“CORBIT’S CHARGE”
A Civil War Self-Guided Tour in Westminster, Maryland

Carroll County Visitor Center
210 East Main Street
Westminster, Maryland 21157
410-848-1388
1-800-272-1933
E-mail address: cctourism@ccg.carr.org
Website: www.carrollcountytourism.org

Monday through Saturday - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sundays and most Holidays - 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Americans With Disabilities Act applies to the Carroll County Government and its programs, services, activities, and facilities. If you have any questions, suggestions, or complaints, please contact Jolene Sullivan, the Carroll County Government Americans With Disabilities Act Coordinator, at 410-386-3600, 1-888-302-8978 or TT No. 410-848-9747.
The mailing address is 10 Distillery Drive, Suite 101, Westminster, MD 21157.
A small but extremely important cavalry skirmish took place in Westminster on June 29, 1863. The clash on the outskirts of town between General J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry and a small unit of the Delaware Cavalry was a significant factor in slowing down the General's march. Instead of proceeding into Pennsylvania to reinforce General Robert E. Lee about the major Union troop movements, Stuart's cavalry was delayed long enough to make it advisable to spend the night in the Westminster area. Historians have often wondered whether the results of the Battle of Gettysburg might have been different if Stuart had arrived before July 2nd.

On June 27th, General J.E.B. Stuart crossed the Potomac into Maryland at Rowser's Ford with three brigades of Confederate cavalry, numbering nearly 6,000 men. On June 28th, Stuart entered Rockville for the purpose of destroying the telegraph and procuring supplies, and learned of the approach from Washington of a large Union wagon train. He succeeded in capturing 125 new supply wagons and their contents, badly needed by the Confederate forces. This was a handsome prize, but the little unit of green but gallant troopers were quickly overpowered, many were captured, including Corbit and Churchman. Two were killed, 11 were wounded, and a few managed to make their escape down the Reisterstown Road, pursued closely by Confederates. Two prominent Confederate officers were killed and ten men badly wounded. The wounded on both sides were cared for in improvised hospitals in Westminster by local physicians and citizens.

That night, Stuart's five-mile long column bivouacked along the Littlestown Pike between Westminster and Union Mills. Brigadier General Fina Lee spent the night sleeping in the orchard at the Shriver Homestead. Men and horses rested for four hours; the first time since crossing into Maryland on June 27th. General Stuart spent the night in Westminster and rode on to Union Mills early the next morning.

Shortly before noon on June 28th, units of the 1st Delaware Cavalry, numbering less than 100 men of Companies C and D, arrived in Westminster to guard the important rail and road junction. They were commanded by Major Napoleon B. Knight, with Capt. Charles Corbit and Lt. Caleb Churchman as company commanders. They had moved from Baltimore through Reisterstown on the previous day, and made their headquarters on the "Old Commons", a high point which commanded a fine view of the country for many miles. A detachment of the 150th New York Infantry had occupied Westminster as a Provost Guard for several months before their arrival.

Westminster remained quiet until about 4 p.m. on June 29th, when the report of approaching Confederates was brought to the Union troops by a doctor visiting a patient in the country. In Major Knight's absence, Capt. Corbit immediately gathered his men and led a charge through the streets of Westminster toward the Washington Road. They expected to overcome a small unit of Confederates, but instead found themselves in the midst of a large body of Stuart's veteran cavalry. A fierce skirmish ensued, but the little unit of green but gallant troopers were quickly overpowered, many were captured, including Corbit and Churchman. Two were killed, 11 were wounded, and a few managed to make their escape down the Reisterstown Road, pursued closely by Confederates. Two prominent Confederate officers were killed and ten men badly wounded. The wounded on both sides were cared for in improvised hospitals in Westminster by local physicians and citizens.

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The "Battleground"

"Old Commons"
Now the campus of McDaniel College. For many years before the Civil War, the site was used as a hospital. The wounded of both sides were treated here by local physicians. The site is marked by an iron urn near the flag pole.

296 East Main
Shellman House, circa. 1807. The Historical Society of Carroll County.

East Main & Court Streets
Now a service station. Site of the Westminster Hotel & Tavern. "Headquarters" of Major Napoleon B. Knight, 1st Delaware cavalry prior to the engagement.

206 East Main
Shelling House, circa. 1807. The Historical Society of Carroll County.

East Main & North Bishop Streets
Site of Michael Baughman Blacksmith Shop. Delaware cavalrymen were having horses shod here just prior to the engagement. They were surprised, and men and horses were captured by the Rebels.