



ROCKY SPRINGS CLASH



“Skirmished with the rebel cavalry ... near Rocky Springs Schoolhouse”



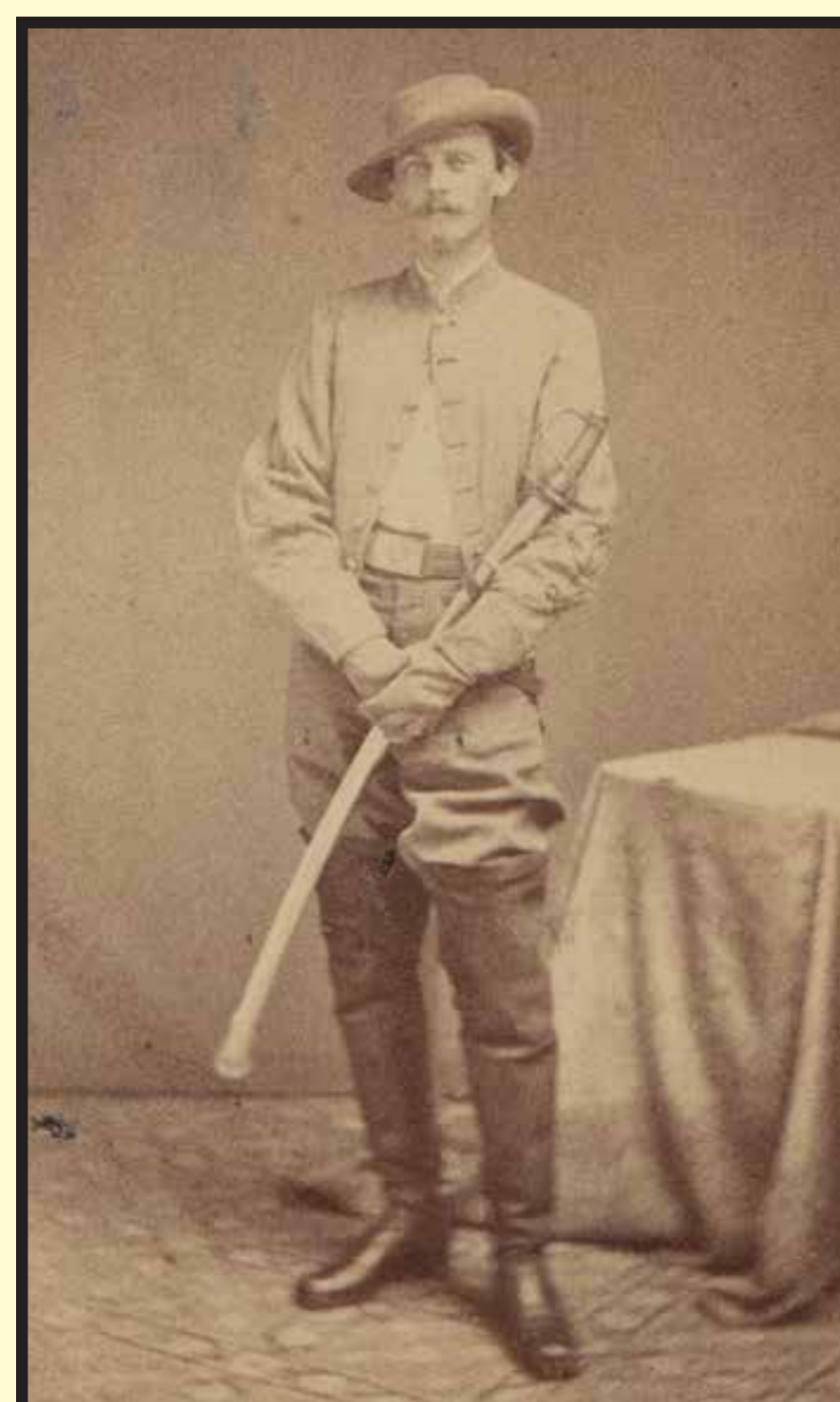
EARLY'S 1864 ATTACK ON WASHINGTON

In June 1864, Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee detached Gen. Jubal A. Early's corps from the Richmond battlefields and dispatched it to the Shenandoah Valley to counter Union Gen. David Hunter's army. After driving Hunter into West Virginia, Early launched an incursion through Maryland against Washington, D.C., to draw Union troops from Richmond and to release Confederate prisoners held at Point Lookout. On July 9, Early detached Gen. Bradley T. Johnson's cavalry brigade, including Maj. Harry Gilmor and his cavalry battalions, to raid eastward toward Baltimore. Union Gen. Lew Wallace delayed Early at the Battle of Monocacy on July 9, as Federal reinforcements strengthened the capital's defenses. Early probed them briefly on July 11–12 and then withdrew to the Shenandoah Valley, where he stopped the Federal pursuit at Cool Spring on July 17–18. Despite failing to take Washington, Early's invasion succeeded in diverting Federal resources.

On July 8, 1864, a sharp, confused fight erupted here when four hundred of Confederate Maj. Harry Gilmor's men, 1st and 2nd Maryland Cavalry, unexpectedly encountered Union Capt. John Morris's one hundred men of Co. M, 8th Illinois Cavalry, who were riding up the road toward you to reconnoiter. As Gilmor charged, Sgt. Harrison Hakes, Co. B, 8th Illinois, with several men fired on Gilmor's troopers from woods across the road, stopping the charge



Maj. Harry Gilmor
Library of Congress



Capt. James L. Clark
Courtesy American Civil War Museum

and enabling their comrades to retreat. The Confederates pursued until they encountered Union infantry. Morris, shot in the hip, soon died. Three other Union troopers also were wounded. Gilmor lost four men wounded, and twelve horses.

“Our cavalry skirmished with the rebel cavalry ... near Rocky Springs Schoolhouse,” wrote Union Lt. Edward Y. Goldsborough. Gilmor

wrote of the clash, “Although [Morris's men] sustained their reputation, we whipped them handsomely. ... A bullet struck [Capt. James L. Clark's] jacket button, and made it concave, but inflicted no injury.” The next morning, July 9, Gen. Jubal A. Early detached Johnson's cavalry



Capt. John V. Morris's pistol
Courtesy Marshall D. Krolick Collection

brigade to sever the rail and telegraph links to Baltimore, Washington, and Philadelphia; burn bridges; threaten Baltimore; and release the prisoners at Point Lookout. Union Gen. Lew Wallace delayed the rest of Early's army on its march to Washington at the Battle of Monocacy, eight miles south of here. On July 12, Early recalled Johnson to retreat to Virginia.

The stone building in front of you is Rocky Springs School House, built ca. 1839.