

The bloody battle of 3rd Winchester

The bloody battle of 3rd Winchester occurred on September 19, 1864 with Union forces victorious. Confederate troops then retreated up the Valley to Fisher's Hill, south of Strasburg. By the next evening Rebel sharpshooters occupied the southern portion of Strasburg and Union forces were camped between the crest of Hupps Hill and Cedar Creek on the north end of town.

Richard Kleese, in his book *Shenandoah County In The Civil War* writes:

(Confederate) Dr. Hunter H. McGuire was able to remove all but the most severely wounded from the hospitals and homes of Winchester before occupation by the Federals. Most of the wounded were loaded into crowded ambulances to begin a miserable journey south to Woodstock where their first rest, examination, and care was provided. Private John Worsham of the 21st Virginia Infantry was wounded in the knee late in the action. Reaching Winchester, he was hastily loaded into an ambulance that was wildly driven through the night. After a short rest the following morning, he stated:

“I prevailed on the driver...to pull off my boot, - it was full of blood and running over the top! Soon after it was pulled off, my wound seemed to stop bleeding, and I proceeded more comfortably. We rode until four o'clock in the afternoon, when we halted at a church in Woodstock. Here the ladies brought to the wounded fruit, flowers, eatables, water and bandages, and made themselves very useful to two or three hundred wounded. A surgeon cut open my pants and drawers, and examined my wound and dressed it, - this was the first time it was seen even by myself...About sunset the wounded were put into wagons on a little straw and started up the pike.”

Worsham finally had the ball removed from his leg after reaching Charlottesville some three days later.

Confederate and Union forces maneuvered their way south through Strasburg towards Fisher's Hill, with skirmishers drawing fire from both sides. These actions culminated in the Battle of Fisher's Hill on September 22, 1864.

This moment from the past was presented by the Shenandoah County Historical Society.