

THE CIVIL WAR DIARY OF JOSEPH H. COIT

Edited by JAMES McLACHLAN

A LITTLE over a hundred years ago, in June of 1863, Lee, in an attempt to bring the Civil War to the very door of the enemy, moved the three great corps of Generals A. P. Hill, Early and Ewell northwards through western Virginia and Maryland into Pennsylvania. All through that June normally peaceful citizens of Washington County, Maryland, were shocked into sudden alertness as Union and Confederate troops advanced and retreated through the towns and countryside. Among the witnesses to this long prelude to Gettysburg was Joseph Howland Coit, a young Episcopal clergyman and instructor in Natural Science and Mathematics at the College of St. James, an Episcopalian preparatory school and college in the path of the maneuvering armies, about six miles south of Hagerstown. Coit kept a diary that June, and in its pages are recorded some of the suspense, confusion and sadness he felt and saw as, under the pressure of war, the secure, ordered world of his small institution dissolved about him.¹

Joseph Howland Coit (1831-1906) was born in Wilmington, Delaware, the second son and namesake of the Rev. Joseph H. Coit, an Episcopal clergyman. He grew up in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and in Plattsburg, New York, where his father held parishes. At the age of fourteen Coit wrote to the Rev. John Barrett Kerfoot, Rector of the young College of St. James and its preparatory school, requesting admission. He explained that his father was a poor clergyman with a large family and asked if he might not therefore be educated free of charge. Since St. James had a policy of reduced fees for clergymen's sons, ar-

¹For a good account of Southern maneuvers before Gettysburg—the background to Coit's Diary—see Douglas Southall Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command* (3 vols.: New York, 1942-44), III, 20-89. For another contemporary description, see Fletcher M. Green, "A People at War: Hagerstown, June 15—August 13, 1863," *Md. Hist. Mag.*, XL (Dec., 1945), 251-260.

rangements were made and Coit entered the preparatory school, the youngest and smallest boy in his class. He graduated from the College in 1851, and was admitted to the Episcopal priesthood in 1855. With the help of well-to-do relatives he spent the years from 1858 to 1860 studying advanced physics and chemistry at the Sorbonne, and then, just before the outbreak of the Civil War, returned to Maryland to teach at his alma mater.²

In 1860 the College of St. James was celebrating its eighteenth successful year. It had been founded through the efforts of Episcopal laymen in Hagerstown and of William R. Whittingham, bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland.³ St. James was only the second institution of its type in the country, and was modeled directly on the first, Flushing Institute and the College of St. Paul's in Flushing, Long Island.⁴ Bishop Whittingham had asked the founder and head of the Long Island institution, William Augustus Muhlenberg, to serve in the same capacity for the proposed school in Maryland, but Muhlenberg preferred to remain in New York.⁵ As Rector for the new school he sent instead the Rev. John Barrett Kerfoot, one of his favorite pupils and an instructor at Flushing.⁶

With much difficulty, Bishop Whittingham and the Hagerstown laymen had raised enough money to purchase Fountain Rock, a magnificent mansion with twenty acres of grounds not far from Hagerstown, as the home for the new college. The building had been started in 1792 by General Samuel Ringgold, a local magnate, as the manor house for his 17,000 acre Conococheague Manor estate. It was later embellished with

² Arthur S. Pier, *St. Paul's School, 1855-1934* (New York, 1934), pp. 50-54.

³ For a good brief account of St. James, see Hall Harrison, "The College of St. James (1843-1864)," in Bernard C. Steiner, *History of Education in Maryland* (Washington, D.C., 1894), pp. 258-60.

⁴ The first announcement of St. James's, *Opening Services. . . . Outline of the Discipline, Studies, Etc., St. James Hall, near Hagerstown, Washington County, Maryland* (Hagers-Town, 1842), is an almost word-for-word copy of *An Account of the Grammar School, or Junior Department, of St. Paul's College* (New York, 1842).

⁵ Alvin W. Skardon, "William Augustus Muhlenberg: Pioneer Urban Church Leader" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1960), *passim*.

⁶ Hall Harrison, *Life of the Right Reverend John Barrett Kerfoot, D.D., LL.D., First Bishop of Pittsburgh* (2 vols.: New York, 1886), I, 21-43. Harrison's work is the most complete account available of the College of St. James. It contains too several chapters of recollections by Joseph H. Coit.

interiors by Benjamin Latrobe, architect of the capitol in Washington. Ringgold lived too well; his heirs were forced to auction what remained of the estate for debts in 1832. The property passed through several hands, and in 1842 the Episcopal Church acquired it for only \$5,000.⁷

Under Kerfoot, the College and its preparatory school were an almost immediate success. "The sin of our first parents," Bishop Whittingham said at the College's opening, "was an attempt to attain intellectual growth in defiance of the will of GOD."⁸ Therefore Kerfoot, following Muhlenberg's example, combined thorough religious instruction with the usual secular education. He recruited a small, largely northern, faculty, and soon attracted students from wealthy families all over the South. By 1848 St. James had 98 students, and by 1857, 117. When the College closed its session in June, 1861, shortly after the beginning of the war, enrollment rose almost to 175 students. But the following October only sixteen returned. The student body had been overwhelmingly southern, and most of the former pupils had loyally joined the Confederate army.⁹ Kerfoot and his staff, however, determined to keep the College in operation and opened the October, 1862, session with between forty and fifty students.

Several times the war came almost to the gates of the College. The battles of South Mountain and Antietam were fought only a few miles away, and Kerfoot and his staff—though mainly strong Union sympathizers—offered every possible assistance to the wounded, Confederate or Union.

On June 11, 1863, Joseph Coit made one of his infrequent entries in his Diary. It was the ninth anniversary of his ordination, and while making new vows he promised himself "heart searching and repentance." But the next two weeks would

⁷ Edith Rossiter Bevan, "Fountain Rock, The Ringgold Home in Washington County," *Md. Hist. Mag.*, XLVII (Mar., 1952), 19-28; Thomas J. C. Williams, *A History of Washington County, Maryland, . . . Including A History of Hagerstown* (2 vols.: Hagerstown, 1906), I, 278.

⁸ "Bishop Whittingham's Address," *Opening Services St. James Hall*, p. 9.

⁹ Of the 117 students at the College in 1857-1858 only 18 were from north of the Mason-Dixon line. The largest number (42) were from Maryland. *Register of the College of St. James, and the Grammar School . . . 1857-58* (Baltimore, 1859), pp. 9-13; *Register of the College of St. James and the Grammar School . . . 1848-49* (Baltimore, 1849), pp. 5-8; Williams, *History of Washington County*, I, 341-43.

afford him little time for either. Instead, with a refreshing immediacy, he would record from day-to-day in the pages of his Diary a multitude of new and unhappy impressions.¹⁰

* * * *

Sunday, June 14, 1863

In the morning at St. Mark's¹¹—sermon. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets etc" St. Luke.

On my return to the College I was told of rumors that fighting was going on at Winchester and Martinsburgh. Later in the afternoon Dr. Magill¹² brought out the same stories, adding that the Post Master at H[agerstown] had left the place and that many of the citizens were preparing to do the same. Other stories are told concerning the removal of stores, etc. Dr. Falk¹³ on his return from C[hambersburg?] through Williamsport partly confirmed and partly denied the rumours. There is no doubt but that the Confederates are in the Valley in force.

Monday, June 15, 1863

At breakfast the waiter H.U. who returned from H[agerstown] at 4 this morning told us that all day yesterday the blacks had been fleeing to Pennsylvania—that last night they burned the U.S. stores at H[agerstown]—that soldiers and wagons in one continuous stream had been pouring through en route for Ch[ambersburg?]. At 9 a colored man brought tidings that the Confederates were in Williamsport. Mr. E[dwards]¹⁴ and Mrs. C. from Hagerstown con-

¹⁰ Coit's Diary is in the Archives Room of the Sheldon Library, St. Paul's School, Concord, New Hampshire. I am grateful to the Rector, the Rev. Matthew M. Warren, and the Trustees of St. Paul's for permission to publish the Diary here.

I have imposed paragraphs and expanded contractions and abbreviations in the Diary. My expansions of the abbreviations of proper names are indicated within brackets.

¹¹ Built in 1852, St. Mark's at Lappans was a small church not far from the College at which Coit regularly conducted services. Williams, *History of Washington County*, I, 166.

¹² Dr. Charles Magill (1806-1881), a vestryman of St. John's (Episcopal) Church in Hagerstown, had two sons serving in the Confederate army. A strong Southern sympathizer, after the battle of Gettysburg he left for Virginia, where he was commissioned an officer in the Confederate army. Williams, *History of Washington County*, I, 428.

¹³ Dr. Alexander Falk, professor of Greek, Latin, Hebrew and History at the College.

¹⁴ Rev. Henry Edwards (1821-1897), a Connecticut-born, Flushing Institute and Yale-educated descendant of Jonathan Edwards, was rector of St. John's Church in Hagerstown from 1853 to 1867. To the distress of his congregation, he was an ardent Union sympathizer. Williams, *History of Washington County*, I, 386, 583-84.

firmed the account . . . pretty much. Most of the Union (par. ex.) left during the night.

In the afternoon Dr. F[alk] and Cor. and also her Brother were in town and saw a body of Confederate Cavalry (about 1000) pass through en route to Pennsylvania. They went on very quietly. As we came out from tea a party of Confederate Cavalry rode through the grounds. The boys rushed to meet them—cheering and waving their hats. Dr. K[erfoot] and myself stood on the circle watching the invaders with sad hearts. H[all] H[arrison]¹⁵ joined in the demonstration—alas for us and for him. The Rebs are out after horses and took two . . . from A. Rowland.

Tuesday, June 16, 1863

I was wakened before the bell by noise, and looking out of my window saw most of the boys gathered about a squad of cavalry. Soon a cheer was raised and the party rode off. After breakfast we were told that two of the boys Baukard and Boteler had gone off with the Confederates. The Rector after consultation determined to speak in Chapel with regard to demonstrations joining the S[outhern] army etc. which he did strongly, prudently, and well. I noticed several absent—and soon learned that Latrobe, Hayward, W[illiam] Harrison, Heighe, Edmundson and Motter had also gone to H[agerstown] to enlist.¹⁶ About 11 A.M. W[illiam] H[arrison] and Ed[mundson] came back to get some things. W[illiam] H[arrison] so excited as to act and talk like a fool. He and Ed[mundson] are said to have gone with the man who came out with them to Mr. R[owland]'s to take horses. H[all] H[arrison] has written a note to the Colonel to whom W[illiam] H[arrison] applies to get him to refuse W[illiam].

T. and C. Pitts went to Williamsport today. According to their account a large infantry force is there. Heard through them of Ives Smedes' death—he was killed at Chancellorsville. Weddell who was here several years ago was also killed there.¹⁷

¹⁵ Rev. Hall Harrison (1837-1900), instructor in Latin, Greek and English at the College, from which he had graduated in 1857. Harrison was one of the few strong supporters of the Confederacy on the faculty. He was a native of Ellicott City, Maryland, where, after some years as a master at St. Paul's School in Concord, N.H., he ended his days as rector of St. John's Church. Pier, *St. Paul's School*, pp. 46-50.

¹⁶ Boteler, Heighe and Motter were students from Washington County. William Harrison was a close (how close I have been unable to determine) relation of Hall Harrison. Latrobe was probably Benjamin H. Latrobe, a grandson of the architect, and one of the many members of the Latrobe family to attend St. James. [Anonymous], *Baltimore, Its History and Its People* (3 vols.: New York and Chicago, 1912), II, 399-400.

¹⁷ Ives Smedes of Raleigh, N.C., and Lucien Porter Weddell of Nachitoches, Louisiana, were both students at the College in the late 1850's. *St. James Register* 1857-58, pp. 9-13.

Js. Snodgrass was at tea this evening. He was slightly wounded at Winchester. According to this account W[inchester] was attacked on Sunday. Milroy evacuated that night—and fought his way to H[arper's] Ferry. The confederates are said to have captured 5000 men and [illegible] cannon.¹⁸

Wednesday, June 17, 1863

H[all] H[arrison] having received a note from W[illiam] stating he had not enlisted walked in this morning and brought W[illiam] out. He then in the afternoon drove him to Boonsboro from whence W[illiam] is to go to F[rederick] and Baltimore.

Dr. Wilson¹⁹ was here today and says there is no interruption of communication between Boons[boro] and Fr[ederick]. No confederates have yet appeared east of the Potomac South of Williamsport. I saw yesterday's [Baltimore] Am[erican] which gives one some idea of what is going on without.

None of those who ran off Tuesday have yet enlisted and only two will do so. Latrobe and Hayward Tuesday, Edmundson and Heighe came back this evening. Heighe submitting himself is to stay until he can be sent to his mother. Edm[undson] was sent off the grounds. Motter returned yesterday being sent back by his uncle in H[agerstown].

A party of scouts from H[arper's] F[erry] were as far as Funkstown today. They stopped Mr. B[reathed]²⁰ on his way there. A squad of C[onfederate] cavalry drove them away. . . . In H[agerstown] where the stores have all been closed they were compelled I am told to open them and to take S[outhern] money. A man was arrested who refused. Isaac Br[eathed]²¹ and Odis have joined the confederates. . . .

H[all] H[arrison] resigned his Professorship yesterday. The Rector declining to consult with him in the present crisis on account of his conduct Monday evening.

Thursday, June 18, 1863

. . . . I proposed to Dr. K[erfoot] in the morning the importance

¹⁸ Maj. Gen. Robert H. Milroy's actual losses to the South at the battle of "Second Winchester" were 3,358 prisoners and about 61 cannon. Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants*, III, 27.

¹⁹ Dr. Henry Beatty Wilson (1830-1883) of Boonsboro, a physician prominent in local affairs. He named his tenth and youngest child Joseph Coit Wilson. Williams, *History of Washington County*, II, 1186-87.

²⁰ John W. Breathed, Curator (roughly, treasurer) of the College. Well-to-do and prominent in local affairs, he was a strong Southern sympathizer, with three sons in the Confederate army. After the war he moved to Virginia, where he became mayor of Lynchburg. Williams, *History of Washington County*, I, 365.

²¹ John W. Breathed's fifteen year old son. Williams, *History of Washington County*, I, 365.

of attempting to get our students home while we could, particularly the Pennsylvania boys. He agreed with me and after consulting Dr. F[alk] and Cnt. the attempt to break up was resolved upon[.] Mr. B[reathed] went to town to get passes if necessary and engage vehicles. He was told by the general there that his orders were to let no person pass either in or out of H[agerstown] though we could go to B[oonsboro]. As no trains can come here we must wait until tomorrow when N. or B[reathed] will apply to General Rhodes [*sic*]²² at Williamsport who commands on this side of the river.

We have heard cannonading very distinctly during the middle of the day and the report is that H[arper's] F[erry] has been taken. Nous verrons.

H[arrison] was at Dr. Maddox's²³ this afternoon and brought us an Am[erican]. Latrobe and H[ayward?] were here this morning. I saw H[ayward?] for a moment. The cavalry returned from Pennsylvania today. So N. or B[reathed] reports. The boys who ran off go to F[rederick] today except L[atrobe] and Hayward. The neighborhood is full of absurd stories with regard to the conduct of the students. The country is wonderfully quiet—there is very little moving among the people—and the military keep very quiet. Parties of two or three occasionally ride through our grounds. But always quietly.

Friday, June 19, 1863

Boyle, an old student (1853) from North Carolina, was here for several hours this morning. His visit was a pleasant one. He was cordial and talked well. Several of our old students are near us.

Mr. B[reathed] about 11 A.M. called to tell us that it was useless to attempt to break up. No cars have left for Baltimore since Wednesday and the confederate pickets are now thrown out in all directions. This evening we hear that they are marching on Fr[ederick] [.] If so we are within their lines—and now must patiently await events.

There has fallen a heavy rain near sundown, the first we have had for a long time. The Rector told the boys after prayers tonight of the attempt we had made to get them home—and added some good words. Most now are self-controlled and obedient.

We are obliged at present to make our bread here and fall back

²² Maj. Gen. Robert E. Rhodes had recently assumed command of D. H. Hill's old division. Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants*, II, 700-701.

²³ Dr. Thomas Maddox (? -1887), member of a wealthy landed family and one of the founders of the College. Williams, *History of Washington County*, I, 587.

upon the bacon we have in store. Very fortunately only last week the College received a new supply of sugar, tea and coffee. We have also some 400 lbs of butter on hand, and have this week secured 10 bls of flour.

It has been profoundly quiet all day—and yet events are bringing on the hours of confusion and suspense. . . .

Saturday, June 20, 1863

The day has been perfectly quiet. No sounds at the College of cannon or drums. It has been raining a good part of the time and the sky has been dark and air damp and chill. This morning I walked out with Coster²⁴ nearly to Welty's Toll-gate on the turnpike. We saw one or two squads of confederate cavalry and heard the music of a band in the direction of Funkstown. In one or two fields farmers were out working at their corn but most everybody seemed to be shut up at home. The confederates have left Williamsport and moved to H[agerstown] and are massed there, and a few miles from there. No person is at present allowed in or out of H[agerstown] without a pass.

Jno. Heighe is here this evening. He comes from Martinsburgh.

Sunday, June 21, 1863

The day has been a stirring one . . . the rumours and news. Heighe having spent the night here, left for H[agerstown] after breakfast, taking with him some butter to Mrs. K[ennedy].²⁵ I walked over to St. Mark's. On the way I heard very distinctly the beating of drums in the direction of Sharpsburgh. I passed three or four groups of farmers on the road talking over events, some of them angrily. At Church some thirty people were assembled. I read the service and preached from St. Mark, 12.49. . . . I also gave notice of the celebration of the Holy Communion next Sunday.

On coming out of Church I met Dr. Wilson. He had seen Friday's and Saturday's papers and had endeavored to get one for us but was prevented—the copies he had secured being taken by a party of Cavalry passing through on their way to F[rederick]. He had however prepared an abstract of the news for us. Hooker is said to be at S[nicker's?] Gap about 40 miles southwest from us. Lee is at Centreville, 20 miles from Washington. Longstreet's corps

²⁴ Robert John Coster of Baltimore, an 1862 graduate of the College, in 1863 a tutor there. Harrison, *Life of Bishop Kerfoot*, I, 228.

²⁵ Mrs. Frances Howell Kennedy of Hagerstown, widow of Dr. Howard Kennedy. A staunch friend of St. James', among her many benefactions during the Civil War was the rescue and care of the injured Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., after the battle of Antietam. Williams, *History of Washington County*, I, 428; Catherine Drinker Bowen, *Yankee from Olympus: Justice Holmes and His Family* (Bantam Book ed.: New York, 1960), pp. 148-58.

has crossed at Shepherdstown and is now encamped near Sharpsburgh. Such are some of the rumors. H[arper's] Ferry has not been taken. Rode back with Mr. Breathed and had a disagreeable conversation by the way.

Three officers friends of the Pitts' were here part of the day. . . . Nicholson rode up . . . and went to chapel and afterwards took tea and spent the evening. None of the Giles's are killed, J[ohn] is a major Confederate States army and is stationed at Savannah. Willy is in very bad health. N[icholson] seemed cordial but was rather rude in his remarks. . . .²⁶

Fred. got in to town today, having passed the pickets. He brought out notes from Mrs. K[ennedy] and others. Things were quiet in town. In the morning Mr. Edwards had a good congregation of confederates who behaved well and heard the President of U.S. prayed for without sign. Ewell and Rhodes, though Episcopalians, went to the Catholic Church. At the Lutheran Church where a large body of soldiers attended the pastor prayed for Mr. L[incoln] cabinet etc. Thus ends week one of excitement and confederate occupation. Their soldiers appear well equipped, the discipline excellent. Many horses have been taken from the farmers, but in most cases without authority, and they have nearly all been returned. The Confederates have opened some of the stores in H[agerstown] and compelled them to sell and to take the S[outhern] money—at Ch[ambersburg?] they took the stock of 2 drugstores and sent it South. On the whole they behaved well.

Monday, June 22, 1863

Last night after I had gone to bed the Rector came to tell me that F. Lewis had come to tell him that he felt it his duty to join the S[outhern] army. Dr. K[erfoot] said what he could to dissuade him. This morning L[ewis] informed him that he had not changed his mind and would go while we were at chapel. And so he has gone.

Turner, brother of T[urner] now at the College, an old student of my brother's²⁷ was here today, and asked to see me. I found him a pleasant gentlemanly fellow. But his account of matters is very different from the one I got from Wilson yesterday. Long-

²⁶ In the 1857-58 session of the College John Reston Giles and William Giles, both of Savannah, were members, respectively, of the junior and freshman classes. John Joseph Nicholson of Montgomery, Alabama, was a member of the junior class in the same year. *St. James Register 1857-58*, pp. 9-13.

²⁷ Joseph Coit's brother, Rev. Henry Augustus Coit (1830-1895) was in 1863 Rector of the eight-year old St. Paul's School in Concord, N. H. He received his A.B. from St. James and had taught there briefly. *Pier, St. Paul's School*, pp. 7-8.

street's Corps is not in Maryland—but at or near Snicker's gap. Nor is Lee at Centreville. General Ewell's headquarters are at Sharpsburgh—and part of his army. From Turner's account I infer that the whole number of confederates in Maryland does not exceed 20 or 25 thousand. Six weeks ago, this young man was in New York and Philadelphia in disguise, having run the blockade. He spoke warmly of Henry [Coit] and his family.

Mr. H. and Br[eathed] returned from town at noon and report that the confederates have left. They took up their march for Pennsylvania at 5 A.M. They were 2 hours 30 minutes passing a single point from all I can learn—their number is about 10,000. H. and B[reathed] attempted again in the afternoon to get to Sharpsburgh but were unable.

Near tea-time a person named Sever came from Winchester in search of the slaves of his father. He carried off our cook and her two children. It was a sad sight.

In the evening some coloured women from Williamsport came with a story [rumor] that the confederates were retreating in great confusion along the Greencastle turnpike. They had seen their wounded in large number brought into W[illiamsport]. McClellan had met and de-feated the enemy. Great Judaeus Apollo—too good and too soon to be true.

. . . . Lynch is willing to carry the boys to M———— [illegible] or even Baltimore if a pass can be procured and the Rector will go along. Tomorrow Dr. K[erfoot] proposes attempting to see General Ewell and finding out what we can do.

The confederates have taken 21 head of cattle from Br[eathed] and 65 from Dodge giving them receipts.

We had music on the steps after tea—music and war do not seem to fit together very well. But I found both relief and pleasure in it.

Tuesday, June 23, 1863

The Rector had purposed going to see General Ewell today. But General E[well] and his entire corps have gone into Pennsylvania. They were passing during the morning on both the S[harpsburg] and B[oonsboro] pikes.

This afternoon Lynch came out by appointment to see what could be done in the way of getting the boys off. It seems probable that to-morrow there will be no pickets on the roads—For General E[well's] corps are gone and those which are reported to be coming in their place have not yet crossed the river. After a good deal of anxious talking the Rector decided to make the attempt to get the boys to F[rederick] to-morrow. The plan at first was to send

T. Pitts and H[all] H[arrison] to Boonsboro to get a pass if one was necessary from Major Gilmore who is said to command a force now picketting G. Mountain. But it was thought best finally to take our chance without a pass. I am going with the Rector. The Lord prosper our undertaking.

H[enry] Holliday²⁸ was here today. I did not see him. Bowley also passed near us, though unable to come and see us. Others probably of whom we have not heard have been in our neighbourhood lately.

Wednesday, June 24, 1863

On Tuesday afternoon we were told that the Rebel army having passed into Pennsylvania, their pickets would be drawn in, by the next day, and then the way to Frederick would be clear. Moreover it was said that the road would soon be closed again for Lee's whole army were about to cross into Maryland at Shepherdstown. Now was our chance to get our students to their homes.

We debated anxiously whether we ought to go without a pass, the risks of being turned back, whether the Rebel authorities would exact a parole of those who left their lines—and whether the Union Commander if such there should be at F[rederick] would require every one coming into his lines to take the oath of allegiance. At last we decided to go without a pass and to submit with good grace if we were turned back.

Lynch who had come out to know our plans was told to be out at the College by 5 A.M. and to say nothing of our movements in town. The students who had been standing in a throng not far off from the C[laggett] H[all] steps where our consultations had been held were then informed by Dr. K[erfoot] of the plan, and those of them who were to go were directed each to pack one trunk with their clothing—to put their books and other small effects which they could not carry with them in boxes and bundles and take these last to the Irving Hall where they would be kept as safely as we could provide. At tea other directions were added as to the carrying of letters, as to the talking, etc.

The evening was a busy one with the boys—an anxious one with us who were to go with them to F[rederick]. We were anxious not on account of any personal dangers but because we felt the responsibility of the care of them when the war was at our very doors and it was uncertain what perils or strange situations would befall us too great a charge too great a tax on all one's energies. To get them to their parents was a paramount obligation—and to do so

²⁸ Henry Holliday of Queen Anne County, Maryland, attended the College in the late 1840's. *St. James Register 1848-49*, pp. 5-8.

without bringing them into any peril or compromising position was equally our duty. Hence our anxiety.

I went to bed about midnight—the waking bell was to ring at 3 A.M. and breakfast to follow in half an hour after. I slept until nearly four hearing no bells, and was then aroused by a messenger for the Rector. I dressed rapidly, went and got my breakfast, and by 4 45 was ready to start.

About 5 we heard very distinctly the music of a military band not far off and our hearts began to fail for we thought that the road is again held by guards. A boy who had been sent to town the evening before had come back without getting very far on the turnpike reporting that Longstreet's corps was moving along between Sharpsburgh and H[agerstown]. This story and the music and the fact that five passed and 6 came on and no omnibuses made their appearance drew the boys faces very long and made us doubtful of our even starting. But at last the welcome sound of the approaching vehicles was heard and by 6.30 we were under way—our party consisted of 20 boys, Dr. K[erfoot] and myself and a Mr. Spencer of Baltimore. Two omnibuses carried us—one driven by Lynch—one by a man named Knode.

We started on the road leading from the College to Claggett's Mill and the F[rederick] road—but before we had gone any distance Dr. K[erfoot] bade L[ynch] turn in to the S[harpsburg] turnpike when he reached it, follow it to the Cross Roads, and then take the B[oonsboro] road. It was very fortunate that his course was adopted. For the F[rederick] pike had pickets on it within a mile of B[oonsboro] who refused permission to go through unless a pass was presented.

We went along at a good pace and spirits until we reached a camp not far from the cross roads. After passing it without challenge we hoped we should meet no interruption, but a little beyond it we met a line of pickets—4 horsemen, one of whom riding forward told us we could not pass without an order from General E[well]. Dr. K[erfoot] Mr. S[pencer] and myself got out, and asked where their officer was. Happily he was not far off—and the Dr. and S[pencer] went to see him while I staid with the omnibuses.

The men were civil though rough-looking. One of them asked whether there were any Yanks about. They were eating their breakfast while sitting on their horses—a dirty looking mess of bread and meat. At length Dr. K[erfoot] and Mr. S[pencer] returned accompanied by an orderly who bade the pickets let us pass.

... We got to the Junction in ample time for the train to Balti-

more. We left F[rederick] on our return to the College at 3.30 P.M. and reached home safely about 11. at night. . . .

Thursday, June 25, 1863

I was very tired all day. I sent in one of the [Baltimore] Am[ericans] I got in F[rederick] to Mrs. K[ennedy] today. Lee's army has been passing all day along the F[rederick] and S[harpsburg] pikes towards Pennsylvania.

We have resolved to go on with our College work if possible until the 9th of A[ugust]. Our students are of course only those from this county some 12 in number: C. Pitts, C. Harrison, and Geo. Miller, who are still here will leave as soon as they are well. We have one senior, 2 Juniors, 2 sophomores, 2 Freshmen, 5 1st Preparatory. This is our establishment. We shall probably lose our Senior and Juniors, as they are very loath to stay. Indeed Mr. Schley who was out in the morning had great difficulty in persuading his son to remain.

Ozman Latrobe, Dr. Cullen (Mrs. B[reathed]'s brother) and 2 other confederate officers were here for a few moments. E. Thomas spent a couple of hours at the College yesterday while we were absent. Aisquith, Jr. was also here at the same time, Hooker is reported to have crossed into F[rederick] Co[unty] on Wednesday.²⁹

Friday, June 26, 1863

We began our work today again. We have altered the daily routine so as to throw all recitations into the Morning. We get up an hour later and have chapel at 9. It is very hard to go on teaching. The events of the hour are so absorbing and exciting—and the future of the College seems to be so hopeless.

A. P. Hill's corps have been marching all day on the S[harpsburg] pike. The boys while watching them were accosted by a General Heth, who told them he had been a pupil of Dr. K[erfoot]'s at Flushing [Institute] years ago.³⁰

Mrs. C. and Mrs. G. drove out in the afternoon, . . . Lynch who brought the ladies told us he had been paroled before leaving F[rederick] by our troops. General Lee passed through H[agerstown]

²⁹ Ozmun Latrobe, a graduate of the College, was a member of Longstreet's staff. He was brother of Ferdinand C. Latrobe, long-time mayor of Baltimore, also a graduate of the College. *Baltimore, Its History and Its People*, II, 397; John Thomas Scharf, *History of Western Maryland . . .* (2 vols.: Philadelphia, 1882), II, 1239.

³⁰ This was the capable, charming, but unlucky Maj. Gen. Henry Heth (1825-1899), Lee's favorite officer and the only one he called by his first name. Heth was commanding part of Gen. A. P. Hill's III Corps, and would be the first to come into contact with Union troops at Gettysburg. Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants*, II, 506-508.

this morning. Lynch said he was sent for by Lee to give him information as to roads in Pennsylvania—but he declined because of his parole.

Saturday, June 27, 1863

Longstreet's corps have been crossing at Williamsport today—and passing through Hagerstown on the way to Pennsylvania. The whole number of the confederate army is put at 90,000 men. Mr. B[reathed] who was in town today with his wife brings out a story that Stuart had captured 2000 prisoners and 600 wagons from Hooker during the last few days. It has rained nearly all day. According to all accounts the Rebels are better equipped than ever before—and full of confidence.

Sunday, June 28, 1863

Rode to St. Mark's with Mr. and Mrs. B[reathed]—a small congregation present—preached Matthew 4. and 1st . . . administered the communion. . . . Dr. W[ilson] was there and had brought a Friday's American for his sister. He had also a Saturday Am[erican] which he could not loan. Read both and brought away the Friday paper. Little or no news in either. Hooker's army is at Frederick and our scouts W[ilson] said have been in B[oonsboro] today.

F. Schley⁸¹ went into town on an errand this evening and while there a dash was made by the Union Cavalry. The party was small, but they were greeted most warmly, took several prisoners and paroled the sick.

I dined at Mr. B[reathed]'s today. He is much excited and violent at present.

Monday, June 29, 1863

Many rumours but no authentic news. It has rained heavily all day, and such weather of course hinders the confederates. Our classes are going on after a fashion but it is impossible for me to do any profitable reading or study.

C. Pitts who leaves tomorrow came to see me about 6 P.M. I had a most pleasant talk with him, perhaps, probably, the last I shall ever have with him. That the College cannot prosper until the war is over seems more and more likely. *Our* work here is done.

Walton Hughes is here spending the night. He tells me that the Confederate officers say that the direction of our Army is much better than theirs—though they think their men fight better.

Tuesday, June 30, 1863

Raining all day—no tidings of any sort. Our cavalry are said to

⁸¹ Frederick Buchanan Schley of Hagerstown, later a prominent judge and lawyer there. Williams, *History of Washington County*, II, 788-89.

dash into H[agerstown] every day. The confederates keep to the Williamsport and Greencastle road.

C. P[it]ts] left this morning, he takes a letter from me, for home. Communication just now with Frederick is possible—and so we hope to get the papers today or tomorrow. Our's is an anxious life at present. The fate of the country, of the College, of our own personal property, our own future, all are uncertain.

Dominus nostra illuminati.

Mr. B[reathed] tells us that he has been told by a man from F[rederick] that Hooker has been removed and McC[lellan] re-appointed. This man heard the troops cheering as he left F[rederick]. The change was made Sunday. A day or two will tell us the truth.

Wednesday, July 1, 1863

The rain has ceased. Went to town this afternoon with Mr. F[alk]. On the way in met Mrs. K[ennedy], Mrs. G. and Mr. E[dwards] driving out to the College. While in town saw a dash made by confederate cavalry. I was standing on Mr. E[dwards]'s steps at the time talking with Mrs. E[dwards]. A party of 5 among whom was Joseph Brown who bowed to me as he passed rode by at full speed with pistols or carbines in position. They were followed in a few minutes by about thirty others who rode slowly to the C[ourt] House. A little boy stood at the corner waving a U.S. Flag while the confederates were there. After a half hour's stay during which they did nothing, the party went out by the Clearspring road. Took tea with Mrs. C. and came out about 9 P.M.

In town got a paper in which is the good news that Hooker has been removed. A General Meade is put in his place. It is hard to say anything about this last appointment so little is known of the man. Everyone desires McClellan. One can but pray that Meade may prove equal to the position he has taken. . . .

* * * *

General Meade, of course, proved more than equal to the position. The Southern forces were decisively defeated at Gettysburg in the following days, and on July 4 Lee began his retreat to Virginia.²² The Union victory, however, brought little but more disorder to the College of St. James. "I am not without anxiety," Bishop Whittingham wrote Kerfoot on July 6, "lest your danger from the vagabond mob of a beaten army

²² For a good short account of the battle of Gettysburg, see J. G. Randall and David Donald, *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (Boston, 1961), pp. 401-405.

be greater that it has yet been while that army was under discipline and . . . kept in comparative restraint."³³ The bishop was almost prescient, for the College was sacked several times by the retreating Confederate troops.

In spite of these blows Kerfoot, with the help of Coit and Falk, managed to operate the College until the following summer, when it received its *coup d' grace*. In August of 1864 Kerfoot and Coit were arrested by General Jubal Early in reprisal for the Union's arrest of the Rev. Hunter Boyd, a Virginia clergyman. Although both were eventually released, it proved impossible to keep the College open during their absence, and it was regretfully closed and abandoned.³⁴

Kerfoot went on to become, briefly, president of Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, and in 1865 was elected the first Episcopalian Bishop of Pittsburgh, where he enjoyed a long and distinguished career. Joseph Coit, accompanied by Hall Harrison, made his way to St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire, where in 1895 he succeeded his older brother, Henry, as the school's second Rector.

Though the College of St. James expired amidst the confusions of the Civil War, it left a rich legacy.³⁵ Not only had it educated a whole generation of Southern leaders, but it was also its example that had inspired George C. Shattuck, a Boston physician, to establish in 1855 St. Paul's in Concord. St. Paul's in turn became one of the major models for the host of Episcopalian and non-denominational private preparatory schools founded in the United States in the last decades of the nineteenth century. When St. James closed, Bishop Whittingham expressed the hope that the Coit brothers and Harrison would, somehow, maintain and strengthen the traditions of the College. His hope was met in far larger measure than he could ever have foreseen.³⁶

³³ Harrison, *Life of Bishop Kerfoot*, I, 267.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 270-301.

³⁵ In 1869 Henry Onderdonk (1822-1895), member of a prominent Episcopalian family, leased the deteriorating buildings of the College from the trustees, made extensive repairs, and reopened it as a secondary school for boys. The present St. James School is therefore (like Lawrenceville School in New Jersey or Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts) an essentially new institution built on a moribund foundation. Williams, *History of Washington County*, II, 1236-37; Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II, 1240, 1241-42.

³⁶ Harrison, *Life of Bishop Kerfoot*, I, 48; II, 383.

MSA SC 5881-1-239

MARYLAND HISTORICAL MAGAZINE

VOL. 60, No. 3 SEPTEMBER, 1965

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Maryland's Economic War with Pennsylvania <i>Gary B. Nash</i>	231
The Civil War Diary of Joseph H. Coit <i>Edited by James McLachlan</i>	245
The Cautious Revolution: Maryland and the Movement Toward Independence: 1774-1776. Part I <i>Herbert E. Klingelhofer</i>	261
The Adams-Kilty House in Annapolis <i>William V. Elder, III</i>	314
Sidelights	325
Bishop Whittingham, Mount Calvary Church, and the Battle of Gettysburg <i>Edward N. Todd</i>	
Reviews of Recent Books	329
Brown and Brown, <i>Virginia 1705-1786: Democracy or Aristocracy?</i> by John Carter Matthews	
Waring, <i>The Fighting Elder: Andrew Pickens (1739-1817)</i> , by Warren F. Kimball	
Smith, <i>White Servitude in Colonial South Carolina</i> , by Warren F. Kimball	
Stampf, <i>The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877</i> , by George H. Callcott	
Fischer, <i>Lincoln's Gadfly, Adam Gurowski</i> , by Richard R. Duncan	
Brown and Huth, trans., <i>Baroness von Riedesel and the American Revolution: Journal and Correspondence of a Tour of Duty, 1776-1783</i> , by C. Ashley Ellefson	
Rodick, <i>Appomattox: The Last Campaign</i> , by Ellen Hart Smith	
Somers, <i>The Southern States Since the War, 1870-71</i> , by Ellen Hart Smith	
Giles, <i>Patty Cannon, Woman of Mystery</i> , by C. A. P. H.	
Notes and Queries	342
Contributors	348

95974

Annual Subscription to the Magazine, \$4.00. Each issue \$1.00. The Magazine assumes no responsibility for statements or opinions expressed in its pages.

Richard Walsh, Editor

Published quarterly by the Maryland Historical Society, 201 W. Monument Street, Baltimore, Md. 21201. Second-class postage paid at Baltimore, Md.