



Bill's notes:

August 21, 1864

Capt. Jed Hotchkiss¹, the topographical engineer for the 2nd Corp of the Army of Northern Virginia, under the command of Gen. Jubal Anderson Early, sat in his tent correcting the maps from Saturday's movements. The day was soggy, not quite rain, making it miserable to work. He was kind of relieved when the order came to move out.

The word was they were going to drive Sheridan's reconnaissance troops, at their front, across the Opequon and toward what everyone in those days called Charlestown².



Civil War Bullet hole in the Packett home

On this Sunday in August the Packetts of Locust Hill had invited some of the Washington girls from Claymont over for a Sunday brunch – one they would not soon forget. Just as the girls arrived at Locust Hill they could hear musket fire coming from the direction of Harewood. They had previously learned to stay put when a skirmish or battle was in the vicinity, and Locust Hill was a stable brick building, about as safe a place as they could have. Besides, the Confederate and Union troops never bothered local women. Everything, they felt, would be fine.

However, soon after the musket fire began, one of the Union reconnaissance groups, attracted by the Washington girls, loitering near Locust Hill, took refuge in the mansion and began to barricade the windows and doors. The soldiers encouraged the women and

¹ **Jed Hotchkiss**

A native of New York, **Jedediah Hotchkiss** served as the chief topographical engineer and mapmaker for **Stonewall Jackson**. His maps are credited as being key to Stonewall Jackson's many successes in the "**Valley Campaign**". Hotchkiss settled in Augusta County during the 1840's where he administered two boys' academies until the Civil War. He later moved to Staunton, VA and in 1888 he built a handsome addition to the front of his home. That house, known as "The Oaks", is now a private residence located at 437 East Beverley Street.

² Charles Town was annotated as one word on Civil War maps.

children to seek refuge in the cold cellar, assuring them they would be safe there, and would be there only long enough to ensure their safe withdrawal to Charlestown.

A Confederate officer (probably McCausland), after driving off reconnaissance groups from Cameron Depot, near Harewood, was heading for Summit Point to clear the area of other Union troops. He ran into musket fire from the house at Locust Hill and set up artillery and a musket line in front of the house. After standing off for a couple of hours, not sure if women and children were held up in the house, the Confederate troops began firing over the house as a warning. The Union soldiers in somewhat of a panic yelled out to cease-fire, that women and children were indeed held up in the cellar.

The Confederate officer ordered the cease-fire until the women and children could be removed to a safe haven at Mr. Davenport's farm at Altona. The women and children were escorted safely to Altona by one of the Union troops.

The Confederates then resumed the assault on Locust Hill, destroying one chimney and almost all the windows and doors. Near dusk the surviving Union troops withdrew to the bivouacked Union divisions about a mile east toward Charlestown.

Epilog:

On August 21, 1864, a large Union force had been bivouacked along a road about where Tusawilla Drive (was Ridge Dr. prior to 2007) is today. The troops extended from about a quarter mile North of 51 to Summit Point road. The Confederate forces – two or three divisions – were just west of Harewood. Although the Confederates were outnumbered, this had the making of a large battle. However, in early August General Sheridan had a sit down meeting with General Grant at Harpers Ferry with Grant giving Sheridan the instructions to remain “quite” until Lee had removed some of his troops from the “Valley” and a September offensive could be organized. With the battle of Locust Hill imminent, Sheridan instructed his troops bivouacked at Locust Hill and Altona to withdraw and regroup with him in Halltown. In all the skirmishes that day from Cameron Station to Summit point hundreds of Confederate and Union troops perished.

The September encounter did take place with Sheridan routing Early along the Opequan at the battle of Winchester, pursuing him down through Winchester to Staunton.

If it had not been for the directions given to Sheridan that day in early August 1864 we might be visiting Locust Hill as a Civil War battleground, and not living here. This land – this development – has a rich history, from George Washington to the Civil War, we should all respect and preserve that history. So as you pass the Packett remnants and the #21 monument on the back nine pause a second to remember the soldiers that gave their life at that very spot so you can play golf today.

Bill Cummings

