home."<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Mary Lee Diary, Jan. 10, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>158</sup> Special Order Number 4, RG 393, Vol. II, NARA.

<sup>159</sup> Emma Cassandra Riely Macon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War* (Cedar Rapids, Ia., 1911), 76.

<sup>160</sup> Michael G. Mahon, *The Shenandoah Valley 1861-1865: The Destruction of the Granary of the Confederacy* (Mechanicsburg, Pa., 1999), 78.

<sup>161</sup> Gwin, *A Woman's Civil War*, 123.

Milroy ruled without prejudice. Even children were subject to severe punishment. Winchester had passed through a terrible winter; even by mid-March snow still covered the ground. One day a group of young boys were playfully throwing snowballs in the streets and one accidentally struck a Federal officer. The officer approached the boys and arrested Harry McDonald, who happened to be holding a snowball at the moment. The boy was released from jail later that night at the request of the quartermaster who boarded at the McDonald home.<sup>162</sup>

Even though many of the civilians held strong Confederate convictions, some of them had no choice but to beg Milroy for a permit for food. More often than not, Milroy expressed no sympathy to the women. Cornelia McDonald went to Milroy in late February to obtain such permission.<sup>163</sup> Milroy naturally asked her if she was loyal to the Union. McDonald replied that she was not. She added that the generals previous to him did not require taking the oath of allegiance in order to purchase food and other necessities.<sup>164</sup> Milroy did not care what other commanders in Winchester had done. He repeatedly stated: “The way of the transgressor is hard and that if they could not afford to renounce treason they must suffer on as they need expect no favor.”<sup>165</sup>

After listening to McDonald’s plea, he told her that “if it had not been for the women, the men would have long ago given up.”<sup>166</sup> Milroy then calmed down and handed her a piece of paper. He told her to present the paper to his adjutant in the next room. When the adjutant asked if she was “loyal,” she replied negatively and walked out of the room, unable to purchase any goods. McDonald as well as the other women of Winchester felt it more important to hold on to their pride rather than submit to the tyrant.

Time and again Milroy heard pleas. His response was that if one was loyal to the Union one could get what one needed. A survey of the identifiable oaths of allegiance from the Middle Department reveals that no new oaths of allegiance were taken at Winchester during Milroy’s occupation.<sup>167</sup> Regardless of how hard Milroy tried, he could really do nothing to break the impenetrable spirit of Winchester’s Confederates.

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<sup>162</sup> Gwin, *A Woman’s Civil War*, 132.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 125-26.

<sup>164</sup> Milroy to wife, Jan. 18, 1863, in Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 1:228.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> Gwin, *A Woman’s Civil War*, 125-26.

<sup>167</sup> Middle Department Oaths of Allegiance, RG 393, Vol. I, NARA.

Some of Winchester's staunch Confederate women (such as Mary Lee) had too much pride even to attempt to ask Milroy for a permit to purchase food. Mary Lee wrote: "I will do without, as I have never asked a personal favour from a Yankee."<sup>168</sup> Even though Mrs. Lee benefited from friends who were able to obtain permits, without Milroy's knowledge, directly from the provost, she looked down upon the act of asking a Federal soldier for something as "undignified."<sup>169</sup>

The townspeople found various means through which to obtain food and other necessities. Some of Winchester's inhabitants smuggled food through Union lines. Others played on the sympathies of Union soldiers under Milroy's command. Soldiers traded meat, sugar, and coffee with the women of Winchester in exchange for fresh baked bread or flour. Even officers on Milroy's staff, such as his quartermaster, gave food to the civilians and let some of them take a few pieces of wood a day for fuel.<sup>170</sup> Some sutlers also sold goods on the side to civilians who did not possess permits. Once Milroy found out about this "black market," he threatened to close any sutler who sold goods to civilians without a permit. Secret detectives roamed the town to arrest anyone who defied the order. Many sutlers then refused to sell goods without a permit. However, some sutlers were more courageous and did so nevertheless.

Even though Milroy's men aided the civilian population it did not reflect a lack of respect for him. Without a doubt, Milroy was beloved by the men of his command—except a few such as Thomas O. Crowl of the 87<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania. Crowl despised the Gray Eagle, blacks, and everything that Milroy did in Winchester. In a letter to his sister in late January, Crowl wrote: "our old General says that he thinks more of the Blacks than his soldiers, but if we get into Battle he will stand a good chance of getting his infernal old gray head shot off."<sup>171</sup>

While Crowl did not like Milroy, some of the contempt expressed for him may have resulted from the fact that many of his men had not been paid in nearly six months.<sup>172</sup> Milroy knew that his men desperately needed pay and he did everything within his power to see that his men received proper care. He recognized the poor morale

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<sup>168</sup> Mary Lee Diary, Feb. 12, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb. 20, 1863.

<sup>170</sup> Gwin, *Cornelia McDonald*, 123, 129.

<sup>171</sup> Thomas O. Crowl to sister, Jan. 28, 1863, Pennsylvania State University

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb. 16, 1863.

among his troops and wrote to Schenck: “The tales of anguish and misery that come to me from my poor soldiers, whose helpless families are depending upon their scant pay...is very damaging to the morale of the army...and creating deep discontent and hatred of the service...This evil should be promptly remedied.”<sup>173</sup>

While some soldiers may have had contempt for Milroy, strong evidence suggests that the majority of Milroy’s command adored the Gray Eagle. Not only did Milroy know that the majority of his men respected him, he also knew that a handful of citizens in the region approved of his policies.

Even though most of the Lower Valley residents held Confederate sympathies, Milroy knew that a part of the population, albeit a small one, held Union loyalties. As spring approached, Milroy began informing Schenck that he needed money to establish a home guard defense of local unionists. Milroy hoped that this local defense could help him stave off incursions by small enemy detachments.<sup>174</sup> He lamented to Schenck that a number of residents from Shenandoah and Frederick counties wanted to form a home guard defense.<sup>175</sup> Milroy thought that government money and arms ought to be furnished for the purpose of establishing this unit. “I think it is an important movement & that it ought to be encouraged,” Milroy wrote.<sup>176</sup>

Great difficulty exists in determining the size of the Unionist population in Milroy’s area of control; however, a petition from the loyal population in the area under Milroy’s command slightly illuminates its size. Approximately two months after Milroy’s debacle at the Second Battle of Winchester, June 14-15, 1863, a group of Unionist citizens sent President Lincoln a petition asking that Milroy be given back his command at Winchester. Sixty-five male residents of Frederick County signed the petition. It read in part: “Have him restored to his command, and forwarded to Winchester for the protection of the interest of the Union cause, for which we consider him fully competent and what is almost the wish of all citizens.”<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Milroy to Schenck, Feb. 15, 1863, Schenck Papers, University of Miami, Oh.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, Apr. 18, 1863.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb. 15, 1863.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> Petition to Abraham Lincoln from residents of Frederick County, Virginia, Aug. 10, 1863, Civil War Materials, Jonah H. Lupton, Virginia Historical Society.

Even though Milroy reveled at having a small portion of the population with Union sentiment, the majority of Winchester's and the surrounding area's population maintained Confederate loyalties and contempt for their tyrant. Several of Winchester's women showed their disdain for him in a unique way. A couple days prior to Valentine's Day Cornelia McDonald and several other women proposed that they send a card to Milroy as a result of the rude treatment of Mrs. Robert Baldwin. During a visit to Milroy's headquarters, Mrs. Baldwin had been shown out of the room so that two black women might speak with Milroy. McDonald painted Milroy sitting down, greeting two black women and throwing out a white lady who was wearing a dress of red and white stripes.<sup>178</sup> McDonald also made several copies of the valentine, one of which was given to Fanny J. Barton. When Milroy received the card, he immediately ordered the search of all homes and the immediate prosecution of the perpetrator.<sup>179</sup> Luckily for McDonald, Milroy's men could not find any copies.

Although Milroy took action against the civilian population by ordering the search of homes for any evidence of who may have made the card, he had a more light-hearted tone about the affair with his staff and family. He sent the card to his wife and wrote: "You see they have made me very amiable looking while I am ordering one of the secesh misses out of the room and politely inviting two negro wenches to be seated near me. It is pretty well got up and has made considerable fun for my staff...How do you like my looks? Ain't I getting Handsome?"<sup>180</sup>

The women of Winchester, even though living in deplorable conditions, never lost their Confederate spirit. Mrs. Lee did everything in her power to show contempt for her Federal counterparts. She never walked under the stars and stripes flying atop Milroy's headquarters. As she tried to avoid walking under it, soldiers shouted remarks such as "she won't go under the flag; take care the flag is over you; there the shadow is on your back."<sup>181</sup>

Mrs. Lee and Cornelia McDonald, along with a whole host of Confederate women, did everything they could to exhibit their Confederate pride. Mrs. Lee noted that

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<sup>178</sup> Gwin, *A Woman's Civil War*, 121.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> Milroy to wife, Feb. 27, 1863, in Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 1:244; A copy of the valentine that Cornelia McDonald sent to Milroy appears in Barton, *Defend the Valley*, 218.

<sup>181</sup> Mary Lee Diary, Jan. 19, 1863, Handley Library.

“it aggravates them to see how fearless we are & that they cannot subjugate us. The rascals have applied the screw in letting nothing be brought to town & not permitting anyone to leave town, without a pass.”<sup>182</sup>

Aside from showing disdain for Milroy and his men, some of the women of Winchester collected what supplies they could for Confederate soldiers when they reoccupied the town sometime later.<sup>183</sup>

While Milroy carried out many policies to break the will of the people, perhaps one of the most troublesome things that he did was employ the use of Jessie Scouts. Milroy utilized these Union soldiers dressed as Confederates to entrap the Southern population. On numerous occasions Milroy’s Jessie Scouts went about town at night and knocked on doors, portraying themselves as war-weary Confederate soldiers asking for food and shelter. When the people opened their doors and expressed sympathy to what they thought was a beleaguered Confederate soldier, they were placed under arrest or exiled.<sup>184</sup>

As if Milroy’s deception of the people was not bad enough, Milroy’s secret detectives entered homes dressed in civilian clothes. The detectives passed themselves off as ordinary citizens. They were trying to identify people who spoke positively about the Confederacy or if children played with Confederate flags.<sup>185</sup> While a presence of the detectives always existed, Milroy increased their use as spring approached. These detectives also monitored the stores, waiting for someone to buy an item without a permit.<sup>186</sup>

Even though Milroy’s system of espionage may not have been characteristic for military manner at the time, his practice was undoubtedly supported by his immediate superior. Gen. Schenck sent Milroy at least \$500 “to prefer a system of espionage on the Rebs.”<sup>187</sup>

As the spring campaign season approached, Milroy seemed to tighten his grip on the civilian population. The search of homes for contraband items continued. In mid-

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<sup>182</sup> Mary Lee Diary, Jan. 19, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb. 23, 1863.

<sup>184</sup> Macon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 69.

<sup>185</sup> Gwin, *A Woman’s Civil War*, 120.

<sup>186</sup> Mary Lee Diary, Mar. 6, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>187</sup> Milroy to Schenck, Apr. 18, 1863, Schenck Papers, University of Miami, Oh.

March Milroy issued orders for the enlisted men to occupy houses that had no one living in them. He ordered the officers in his division to quarter themselves in the homes of the town's Confederate population.<sup>188</sup> In early April Milroy directed that sutlers refrain from selling anything to citizens "loyal or disloyal."<sup>189</sup>

Aside from tightening his reign over the civilian population Milroy deployed his Third Brigade, under the command of Col. Andrew T. McReynolds, to Berryville to the east. Milroy wanted McReynolds to act as an advance outpost, to watch the passes of the Blue Ridge Mountains and fords across the Shenandoah River. He also ordered McReynolds to keep an open line of communication with Gen. Kelley's forces at Harpers Ferry.<sup>190</sup> McReynolds remained at Berryville until the approach of Confederate forces on June 13.<sup>191</sup>

As spring approached Milroy received some welcome news: he had been promoted to the rank of major general.<sup>192</sup> No doubt jubilant over earning his second star, he lamented over why it took him so long to get it. According to Milroy, Halleck's extreme dislike of Milroy was the sole reason for the delay.<sup>193</sup> President Lincoln nominated Milroy for promotion near the end of 1862, but Halleck struck Milroy's name because of the orders Milroy issued regarding the civilian population of western Virginia.<sup>194</sup> He exhibited his disgust to his wife: "It has now been so long and so unjustly held from me, and so many others, with little or no merit, have been promoted over me, that I attach no honor to it, and look upon it as valueless, and were it not that it unshackled me and gives me wide field of action I would reject it with scorn."<sup>195</sup> Even though bitter over the length of time it took to earn his second star, Milroy relished in his "complete triumph over old Halleck."<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Mary Lee Diary, Mar. 16, 1863, Handley Library; Delauter, *Winchester in the Civil War*, 49.

<sup>189</sup> Mary Lee Diary, Apr. 1, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>190</sup> George R. Prowell, *History of the Eighty-Seventh Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers: Prepared from Official Records, Diaries, and other Authentic Sources of Information* (York, Pa., 1903), 64-5.

<sup>191</sup> Treadwell Smith Diary, June 13, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>192</sup> Milroy's commission to major general of United States' Volunteers, Mar. 31, 1863, Jasper County Public Library.

<sup>193</sup> Milroy to wife, Feb. 10, 1863, in Paulus, *Milroy Papers*, 1:234.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

Unionist civilians and men of Milroy's command celebrated Milroy's promotion. Several civilians and officers sent Milroy congratulatory letters. The surveyor of customs for Wheeling, West Virginia, sent his best wishes. The official noted that Milroy's promotion was well-earned and that had there been other generals like Milroy, "this damnable slaveholding rebellion would soon be crushed."<sup>197</sup> The adjutant of the 116<sup>th</sup> Ohio joined in the congratulation of Milroy. He wrote the Gray Eagle: "It is a glorious victory over stupid prejudice, and the 'scientific' bigotry of 'book-worm' warriors."<sup>198</sup>

As a result of Milroy's promotion to major general, the officers of the division collected money for the purchase of an elaborate presentation sword for Milroy. This sign of adoration was perhaps the highest honor that any commander could be given by his men. He received this honor a second time at Winchester when the men from an Ohio regiment gave him a sword in early May.<sup>199</sup>

The officers of his command presented the sword honoring his promotion on April 4. The elaborate presentation sword was manufactured by Jerre McLene of Indianapolis. The ceremony began with a parade through the Winchester. It ended on a plane northeast of town where a grand review of the entire division was held.<sup>200</sup> The inscription on the sword read: "To Gen. Robert H. Milroy, A true Patriot and Hero. A man who loves his country and race, A soldier who acts fearlessly and promptly, A chiefton to honor and follow."<sup>201</sup>

Col. W.H. Ball of the 122<sup>nd</sup> Ohio presented the sword and delivered the address. Deeply moved by this sign of affection, Milroy responded to Ball's address. He stated: "The capacity of man for self government is now on trial before the civilized world. [O]ur Fathers in founding the institutions under which we have prospered as a nation, performed their mission. It is the mission of this generation to demonstrate the practicability of those institutions."<sup>202</sup> After Milroy gave his speech, the whole of his command filled the air with cheers and shouts "that would deafen any one but

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<sup>197</sup> Surveyor of Wheeling, West Virginia, to Milroy, Mar. 9, 1863, Jasper County Public Library.

<sup>198</sup> H.L. Sibley to Milroy, Mar. 10, 1863, Jasper County Public Library.

<sup>199</sup> "Milroy's swords" in Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 4:9.

<sup>200</sup> Davidson, *James J. Hartley*, 30; Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 4:137. The original extract about the event was taken from the *Cincinnati Commercial*, Apr. 1863.

<sup>201</sup> "Milroy's swords" in Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 4:9.

<sup>202</sup> Milroy's response to W.H. Ball's address, Apr. 4, 1863, in *ibid.*, 4:141.

soldiers.”<sup>203</sup> Apparently Milroy cherished this sword more than any other because he demanded that it be buried with him.<sup>204</sup> His request was granted upon his death in 1890.

Several days after Milroy’s presentation of the Jerre McLene sword his already tenuous relationship with the Confederate population became even weaker. Shortly after Milroy’s arrival, he established his headquarters in the home of Mrs. Lloyd Logan. The Logan home, situated at the corner of Braddock and Piccadilly Streets, was (and still is) one of Winchester’s more architecturally pleasing homes. Generals previous to Milroy made it their headquarters as well as generals after Milroy’s departure, including Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan. Generals such as John P. Hatch used the home prior to Milroy’s arrival, but still allowed the Logans to reside in a portion of it. Milroy extended the same courtesy to the Logans until his wife came to town during the first week of April.<sup>205</sup>

Mrs. Milroy’s arrival unleashed a chain of events that severed an already weak relationship with the townspeople. Milroy evicted the Logans from their home. While many of Winchester’s citizens felt the Logans had been exiled from Winchester on account of Mrs. Milroy’s desire to have the house all to herself, Milroy gave another reason. In his eyes the exile of the Logan family was retaliation for the ill-treatment of a Jessie Scout. Mrs. Lee recorded in her diary that the Logans “collared him, shook him and threw him out of the house.”<sup>206</sup> Milroy’s act conformed to his policy to punish anyone who mistreated a Union soldier.

Milroy did not allow the Logan family to gather any clothing or any other items. One of Mrs. Logan’s daughters, afflicted with erysipelas (a severe type of skin infection), was not even allowed to take medicine with her.<sup>207</sup>

As the Logans walked out of their house for the last time and prepared to board a wagon that would carry them south, about seven miles to Newtown, Mrs. Milroy’s sat in a wagon and, as Kate Sperry noted: “viewed their removal with the utmost complacency.”<sup>208</sup> The Logans boarded the wagon and as it drove off, one of Mrs.

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<sup>203</sup> Milroy’s response to W.H. Ball’s address, Apr. 4, 1863, in Paulus., *Papers of General Milroy*, 4:141

<sup>204</sup> “Milroy’s swords” in *ibid.*, 4:9.

<sup>205</sup> Delauter, *Winchester in the Civil War*, 36.

<sup>206</sup> Mary Lee Diary, Apr. 6, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, Apr. 7, 1863.

<sup>208</sup> Kate Sperry, *Surrender? Never Surrender?* Apr. 7, 1863, Handley Library.

Logan's daughters pointed her finger at a Union soldier in a mad rage and shouted:  
"There is a man whose brains I could blow out."<sup>209</sup>

The eviction of the Logan family not only unleashed greater hatred for Milroy; it also created some dissent among the officers of Milroy's command, especially those who boarded at the home. The Union officer escorting the Logans beyond the Federal lines reportedly was dishonorably discharged by Milroy for extending sympathy to the family.<sup>210</sup> Other Federal officers residing at the Logan home threatened to resign their commissions. One Federal officer reportedly tore off his shoulder straps and threw them down at Milroy's feet in disgust.<sup>211</sup>

The Logans were not the first to feel Milroy's wrath, and they certainly would not be the last. While Milroy exiled people during the winter months, he exiled far more frequently as the spring campaign season approached. Perhaps he did this to protect his security so that individuals would not inform the Confederates as to Milroy's position and strength. On April 10, three days after the exile of the Logans, Milroy sent ten more people south beyond the Federal lines.<sup>212</sup> Among those banished was a school teacher. Milroy expelled her from Winchester because his secret detectives intercepted a note from her with comments about him. Even though the school where she taught had not broken any rules, Milroy closed it down the same day.<sup>213</sup> Other exiles soon followed and continued regularly until the Second Battle of Winchester.<sup>214</sup>

The departure of Milroy's wife in early May could not have helped his attitude toward the Confederate population. Milroy sulked in his wife's absence. "My room was painfully lonely after you left," he wrote, "and I kept out of it and absorbed in business as much as possible. Your visit was a bright beam amid the darkened gloom of war, a

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<sup>209</sup> Mary Lee Diary, Apr. 7, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, Apr. 9, 1863.

<sup>211</sup> Gettie Miller Diary, Apr. 8, 1863, Handley Library. The entry reads: "They say that some of the yankees officers resigned their office and that the one that boarded at Mrs. Logan's tore off his shoulder straps and thru them down at Milroy's feet and he had been courtmarshaled."

<sup>212</sup> Gwin, *A Woman's Civil War*, 137.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 138. Cornelia McDonald noted in her diary that the woman exiled was a teacher at a school run by a Mrs. Eichelbarger.

<sup>214</sup> Cornelia McDonald recorded some of Milroy's actions throughout April-June. According to her diary Mary McGill was exiled on April 14, and a store owner with the last name of Rumley had his store and its contents taken possession of by Milroy's command on May 15. Dr. W.H. Boyd and his entire family were sent south on May 22, George and Julian Ward were held captive as ransom for the safe return of a Jessie Scout captured and on June 9, Dr. and Mrs. Baldwin were sent south for not paying wages to a negro woman. See Gwin, *A Woman's Civil War*, 139, 141, 151, 154.

delightful oasis amid the darkened gloom of the desert of widowhood and banishment from home.”<sup>215</sup>

Milroy continued to try to break the spirit of Winchester’s Confederate inhabitants throughout the spring, but nothing could have dampened their spirits more than devastating news from eastern Virginia: Stonewall Jackson was dead. On the evening of May 2, 1863, after a spectacular flanking maneuver against the Union XI Corps at the Battle of Chancellorsville, Jackson and his staff had gone out to reconnoiter the Federal position. Upon his returning to the Confederate line, a North Carolina regiment mistakenly opened fire. Three bullets struck Jackson. Dr. Hunter Holmes McGuire, a native of Winchester and Jackson’s medical director, amputated Jackson’s left arm. For the next several days Jackson appeared to be healing, but his condition took a turn for the worse and he perished on May 10, from pneumonia.<sup>216</sup>

Winchester’s Confederate women showed their adoration for Jackson, the first liberator of Winchester, by adorning themselves with mourning ribbons that contained a Virginia state seal in the center.<sup>217</sup> Milroy did not want these women walking around town displaying the seal of a state in rebellion, so he ordered the women to replace the Virginia seal with the image of George Washington. He also issued an order forbidding anyone to wear a mourning ribbon for more than thirty days.<sup>218</sup> Mrs. Lee, whom Jackson and McGuire had visited in October 1862, was heart-broken. She wrote:

The *American* says the Richmond papers obtain the obituary of Genl. Jackson. I do not believe it yet, though the bare idea has given me a more hopeless feeling than any other event of the war. Not that I despair at the final result, but it would be as if God were for a while leaving us to grope in the dark—in depriving us of one of His purest saints.<sup>219</sup>

Arguably no town had a greater affinity for Jackson than Winchester. Kate Sperry, whose father had served in the ranks under Jackson’s command, expressed her

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<sup>215</sup> Milroy to wife, May 17, 1863, in Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 1:247.

<sup>216</sup> For a detailed account of the events surrounding Jackson’s death see Robertson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 727-62.

<sup>217</sup> Delauter, *Winchester in the Civil War*, 50.

<sup>218</sup> Mary Lee Diary, June 10, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>219</sup> Mary Lee Diary, May 10, 1863, Handley Library.

sorrow with a heavy heart: “I firmly believe he’s dead (Jackson) and feel so miserable—nearly cried my eyes out—poor Jackson—so noble—so brave—so loved by all the people—Oh, how we shall miss him... There was no more pleasure for me after that dreadful news.”<sup>220</sup>

Jackson’s death was bitter-sweet for the Confederacy. The Army of Northern Virginia had just won its most resounding victory, but lost its most able lieutenant. After Lee defeated Joseph Hooker’s Army of the Potomac at Chancellorsville, Lee’s army seized the strategic initiative. The Confederate population of Winchester reveled at the fortunes of their army, but the Unionist population fretted over its future. Julia Chase, a staunch Unionist, wrote: “The secesh are very joyous & well they might be, rather taunting in their remarks to the Unionists. Great God! Shall this thing always be.”<sup>221</sup>

Throughout May, Milroy feared the possibility of a massive Confederate attack. His command had been involved in several skirmishes that month and Hooker’s defeat at Chancellorsville made Milroy realize that he might be vulnerable to attack. Yet he remained confident that he could defend Winchester. He held strong to his conviction that the Confederate forces “may come in sufficient numbers to surround me, but they will never capture me.”<sup>222</sup>

After Chancellorsville, Milroy’s Jessie Scouts (now commanded by Col. Keifer), reported regularly to Milroy that Lee’s army was on the move and that a portion of the Army of Northern Virginia might attack Winchester.<sup>223</sup> Keifer’s scouts provided such detail about Lee’s operations that Milroy ought to have given them more credence than he did. Milroy believed that Lee would not detach a large portion of his army to dislodge him. Instead, the Gray Eagle thought that nothing more than small bodies of enemy cavalry would attack him. Milroy told Keifer that the Rebels had fabricated the story “to cause him to disgracefully abandon the Valley.”<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Sperry, *Surrender? Never Surrender?* May 13, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>221</sup> Julia Chase Diary, May 8, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>222</sup> Milroy to Schenck, Feb. 15, 1863 in Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 4:60.

<sup>223</sup> Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 2:4.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

Keifer's scouts repeatedly reported that the Confederates would attack on June 10.<sup>225</sup> In the meantime, Milroy continued to strengthen his defenses and scout the Valley throughout May. He sent detachments to Strasburg and Woodstock.<sup>226</sup>

While Milroy ignored the reports of his scouts, Halleck did not. Halleck incessantly sent a barrage of inquiries to Schenck why Milroy remained at Winchester. On April 30, Halleck lambasted Schenck for keeping Milroy at Winchester. "As I have often repeated to you verbally & in writing, that is no place to fight a battle. It is merely an outpost, which should not be exposed to an attack in force."<sup>227</sup>

May drew to a close, yet Milroy remained at Winchester despite Halleck's wishes. Halleck, sensing that attack was imminent, wired Schenck at the end of May. "Forces at Harpers Ferry, the Shenandoah Valley, and western Va. Should be on the alert and prepared for an attack."<sup>228</sup>

Halleck and others in the War Department worried over the vulnerability of Milroy's position. Schenck and Milroy showed no apprehension. Federal troops continued to fortify Winchester and awaited June 10. Even though Milroy may have appeared complacent, his command was more active during the first week of June as it prepared for the supposed attack. Mrs. Lee noted in her diary on June 5: "The Yankees are in a panic; the horses are kept to the guns; no officers are permitted to come to town except on urgent business; the Sutlers are ready to go at any moment."<sup>229</sup> Also during this time, Milroy evacuated the sick Union soldiers from Winchester.<sup>230</sup>

Milroy eagerly awaited June 10. The day came and went without incident. The absence of a Confederate attack buoyed Milroy's confidence that the Confederates would not strike Winchester. He further believed that no part of Lee's army would attack Winchester in strength.<sup>231</sup> The Gray Eagle was mistaken. The reports that had come from Keifer's scouts throughout May and the opening days of June proved genuine. The Confederates had planned to strike Winchester on June 10, but were delayed as a result of

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<sup>225</sup> Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 2:4.

<sup>226</sup> Pope, *The Weary Boys*, 37.

<sup>227</sup> Halleck to Schenck, Apr. 29, 1863, Jasper County Public Library.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, May 29, 1863.

<sup>229</sup> Mary Lee Diary, June 5, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>230</sup> Davidson, *James J. Hartley*, 38.

<sup>231</sup> Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 2:4.

the advance of Union cavalry south of the Rappahannock River and the subsequent Battle of Brandy Station on June 9.<sup>232</sup>

While Milroy settled into his false state of security, Lee set his invasion plan of the North into motion. Gen. Richard S. Ewell, commanding the Army of Northern Virginia's Second Corps, spearheaded the army's advance west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Ewell knew the area well from campaigning with Stonewall Jackson in the Valley in 1862. Lee ordered Ewell to march to Winchester, dislodge Milroy, and then move north across the Potomac River.

On June 10, Ewell's corps, approximately 13,000 men strong, departed Culpeper Court House. Meanwhile, on June 10 and 11, Schenck sent his chief of staff, Col. Donn Piatt, to inspect Milroy's position at Winchester.<sup>233</sup> Piatt wired Schenck from Winchester: "All looks fine. Can whip anything the rebels can fetch here."<sup>234</sup>

For some reason, on his return trip to Baltimore, Piatt changed his mind about Milroy's ability to defend Winchester. He dispatched Milroy from Martinsburg to take steps to withdraw to Harpers Ferry.<sup>235</sup> While it is not entirely clear why Piatt changed his mind, it may have had something to do with a telegram sent to Piatt from Halleck that same day. Halleck wrote Piatt: "Harpers Ferry is the important place, Winchester is of no importance other than as a lookout."<sup>236</sup>

Infuriated over Piatt's sudden change of order Milroy wired Schenck: "I think I have sufficient force to hold the place safely."<sup>237</sup> Piatt received Milroy's telegram and replied promptly: "The telegram received. It must be considered an order and obeyed accordingly. Take immediate steps."<sup>238</sup>

Even though Halleck wanted Milroy out of Winchester, Schenck on June 12, gave Milroy clear orders. Schenck told Milroy to "make all the required preparations for withdrawing. But hold your position in the meantime. Be ready for movement but await further orders."<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 2:6.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:4.

<sup>234</sup> *O.R.*, Ser. I, XXVII, Pt. 2, 161.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>236</sup> Halleck to Piatt, June 11, 1863, Jasper County Public Library.

<sup>237</sup> Milroy to Schenck, in Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 2:5.

<sup>238</sup> Piatt to Milroy, June 11, 1863, Jasper County Public Library.

<sup>239</sup> Schenck to Milroy, June 12, 1863, Jasper County Public Library.

While the Union telegraph lines burned hot on June 12, with messages between Baltimore, Washington, D.C., and Winchester, Ewell's force marched to within twenty miles of Winchester. The following day, in a strategy previously employed by Jackson at Winchester in 1862, Ewell divided his force. Maj. Gen. Edward "Old Allegheny" Johnson, who had confronted Milroy earlier in the war, took his division and approached Winchester from the southeast via the Front Royal Road. Maj. Gen. Jubal A. Early's division advanced to Winchester from the south via the Valley Pike and Maj. Gen. Robert Rodes marched his division north to Berryville to drive out McReynolds' brigade. Rodes then directed his division north to Martinsburg to cut off a possible Union retreat.<sup>240</sup>

The first evidence of Ewell's movement appeared on June 12, about fifteen miles south of Winchester near Middletown. Confederate forces under Capt. W.L. Rasin, consisting of the 1<sup>st</sup> Maryland Infantry and the 14<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry, were forced to retreat after a skirmish with elements of the 87<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania, 13<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Cavalry and 5<sup>th</sup> U.S. Artillery.<sup>241</sup> The Union detachment, commanded by Col. John W. Schall of the 87<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania, easily drove off the attacking foe. Schall's detachment suffered no casualties, but inflicted eighty-seven on the enemy.<sup>242</sup>

This easy victory further buoyed Milroy's confidence. Even though Milroy felt safe, he continued to bolster his defenses in preparation for a massive Confederate attack. On June 11, Halleck had made a direct plea to Milroy to withdraw, but Milroy obeyed Schenck's orders to stay put.

Milroy decided to remain at Winchester and fight for several reasons. First, he felt compelled to defy Halleck and obey Schenck's order to await further orders. Second, Milroy knew that Winchester had to be held in order to protect the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Third, he believed that the fortifications his men had constructed could withstand an attack by a force five times greater than his own. Fourth, he wanted to guarantee the safety of the Unionists in the area. Finally, Milroy did not want Confederates to acquire any of the area's remaining crops and livestock.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Brandon H. Beck and Charles S. Grunder, *The Second Battle of Winchester* (Lynchburg, Va., 1988), 23-4; Delauter, *Winchester in the Civil War*, 51; Douglas Southall Freeman, *R.E. Lee* (New York, 1935), 3:33.

<sup>241</sup> Beck and Grunder, *Second Battle of Winchester*, 25.

<sup>242</sup> Prowell, *History of the Eighty-Seventh Regiment*, 66. Of the eighty-seven casualties, fifty were killed or wounded and thirty-seven captured.

<sup>243</sup> *O.R.* Ser. I, XXVIII, Pt. 2, 178.

June 13, dawned as Ewell's forces approached Winchester. Around noon the lead elements of Ewell's corps found a formidable opponent near Kernstown, several miles south of Winchester. Fearing an attack that day from the south, Milroy deployed five infantry regiments, one of cavalry, and a battery of artillery to meet the impending threat.<sup>244</sup> Pickets of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Virginia engaged Milroy's pickets and drove them back toward Winchester.<sup>245</sup> As the fire of musketry intensified south of town, so too did the curiosity of the townspeople. Many disregarded personal safety and climbed to rooftops to catch a glimpse of the men who came to deliver them from Milroy's tyranny.

As citizens peered toward the battle, Johnson's division moved on the Front Royal Pike and Early's division marched in strength on the Valley Pike to reinforce the lead elements of his command that had already engaged the Federals. As Early approached Kernstown, he saw several infantry regiments and one battery of artillery posted atop Pritchard's Hill, a commanding rise slightly west of the Valley Pike. Early marched his men across the field at Kernstown, where Jackson had met defeat in March 1862, to take the heights.<sup>246</sup> Union troops defending the hill staved off Early's advance for some time, but his repeated attacks on the Union right cracked the line. Early pushed the Federals as far north as Cedar Creek Grade. There the Federals halted his advance. The day's fighting came to a close immediately south of town. Meanwhile, to the southeast of town, Johnson marched his division, unopposed, to the intersection of the Front Royal and Millwood Pikes.<sup>247</sup>

Milroy's men fought ably against a formidable opponent, but Schenck grew uneasy about Milroy's situation and ordered him to retreat to Harpers Ferry.<sup>248</sup> Milroy did not fall back, because he never received the order. The Confederates severed the telegraph lines before Schenck sent the order.

June 13, drew to a close with uncertainty for both Milroy and the inhabitants of Winchester. Milroy had no means of speedy communication with his superiors. In turn, his superiors did not know his situation. Telegraph lines between Halleck, Lincoln, and

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<sup>244</sup> *New York Herald*, June 22, 1863. Milroy deployed the following regiments—87<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania, 110<sup>th</sup> Ohio, 123<sup>rd</sup> Ohio, 18<sup>th</sup> Connecticut, 12<sup>th</sup> West Virginia, 13<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Cavalry, and Battery L, 5<sup>th</sup> U.S. Artillery.

<sup>245</sup> Beck and Grunder, *Second Battle of Winchester*, 29.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>247</sup> Delauter, *Winchester in the Civil War*, 52.

<sup>248</sup> Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 2:5.

Schenck buzzed with messages. President Lincoln, concerned over Milroy's situation and the impending movement of the Army of Northern Virginia, wired Gen. Schenck: "Get Milroy from Winchester to Harpers Ferry if possible. He will be 'gobbled up' if he remains, if he is not already past salvation."<sup>249</sup>

The heavy rain during the night of June 13-14 did not dampen Milroy's resolve to fight. The town bustled with activity as Milroy's men made last-minute preparations to defend against Ewell's attack. Winchester's inhabitants had mixed emotions about the immediate future. Excited at the prospect of liberation, Mrs. Lee wrote: "I have everything in nice order for the Confederates."<sup>250</sup> On the other hand, Winchester's Unionists feared a Confederate victory. Julia Chase, one of Winchester's more outspoken Unionists, wrote: "The town is all in an uproar, wagons lining the streets all day, cavalry & infantry passing by, the secessionists very joyful flocking to the sutlers, buying up all they can for their friends... God in his mercy, grant that Winchester may not be given up to the Rebels."<sup>251</sup>

Certain that a massive attack would come on June 14, Milroy's command took refuge in the three fortifications his men had spent nearly six months strengthening. Throughout the day Milroy went from fortification to fortification looking for any movement from Ewell. One of Milroy's staff officers noted of the Gray Eagle's vigilance: "All day, under the burning sun did General Milroy keep his position in the lookout, and with a glass anxiously scan the surrounding country."<sup>252</sup> Milroy knew an attack loomed. Throughout the morning Union troops skirmished briskly with Ewell's men on Main, Market, and Braddock Streets.<sup>253</sup> By noon most of Milroy's command was in the fortifications.

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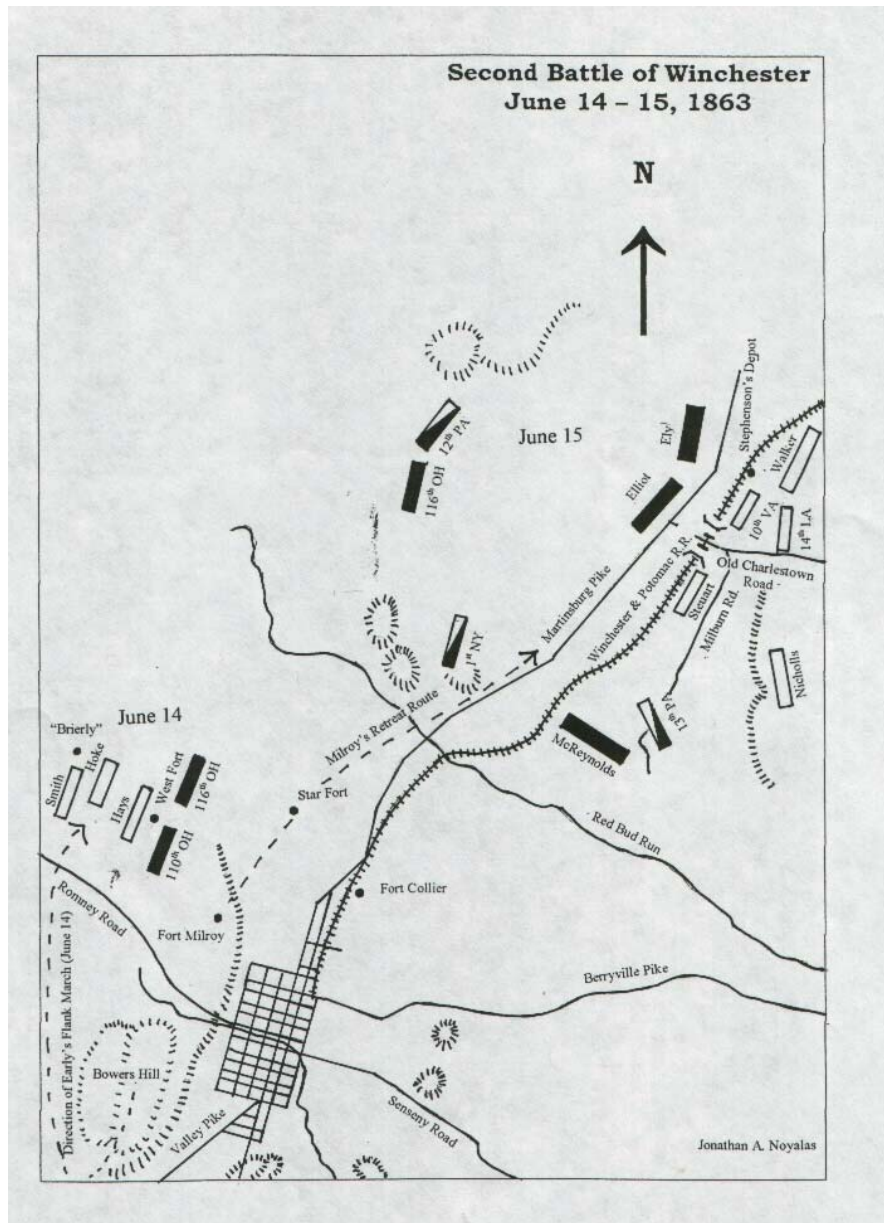
<sup>249</sup> *O.R. Ser. I, LVII, Pt. 1, 1055.*

<sup>250</sup> *Mary Lee Diary, June 13, 1863, Handley Library.*

<sup>251</sup> *Julia Chase Diary, June 13, 1863, Handley Library.*

<sup>252</sup> *O.R. Ser. I, XXVII, Pt. 2, 55.*

<sup>253</sup> *Prowell, History of the Eighty-Seventh Regiment, 72.*



Map depicting Early's flank march, attack on West Fort, and action at Stephenson's Depot (Drawn by Author)

While Confederate forces skirmished throughout town, Ewell and Early met atop Bowers Hill, located slightly southwest of town, and discussed the attack that was to come. Ewell put Gen. John B. Gordon's brigade, the Maryland Line, and two artillery batteries on Bowers Hill, then ordered Early to march west before turning north to strike West Fort. Ewell decided to attack West Fort, the smallest of Milroy's fortifications, because its artillery commanded Star Fort, and the guns in Fort Milroy commanded the

approach to Star Fort.<sup>254</sup> Ewell believed that if West Fort was taken, his troops could easily take the other two.

With the assistance of local guides, Early took his men on a ten-mile flanking march. His men moved his command from Bowers Hill, circled around to the southeast and marched north across Cedar Creek Grade. After crossing Cedar Creek Grade Early's division marched north and halted between the Romney and Pughtown Roads on the west side of West Fort.

By 5 p.m. Early had completed his march and placed twenty guns on the reverse slope of the ridge west of West Fort. While Early made his flanking maneuver, Ewell directed artillery fire at West Fort from atop Bowers Hill. Recognizing this as a prelude to attack, Milroy bolstered West Fort with additional infantry and two guns from the 5<sup>th</sup> U.S. Artillery.<sup>255</sup> Defending the fort were the 110<sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry, one company of the 116<sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry, and six guns.<sup>256</sup>

At 6 p.m. Early's guns opened on West Fort.<sup>257</sup> Artillery poured iron shot and shell into West Fort for forty-five minutes. After the artillery slackened, Brig. Gen. Harry T. Hays' Louisiana Brigade spearheaded the attack. More than a year had passed since this same brigade turned the tide of battle at First Winchester. The Federals attempted to make a stand, but to no avail. By nightfall, Milroy's men had abandoned West Fort and withdrawn to Fort Milroy.

Even though West Fort fell to Ewell, Milroy did not intend to give up yet. For several hours into the evening, Milroy's large guns in Fort Milroy and Star Fort fired on the Confederates. They had little effect.<sup>258</sup> It soon became apparent that Milroy would not be able to defend against Ewell's command.

Around 9 p.m. Milroy held a council of war. He and his subordinates decided to withdraw. The guns were spiked, supplies abandoned, and by 3 a.m. on June 15, the Federals were heading toward Harpers Ferry.<sup>259</sup> As Milroy's men withdrew, Mrs. Lee

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<sup>254</sup> Terry L. Jones, *Lee's Tigers: The Louisiana Infantry in the Army of Northern Virginia* (Baton Rouge, La., 1987) 158.

<sup>255</sup> Beck and Grunder, *Second Battle of Winchester*, 35.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>257</sup> Terry L. Jones, ed., *The Civil War Memoirs of Captain William J. Seymour: Reminiscences of a Louisiana Tiger* (Baton Rouge, La., 1991) 61.

<sup>258</sup> Sperry, *Surrender? Never Surrender?* June 14, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>259</sup> Pope, *The Weary Boys*, 42.

wrote: “for the first time in six months, the air is not polluted by their immediate presence.”<sup>260</sup>

Sensing that Milroy might withdraw to the north under cover of darkness Ewell ordered Johnson’s division north toward Stephenson’s Depot to cut off a possible retreat route. As the early morning darkness hid the ground at Stephenson’s Depot, Johnson’s men heard the thud of marching feet. It was Milroy’s command.

The two opposing sides clashed. A fight erupted and continued for about an hour and a half into the breaking dawn. Milroy’s force was in a state of total confusion; individual units operated independently of higher command. Johnson formed a strong parallel position on the west side of the Martinsburg Pike. He anchored the center of his line at a bridge spanning a railroad cut with the artillery of Col. R.S. Snowden Andrews.

Milroy and his officers made numerous attempts to reorganize their command, but frightened teamsters and sutlers trying to escape complicated the situation. Fleeing sutlers and teamsters did more to break up Col. McReynolds’ brigade than did Johnson’s Confederates. Frantic over what had transpired, Milroy led a charge with the 87<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania. His horse was shot out from under him.<sup>261</sup>

Johnson had put the finishing touches on a well-orchestrated plan. Milroy had suffered a disastrous defeat. While approximately 3,900 men escaped Winchester and made it to Harpers Ferry or Bloody Run, Pa., Milroy’s losses far exceeded the men he retained. Milroy lost 4,443 men in the fight. Among the casualties were ninety-five killed and 318 wounded.<sup>262</sup> Ewell lost little of his strength—forty-seven killed and 219 wounded.<sup>263</sup>

Winchester’s inhabitants reveled at their great victory over the Gray Eagle. The women who had endured so much took part in various festivities to commemorate the recent victory. The celebrations included the raising of a Confederate flag over the Union prisoners in Fort Jackson, formerly Fort Milroy.<sup>264</sup> A Confederate artilleryman recounted the joy of Winchester’s Confederate population. “The citizens seemed perfectly wild with joy, many old ladies and gentlemen rushing out on their porches in

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<sup>260</sup> Mary Lee Diary, June 14, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>261</sup> Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 2:15.

<sup>262</sup> *O.R.* Ser. I, XXVII, Pt. 2, 53.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 328.

<sup>264</sup> William G. Bean, *Stonewall’s Man: Sandie Pendleton* (Chapel Hill, 1959),133.

their night clothes, and waving flags, handkerchiefs and various other garments, while children and young girls shouted and hurraed until their strength failed them.”<sup>265</sup> Ann Carey Randolph Jones simply exclaimed to a friend: “We Are Free.”<sup>266</sup>

While Winchester’s inhabitants remained joyous, things turned worse for Milroy. On the night of Milroy’s defeat, President Lincoln met with Halleck and Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles to discuss the disaster at Winchester. Halleck concluded that someone ought to be blamed. Naturally Schenck or Milroy would be responsible for the loss. Halleck had wired Schenck on June 14: “I have so repeatedly urged you to withdraw your main forces from Winchester, and so recently (the 11<sup>th</sup>) directed it, that I cannot understand how Milroy could have been left there to be invested.”<sup>267</sup> Even though Halleck expressed contempt toward Schenck for not pulling Milroy out of Winchester earlier, Milroy would shoulder the blame for the defeat. Secretary Welles wrote that Milroy would become “the scapegoat, and blamed for the stupid blunders, neglects, and mistakes of those who should have warned and advised him.”<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> William H. Runge, ed., *Four Years in the Confederate Artillery: The Diary of Private Henry Robinson Berkely* (Richmond, 1991), 47.

<sup>266</sup> Ann Carey Randolph Jones to Lucy B. Parkhill, June 18, 1863, Handley Library.

<sup>267</sup> *O.R.* Ser. I, XXVII, Pt. 2, 171.

<sup>268</sup> Gideon Welles, *Diary of Gideon Welles: Secretary of the Navy under Lincoln and Johnson* (Boston, 1909), 1:328.

## Chapter 3

### “Will not history do you justice?”

The joy of Winchester’s citizens at their victory over Milroy’s force was short-lived. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia met defeat at the Battle of Gettysburg, July 1-3, 1863, and the hopes of the Valley’s citizens plummeted once more. In the weeks that followed Gettysburg, Winchester transformed into a vast military hospital for the wounded of Lee’s army. The demoralized Confederate citizens aided in caring for the wounded. The Army of Northern Virginia pulled out of Winchester on July 25, leaving the door wide open to the Federals. The following day Union troops occupied the town.

The time that followed Milroy’s defeat at Winchester was fraught with confusion for his division. Milroy had portions of his command scattered throughout Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Foremost among Milroy’s concerns was the safety and needs of his troops. On June 17, Schenck ordered Milroy to take command of his troops at Bloody Run, Pa., and prepare them for an offensive against Confederate troops that might threaten Chambersburg, Pa. After dealing with the possible threat at Chambersburg, Schenck then wanted Milroy to proceed to Harrisburg to see if Maj. Gen. Darius N. Couch, commander of the Department of the Susquehanna, needed any assistance in defending the capital of the Keystone State.<sup>269</sup>

Milroy did as ordered, but his military career continued down a slippery slope when on June 26, Couch ordered Milroy to relinquish command of the troops at Bloody Run. Milroy turned command over to Col. L.B. Pierce of the 12<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Cavalry.<sup>270</sup> Pierce took command of the troops reluctantly. He stated: “I am aware that you in having your General taken from you, have met with an irreparable loss. That loss no one feels or regrets more than myself.”<sup>271</sup> The following day Halleck put Milroy’s military career on hold. On June 27, Halleck sent orders to arrest Milroy and hold him at Baltimore for the debacle at Winchester.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Special Order No. 162, Schenck to Milroy, June 17, 1863. RG 393, Vol. I, NARA.

<sup>270</sup> Special Order No. 16, June 26, 1863, Jasper County Public Library.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>272</sup> Collins, “The Gray Eagle,” 67; Keifer, *Slavery and Four Years of War*, 2:19.

The day after his arrest, Milroy began a fierce letter-writing campaign to Federal officials to secure his release. Milroy first wrote to Secretary of the Interior John P. Usher, also a fellow Hoosier. He pleaded with Usher to “try to procure my release from the grasp of an incompetent unprincipled tyrant.”<sup>273</sup> He also wanted Usher to pass on the letter to President Lincoln as soon as possible. Milroy used this letter as his first opportunity to defend his actions at Winchester. He explained that he had no orders to evacuate Winchester and was just doing what Schenck told him. Milroy also used the letter as an opportunity to show his contempt for Halleck and the hatred that Milroy believed Halleck felt toward him. Milroy explained: “Halleck hates me without cause...with the blind unreasoning hatred of an Indian & I can ask or expect nothing but injustice from him.”<sup>274</sup>

Aside from defending his actions and explaining that Halleck would do anything to ruin him militarily, Milroy also used the letter to illustrate his strong sense of patriotism and duty. He explained: “I love my country & the Union dearer than life...suspend my arrest only temporarily, during the present terrible crisis, and give me something to do... If permitted I would freely resign my present commission, & take any command, or go into the ranks as a private.”<sup>275</sup> Milroy explained that if he would be allowed to return to the field that after the war concluded “Halleck may have me tried to his hearts content and hang me if he can.”<sup>276</sup>

Secretary Usher delivered the letter promptly to Lincoln. The president responded the following day, telling Milroy that he did not doubt his devotion to the Union, but he could not return him to command because he had just lost a division and that “*prima facie* the fault is upon you.”<sup>277</sup> Lincoln’s letter also lambasted Milroy for accusing Halleck of possessing contempt for the Gray Eagle. Lincoln curtly responded to the accusation: “You hate West Point generally, and General Halleck particularly; but I

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<sup>273</sup> Milroy to John Usher, June 28, 1863 in Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1953), 6:309.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>275</sup> Milroy to John Usher, June 28, 1863, in Basler, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 6:309.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>277</sup> Lincoln to Milroy, June 29, 1863, in *ibid.*, 308.

do know that it is not his fault that you were at Winchester on the 13<sup>th</sup>. 14<sup>th</sup>. and morning of the 15<sup>th</sup>.—the days of your disaster.”<sup>278</sup>

Even though Milroy appeared strong-willed in his official correspondence to politicians in Washington, D.C., the letters that he wrote to his wife immediately after Lincoln’s response had a decidedly different tone. Milroy’s letters to his wife reveal his unhappiness and suicidal feelings. On June 30, he expressed his disgruntled attitude: “I have never in my life been so entirely wretched and miserable. Life has never had many attractions for me and were it not for you and the children would not long endure in its agony.”<sup>279</sup>

By the end of the first week of July Milroy completed his report of the Second Battle of Winchester. After forwarding the report to his superiors Milroy implored Lincoln: “look at my report. My destiny is in your hands. I ask nothing but justice. Having been denied the privilege of participating in the glorious battle of Gettysburg and that which will complete the destruction of Lee’s army, adequate justice cannot now be done me.”<sup>280</sup> Since Milroy knew that he would not obtain a command in the near future he at least felt compelled to clear his name, therefore he implored President Lincoln to call a court of inquiry as soon as possible.

As the month of July passed and Milroy waited for the opportunity either to clear his name or garner support for another command, many judged his actions at Winchester. Some of his soldiers who escaped came to the Gray Eagle’s defense. A soldier of the 116<sup>th</sup> Ohio defended Milroy’s actions in an Ohio newspaper: “Somebody is responsible for the Winchester disaster, but it is not Gen. Milroy. Let the Court of Inquiry, granted at his own request, decide who is responsible, and in the meantime, let those who would trade him keep clear of the boys of his old Division.”<sup>281</sup> The soldier went on to proclaim that “Gen. Milroy’s men and officers love him. They honor him, they revere his very name.”<sup>282</sup>

Others defended Milroy’s actions both in the immediate aftermath of the battle and in the decades that followed. Many soldiers went so far as to conclude that Maj.

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<sup>278</sup> Lincoln to Milroy, June 29, 1863, in Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 6:308.

<sup>279</sup> Milroy to wife, June 30, 1863, Jasper County Public Library.

<sup>280</sup> Milroy to Lincoln, July 13, 1863, Jasper County Public Library.

<sup>281</sup> Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 4:162.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*

Gen. George Meade's Army of the Potomac could not have won at Gettysburg without Milroy's delay of Ewell's advance.<sup>283</sup> A soldier from the 122<sup>nd</sup> Ohio wrote after the war that if the Confederates had "met no resistance at Winchester their march would have been unopposed. They could have gone to Harrisburg, Philadelphia and perhaps the Capitol itself."<sup>284</sup> Other soldiers defended Milroy's actions in letters home describing the indefensible nature of the town.

Historians have the advantage of hindsight and know that the proclamations soldiers made about Winchester's indefensibility hold true. In the three battles of Winchester no defending force ever held off an attack. An officer of the 122<sup>nd</sup> Ohio related Winchester's permeable nature to his family less than two weeks after the battle: "Winchester is situated in the Shenandoah Valley in a very pretty place with elevations all around and presents no front to the enemy but can be approached from any or every direction."<sup>285</sup>

Not all of Milroy's men came to his defense, especially those captured at Winchester. Some prisoners from Milroy's division lambasted him for the mean treatment of the population of Winchester and the "cowardly" behavior exhibited during the battle.<sup>286</sup> A Confederate artilleryman who listened to the grumblings of some of Milroy's men disagreed with the opinions of the prisoners. He stated Milroy "could have done his men no possible good by remaining with them... I think he acted right."<sup>287</sup>

Some Unionist civilians of Winchester and Frederick County organized a petition and sent it to President Lincoln. Sixty-five male residents signed the petition. It stated in part: "believing him to be an able, faithful, and efficient Servant to the cause of the Union and those who advocate the cause of good government... take into consideration at the earliest opportunity Maj Genl Milroy's case in a favorable manner."<sup>288</sup>

Throughout July all of the pleas that Milroy made to politicians, including Lincoln, had fallen on deaf ears. During the first week of August President Lincoln

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<sup>283</sup> *Rensselaer Republican*, Jan. 18, 1863.

<sup>284</sup> Reminiscences of Lloyd Adamson, 122<sup>nd</sup> Ohio, typescript copy, McCormick Civil War Institute, Shenandoah University.

<sup>285</sup> Davidson, *James J. Hartley*, 42.

<sup>286</sup> Ronge, *Four Years in the Confederate Artillery*, 48.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>288</sup> Petition to Abraham Lincoln from residents of Frederick County, Virginia, Aug. 10, 1863, Civil War Materials, Jonah H. Lupton, Virginia Historical Society.

issued a directive to hold a court of inquiry in Washington on August 7.<sup>289</sup> Even though Milroy had gotten the opportunity to clear his name, he delayed the convening date for the court for several days. He complained to the War Department that none of the officers on the court were his peers, all being inferior to him in rank. The officers that would hear testimony were all brigadier generals—W.F. Barry, J.J. Abercrombie, and G.A. DeRussy. Capt, Robert N. Scott of the 4<sup>th</sup> United States Infantry served as the court’s judge advocate.<sup>290</sup>

Milroy filed his complaint, but he had no legal grounds to protest about the members of the court being inferior to him in rank. According to the United States Army Regulations for 1863, courts of inquiry did not have to consist of men of equal or higher rank. Courts of inquiry needed only to “consist of one or more officers, not exceeding three, and a judge advocate.”<sup>291</sup> After several days of delay the court began to hear the testimony of eighteen witnesses. Among them were Col. Keifer and Gen. Schenck. None of the witnesses really provided damaging testimony to Milroy.<sup>292</sup> The inquiry lasted until September 7, and then the officers of the court went into deliberation.

The panel did not hand down an official ruling as to Milroy’s guilt or innocence in the matter. Instead, it passed the testimony along to Judge Advocate General Joseph Holt. Holt reviewed the testimony of the inquiry and concluded that Milroy could not be held responsible for the debacle at Winchester. Holt exonerated Milroy of any wrong doing, but at the same time placed some of the blame on the shoulders of Milroy’s superiors, namely Gen. Schenck. The judge advocate’s report concluded by stating: “General Milroy was under orders from his commanding officer, General Schenck, not to retreat at once, but to hold his post until further orders.”<sup>293</sup>

Even though Milroy had been cleared by Holt, he could not enjoy total success until Lincoln endorsed the conclusion of the judge advocate general. Lincoln endorsed the findings on October 27. John Hay, Lincoln’s personal secretary, sent a page and a

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<sup>289</sup> *O.R.* Ser I, XXVII, Pt. 2, 169.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>291</sup> War Department, *Revised United States Army Regulations of 1861 with an Appendix Containing the Changes and Laws Affecting Army Regulations and Articles of War to June 25, 1863* (Washington, D.C., 1863), 499.

<sup>292</sup> A complete transcript of the testimony for Milroy’s court of inquiry can be found in *O.R.* Ser. I, XXVII, Pt. 2, 88-197.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

half letter to Milroy describing Lincoln's attitude toward the matter. Lincoln concluded: "Serious blame is not necessarily due to every serious disaster; and I can not say that in this case any of these officers is deserving of serious blame."<sup>294</sup>

The court of inquiry and Lincoln had exonerated Milroy for the defeat at Winchester, but his military career remained in shambles. Milroy aimed to get even with the one man whom he believed was responsible for the demise of his military career—Halleck. The day following Holt's conclusion Milroy wrote a letter to Schenck explaining that he wanted to bring charges against Halleck.<sup>295</sup> First, Milroy proclaimed that Halleck had "maliciously & without probable cause ordered me to be deprived of command." Second, he declared that Halleck had not brought official charges against him in a proper period of time. Third, Milroy asserted that several telegrams sent to Schenck from Halleck from March through mid-June contained "false malicious & injurious expressions." Fourth, Halleck sent the aforementioned telegrams to be used as evidence at the court of inquiry. Fifth, Milroy claimed that Halleck tried to deny Milroy defense counsel at the inquiry, and finally Milroy accused Halleck of putting officers inferior to him in rank on the court when Milroy believed there to be at least fifteen major generals not on any sort of active duty.<sup>296</sup> Probably at Schenck's urging, Milroy never carried out his campaign against Halleck. After all it had been quite clear that the judge advocate general placed blame on Schenck's shoulders and pressing charges against Halleck would only mean revisiting the Winchester issue.

Milroy sat idly throughout the remainder of 1863 as the Union armies campaigned. He tried everything humanly possible to obtain a command but achieved no success. Even though Lincoln may have not possessed an affinity for Milroy he did recognize the Gray Eagle as a stern abolitionist and patriot. Acknowledging these strong attributes Lincoln made an attempt to secure a command for Milroy. In December, Lincoln asked Grant to see if he could find something for Milroy. The message stated: "The Indiana delegation in Congress, or at least a large part of them, are very anxious that Majr. Gen. Milroy shall enter active service again, and I share this feeling. He is not a

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<sup>294</sup> President Lincoln's endorsement of Holt's findings in correspondence sent from John Hay to Milroy, Oct. 27, 1863, Jasper County Public Library.

<sup>295</sup> Milroy to Schenck, Sept. 18, 1863, Schenck Papers, University of Miami, Oh.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*

difficult man to satisfy...Believing in our cause, and wanting to fight in it, is the whole matter with him.”<sup>297</sup> Grant, however, did not have the same feelings toward Milroy that Lincoln possessed. Regardless of how much the Indiana delegation in Congress or Lincoln wanted Milroy to have a command, Grant felt that there were other generals of equal or lesser rank than Milroy who could do a better job.<sup>298</sup>

Milroy made a personal appeal to Grant in March 1864. The Gray Eagle implored Grant to give him a command.<sup>299</sup> Milroy begged: “I most respectfully ask General, that you will try me—try me where there is danger and hard fighting to be done, and if I fail have me shot... I will gladly perform any duty to which you assign me... I would prefer a cavalry com.d.”<sup>300</sup> Grant knew very little about Milroy abilities to command cavalry so he sent a message to Meade to see if Milroy would be suited for such a post. Meade did not know Milroy personally, but he knew of him from reports of the Second Battle of Winchester. Meade simply replied to Grant: “I should not judge him qualified to command a division of cavalry.”<sup>301</sup>

While Milroy and the Indiana delegation in Congress attempted to secure a field command, Milroy remained in Washington and did nothing more than write reports about his campaigns. Milroy’s disgust grew each day. Even though he held a strong desire to fight for the Union, he did not want to sit idly by while his fellow comrades in blue suppressed the rebellion. He wrote his wife in early February: “If I see there is no chance for a command when the spring campaign opens, I will quit & come home.”<sup>302</sup>

The new year provided Milroy with some hope when he discovered that Lincoln needed a commander for the Department of West Virginia. Milroy no doubt felt qualified for the post because he had previously served in the region and knew it well. Lincoln quickly extinguished Milroy’s slight glimmer of hope when he selected German-born Maj. Gen. Franz Sigel for the post. Sigel’s appointment greatly dissatisfied Milroy.

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<sup>297</sup> Lincoln to Grant, Dec. 19, 1863, in Basler, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 7:80.

<sup>298</sup> Collins, “The Gray Eagle,” 70.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*; John Y. Simon, ed., *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* (Carbondale, Ill., 1979-1991), 10:278-79.

<sup>300</sup> Milroy to Grant, Mar. 17, 1864, in Simon, *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, 10:279.

<sup>301</sup> Meade to Grant, Apr. 8, 1864, in *ibid.*

<sup>302</sup> Milroy to wife, Feb. 5, 1863, in Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 1:343.

Milroy accused Lincoln of appointing Sigel only because the president did not want to lose the German vote in the November elections.<sup>303</sup>

Aside from writing reports and trying to obtain another command, Milroy did have the opportunity to get out of Washington in January. He was summoned to Cumberland, Md., as a witness at the court martial of Col. George Latham of the 2<sup>nd</sup> West Virginia Infantry.<sup>304</sup> The opportunity to get out of Washington could only have lifted Milroy's morale, but undoubtedly his spirits grew enormously after he received a warm reception from the Union citizens of Cumberland.<sup>305</sup>

On his return trip to Washington, D.C., Milroy stopped in Martinsburg where the Union citizens of the town greeted him in a way that, Milroy wrote, "was sufficient to satisfy the vanity of a King."<sup>306</sup> He spent several days at Martinsburg and visited the regiments, some of which had previously been under his command. As he departed the camps, the soldiers cheered him: "Old Gray Eagle... we want you back!"<sup>307</sup> Milroy returned to the nation's capital during the first week of February and resumed his mundane existence.

After nearly ten months of inactivity it appeared that during the first week of May, Milroy would get another opportunity to command. On May 6, the War Department ordered Milroy to report to Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas, commander of the Army of the Cumberland, at Nashville, Tenn.<sup>308</sup> When Milroy arrived in Nashville on May 20, he learned that Thomas had moved into Georgia. Milroy boarded a train at Nashville and headed to Thomas' headquarters at Two Run Creek.<sup>309</sup> On his way to meet with Thomas, Milroy stopped at the headquarters of Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman. Even though he had specific orders to meet Thomas, Milroy hoped to implore Sherman to give him a command in the field. Sherman did not grant Milroy's wish. He then proceeded to Thomas' headquarters nearly five miles away.

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<sup>303</sup> Milroy to wife, Feb. 5, 1863, in Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 1:343.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.* The Second West Virginia Infantry ceased to exist after Jan. 26, 1864. On that date General Order No. 39 changed the regiment to the Fifth West Virginia Cavalry. For more information on the regiment see Theodore F. Lang, *Loyal West Virginia From 1861 to 1865: With an Introductory Chapter on the Status of Virginia for Thirty Years Prior to the War* (Baltimore, 1895), 210-13.

<sup>305</sup> Milroy to wife, Feb. 5, 1863, in Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 1:343.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, 344.

<sup>308</sup> *O.R.* Ser. I, XXXVIII, Pt. 4, 54.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, 289.

When Milroy arrived at Thomas' headquarters, the Gray Eagle pleaded with Thomas to give him a battlefield command, but Thomas denied it. Even though Milroy had been exonerated for defeat at Winchester, many Federal commanders still remained wary about Milroy's abilities. Instead of giving Milroy duty on the front-lines, Thomas ordered Milroy to organize the militia regiments sent to the Army of the Cumberland. After Milroy organized the force Thomas wanted him to divide it into two brigades and send one brigade to Bridgeport, Ala., and the other to Tullahoma, Tenn.<sup>310</sup>

Although somewhat melancholy over not being able to obtain command troops in the field, Milroy must have felt a little joyous over being given any command at all. As Milroy made his way back to Nashville, he found out that his old regiment, the 9<sup>th</sup> Indiana, was camped near Cassville, Ga., only several miles from Thomas' headquarters.<sup>311</sup> He went to their camp and accepted an invitation by the regimental chaplain to speak at church services that day. Milroy spoke to his former regiment for about an hour. The men frequently interrupted the Gray Eagle's speech with cheers.<sup>312</sup> This display of affection could have only helped to boost Milroy's fragile ego.

After visiting with the 9<sup>th</sup> Indiana for several hours Milroy took a train back to Nashville. On the trip back Milroy gazed out over the ground that passed him by and found the countryside destroyed by the ravages of war. Milroy did not feel sorry for the Confederate inhabitants of the region because they had done nothing to end slavery. Milroy explained: "In this favored and beautiful portion of Gods Creation 'man alone is vile.' He has most Cruely apprised his fellow man... Slavery had poisoned and deadened that enterprise."<sup>313</sup>

Milroy spent the next several months organizing the militia forces and established his headquarters at Tullahoma. However, things would soon change and provide Milroy an opportunity to redeem himself for defeat at Winchester.

On November 22, nearly 40,000 Confederates under command of Gen. John Bell Hood marched into Tennessee from Alabama. Hood hoped to draw attention away from Sherman's operations in Georgia and to hopefully cripple the Union supply base in

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<sup>310</sup> *O.R.* Ser. I, XXXVIII, Pt. 4, 289.

<sup>311</sup> Milroy to wife, May 20, 1864, in Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 1:354.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>313</sup> Milroy to wife, May 20, 1864, in Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 352.

Tennessee. Hood's command marched north toward Franklin. On November 30, Hood's command engaged Maj. Gen. John M. Schofield's IV and XXIII corps. Schofield defeated Hood's command at Franklin. Even though the Union force at Franklin gained victory, they withdrew to Nashville to combine forces with Thomas. Hood's Confederates pushed north to Nashville.

After the Battle of Franklin, Thomas wanted to concentrate his forces so that they could protect Nashville and the supply bases in the region. Thomas ordered Milroy from Tullahoma to Murfreesboro to help protect Fortress Rosecrans—a major supply depot and the largest Union fortress constructed during the war.<sup>314</sup> Milroy had a dual purpose at Murfreesboro—to act in concert with Maj. Gen. Lovell H. Rousseau, a fellow Hoosier, in protecting the supply base at Rosecrans and to protect the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad.

The first signs of Hood's advance to Nashville came on December 4. The Confederate division of Maj. Gen. William B. Bate approached the railroad blockhouses at Overall's Creek, located four and a half miles north of Murfreesboro. Bate initially met token resistance as he burned the blockhouses. Rousseau learned of Bate's actions and deployed Milroy with three infantry regiments and a section of artillery to drive off the Confederates. Milroy had the opportunity that he had waited for since his defeat at Winchester—to prove himself in action. The Gray Eagle made the most of it and drove off Bates' force.<sup>315</sup>

While Milroy reveled over his small victory, Bate joined forces with Maj. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest. Hood initially ordered Bate to move toward Nashville, but when Forrest arrived Hood altered the plan. Hood wanted the two commanders to wreak havoc on the railroad. In order to damage the railroad successfully, Forrest knew Fortress Rosecrans had to be silenced. Otherwise the Confederates would make easy targets for the fifty-seven guns in the stronghold and the rifled-muskets of the garrison of 8,000

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<sup>314</sup> Herbert S. Norris and James R. Long, "The Road to Redemption" *Civil War Times Illustrated*, 36, no. 4 (1997): 33 ; Jacob D. Cox, *The March to the Sea: Franklin and Nashville* (Edison, N.J., 2002), 100.

<sup>315</sup> *O.R.* Ser I, XLV, Pt. 1, 614. In the skirmish at Overall's Creek Milroy took with him the 8<sup>th</sup> Minnesota, 174<sup>th</sup> Ohio, 61<sup>st</sup> Illinois, and a section of the 13<sup>th</sup> New York Artillery.

men.<sup>316</sup> Forrest knew that if they were going to have any success they needed to coax the Federals out of the fort.<sup>317</sup>

On December 6, Confederate forces constructed breastworks of logs and earth across Wilkinson Pike, several miles northwest of Fortress Rosecrans. Rousseau knew that a sizable Confederate force roamed somewhere north of Murfreesboro but he did not know where. To ascertain the enemy's position Rousseau dispatched Milroy with six infantry regiments, one artillery battery, and a small cavalry detachment to reconnoiter the enemy's position. Milroy's command moved out around 8 a.m. on December 7.<sup>318</sup> Throughout the day Milroy's troops engaged pockets of the enemy. Sometime in the afternoon Milroy's men engaged the main body of the Confederate force for about half an hour and drove them off. Forrest tried to rally his troops but to no avail. Milroy had won the engagement.<sup>319</sup> The fight concluded around 6 p.m. No doubt joyous over the victory, Rousseau wrote: "The rout was complete, infantry and cavalry running in every direction. The fight was well-conducted by Major-General Milroy, and the troops behaved most gallantly."<sup>320</sup>

Milroy certainly enjoyed this victory and his time in combat, but it would be his last. Never again during the war did Milroy see action. He spent the remainder of the war in Tennessee. Milroy watched as Union forces defeated Hood's command at Nashville on December 15. He then sat idly by for the remainder of the war and watched as the Union armies enjoyed success on all fronts. Disgusted by his current post Milroy wrote to his wife on New Year's Day 1865, and again blamed Halleck for his military misfortune. He wrote:

My rapid promotion together with my popularity with the troops attracted the attention of the West Point aristocracy who looked upon me as a trespasser upon their special rights and the baleful eyes of the infamous Halleck were fixed on me... What little reputation I have acquired, so is so small, so insignificant, in comparison to what it would have been, had I been fairly dealt by and justly treated, that I regard it as nothing—almost with contempt. I feel entirely

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<sup>316</sup> Norris and Long, "The Road to Redemption," 33.

<sup>317</sup> Jack Hurst, *Nathan Bedford Forrest: A Biography* (New York, 1993), 238.

<sup>318</sup> Norris and Long, "The Road to Redemption," 34.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>320</sup> *O.R.* Ser. I, XLV, Pt. 1, 614.

hopeless and redress any of my wrongs. I am under the heel of West Pointers despotism and must remain there while in the army—for the reason that the army is in the hands and wholly under the control of West Pointers.<sup>321</sup>

Although inactive after his fight on December 7, Milroy's ego received a small boost on February 22, 1865. On that day the citizens of Shelbyville and Bedford County, Tenn., presented Milroy with an elaborate sword. The loyal people offered it to Milroy to commemorate his victories on December 4 and 7. The blade bore the inscription: "Be Just and Fear Not."<sup>322</sup>

The sword was a small consolation to Milroy as he watched the Union achieve victory without him. Milroy stayed in the service for the duration of the war and resigned in July.<sup>323</sup>

After the war Milroy returned to Indiana to practice law, but he did make a visit to Winchester in 1868. Milroy returned to do some political campaigning, though it is unclear for whom Milroy was politicking. Milroy stood on the steps of the courthouse to deliver a message, but was met with such fierce contempt from the crowd that they forced him out of town.<sup>324</sup> His visit to Winchester in the postwar years is the only recorded instance that the inhabitants of the town showed any disdain for a former Union soldier. The Union veterans who came to Winchester after the war were treated with respect and some citizens even welcomed them into their fraternal organizations. For example, Capt. William McKinley of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry was inducted into the Hiram Lodge of Winchester as a master mason on May 3, 1865.<sup>325</sup>

After the war Milroy enjoyed some success in politics. In 1867 he served as a trustee on the Wabash and Erie Canal and then in 1871 was appointed marshal of the Wyoming Territory. The following year Milroy served as superintendent of Indian affairs in the Washington Territory until the post was abolished in 1875. Although nominated as prosecutor for the Washington Territory in 1875, Milroy declined the offer

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<sup>321</sup> Milroy to wife, Jan. 1, 1865, in Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 1:489-90.

<sup>322</sup> "Milroy's Swords," in *ibid.*, 4:10.

<sup>323</sup> Collins, "The Gray Eagle," 70.

<sup>324</sup> Morton, *The Story of Winchester in Virginia*, 186-87.

<sup>325</sup> William Mosely Brown, *Freemasonry in Winchester, Virginia* (Staunton, Va., 1949), 102.

and lived out his remaining years there. He died at Olympia on March 29, 1890, at the age of seventy-four.<sup>326</sup>

Only one monument was erected to Milroy's Civil War service. The people of Jasper County erected a monument to their "local hero" at Rensselaer on July 4, 1910. At the unveiling of the monument Col. E.P. Hammond delivered words of adoration for Milroy: "He was a man of intense patriotism... The cause which he was fighting, his country, the integrity of the Republic, the freedom of the slaves, was constantly present in his mind."

The Civil War afforded Milroy the opportunity to make, as he termed it, "a proud heritage for my children and a pride to my posterity and one that would live in history."<sup>327</sup> Even though government officials recognized Milroy's strong support for emancipation, the contempt he felt for West Pointers plagued his military career. His strong hatred for professional soldiers helped keep him in obscure assignments. Throughout the war he tried to prove that non-professional volunteer officers could fight just as good, if not better than West Point graduates. Oftentimes Milroy's performance on the battlefield did not prove his military ability. It only demonstrated he had a tremendous amount of courage.

The best opportunity Milroy had to gain military prestige came at Winchester, but unfortunately he faced insurmountable odds and met a disastrous defeat. Even though the record strongly suggests that Milroy ought not to shoulder all of the blame for the loss, it is because of his debacle at Winchester that he is remembered most. Milroy's loss at Winchester earned him a place in history. Unfortunately for the Gray Eagle, it did not bring pride to his posterity.

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<sup>326</sup> Paulus, *Papers of General Milroy*, 4:26.

<sup>327</sup> Milroy to wife, Jan. 1, 1865, in *ibid.*, 1:489.

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**Curriculum Vitae  
April 2003**

Address, Phone, E-mail

202 Payne.  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, VA 24061  
540-232-2113  
[jnoyalas@vt.edu](mailto:jnoyalas@vt.edu)

**Education**

M.A., Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (U.S. History), expected graduation May 2003.

B.S., (Magna Cum Laude) Shenandoah University (History), 2001

**Professional Experience**

August 2002 – present: Temporary part-time adjunct faculty, Virginia Tech history department with rank of Instructor Assistant for U.S. History survey course.

December 2002 – present: Curator of Civil War manuscripts and photographs, McCormick Civil War Institute at Shenandoah University.

1998 – present: Freelance tour guide of Lower Shenandoah Valley Civil War battlefields.

Fall 2002: Barnes and Noble, Christiansburg, Virginia, panelist for Civil War Fall discussion series.

May 2002: Guest lecturer at Shenandoah University's McCormick Civil War Institute, "Forging an Image: General J.E.B. Stuart's 1862 Ride Around McClellan"

March 2002: Virginia Social Science Association Conference Paper – "Early's Costliest Victory: The Second Battle of Kernstown and its Impact on Union Strategy in the Shenandoah Valley, 1864".

September 2001-May 2002: Virginia Tech Athletic Department, Academic Support Services, history tutor.

2001: Summer instructor at Shenandoah University's Elderhostel program, "The Lower Shenandoah Valley: 1700-1865"

May 2000: Guest Lecturer at Shenandoah University's McCormick Civil War Institute, "Stonewall Jackson from the First Battle of Winchester to Chancellorsville" and "To Prevent any Further Confusion: Corps Badges in the Army of the Potomac"

September 2000: Guest Speaker, Lower Shenandoah Valley Civil War Round Table, "Major General Stephen Dodson Ramseur and the 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign"

1998 – June 2002: Director, School Outreach Program, McCormick Civil War Institute at Shenandoah University.

1998 – May 2001: Interpreter, Stonewall Jackson's Headquarters Museum, Winchester, Virginia

August 1997 – May 2001: Teaching Assistant, Shenandoah University history department.

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### **Academic Awards**

October 2002: Phi Alpha Theta, Virginia Tech

March 2002: Graduate Scholar Award, Virginia Social Science Association

May 2001: Alumni Outstanding Senior, Shenandoah University

May 2001: Bartley History Award, Shenandoah University

1999 – 2001: Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities

1997 – 2001: Dean's List, Shenandoah University

### **References**

Dr. Brandon H. Beck, Chair, Department of History at Shenandoah University and Director, McCormick Civil War Institute at Shenandoah University. Department of History, 1460 University Drive, Winchester, VA 22601, (540) 665-9525. [Bbeck@su.edu](mailto:Bbeck@su.edu) or [bbeck@shentel.net](mailto:bbeck@shentel.net)

William C. Davis, Professor of History and Director of Programs, Virginia Center for Civil War Studies at Virginia Tech. History Department (0117), Blacksburg, VA 24061, (540) 231-9090. [widavis6@vt.edu](mailto:widavis6@vt.edu)

Dr. Warren Hofstra, Professor of History and Director of Community History Project at Shenandoah University. Department of History, 1460 University Drive, Winchester, VA 22601, (540) 665-4587. [Whofstra@vt.edu](mailto:Whofstra@vt.edu)

Howard J. Kittell, Executive Director, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, P.O. Box 897, New Market, VA 22844, (540)-740-4545.

Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr., Alumni Distinguished Professor of History and Executive Director of the Virginia Center for Civil War Studies at Virginia Tech. History Department (0117), Blacksburg, VA 24061, (540) 231-5510. [jircw@vt.edu](mailto:jircw@vt.edu)

Capricia Shull, Executive Director of the Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society, 1340 S. Pleasant Valley Road, Winchester, VA 22601, (540) 662-6550.

Dr. David Snyder, History instructor and current supervisor at Virginia Tech. History Department (0117), Blacksburg, VA 24061, (540) 231-8378. [dasnyder@vt.edu](mailto:dasnyder@vt.edu)

Amy Tillerson, History instructor and my previous supervisor at Virginia Tech. History Department (0117), Blacksburg, VA 24061, (540) 231-6000. [atillers@vt.edu](mailto:atillers@vt.edu)