

Mike Powell  
News-Post  
Frederick, MD, 21701

9/9/95

Dear Mike Mike,

Whether or not my letter had anything to do with today's story on Jubal Early holding Frederick for ransom, and I hope it did, I'm glad to see it and for so many who knew nothing about it to have learned from it.

There is bare mention of the battle of the Monocacy. It also is little understood because although the Union forces were defeated it was, for the Union, a great victory. It did save Washington.

And the defeated/victorious general, Lew Wallace, lived to write what became a great movie, from his book Ben Hur.

I learned the real importance of the battle of the Monocacy not in school or in college but in World War II.

I spent a total of four months as a patient in the three branches Walter Reed Hospital then had, beginning at the main hospital on upper Georgia Avenue. That is possibly the highest point in the District and it is close to the Maryland line.

There was then a large tree on the hospital grounds known as "the spy tree." That was because the rebels, who had advanced and held part of the city to the north of it, used it for spying on the city itself and movements inside it.

They had men in that tree with "spy" glasses doing the observing.

I do not know if that tree is still there but if it is could it make a picture for a story about it, and the battle of the Monocacy?

After all these years I can not be certain but I think that tree was not far from the main Georgia Avenue entrance. I think also that it had a sign on it but again am not sure.

Best,



Harold Weisberg