

MAINE MONUMENT DEDICATION IN WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA

Steven Garrett



The monument seen on the above picture is a photo, superimposed upon a photograph of the 29th Maine infantry reunion. (Photo by author.)

On September 25, 2021, my wife and I attended the monument dedication honoring the Maine troops who fought at the pivotal 3rd Battle of Winchester (September 19, 1864) the largest battle fought in the Shenandoah Valley. Third Winchester was key in stopping Confederate General Jubal Early's forces and the Union victory began the final defeat of General Early's army at Cedar Creek. This battle was part of General Sheridan's 1864 Shenandoah Campaign.

The Maine units that participated in the 3rd Battle of Winchester were:

- 7th Maine Infantry
- 12th Maine Infantry
- 14th Maine Infantry
- 29th Maine Infantry
- 1st Maine Artillery
- 5th Maine Artillery

Approximately 2000 Maine men participated and about 500 were either killed, wounded, or missing, about twenty-five percent of those engaged.

Who were the Maine men facing? None other than Alabama units—again. The monument shown below is placed near their furthest advance.



Alabama monument. (Photo by the author.)



Third Winchester battlefield. (Photo by author.)

The above photo is of the battlefield. You can see the Alabama monument, center-right. The Maine troops had to attack across this ground!

The dedication ceremony included:

- An introduction by Nicolas Picerno representing the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation;
- Messages from Senators Collins, King, and Representative Golden;
- A reading of a Maine State Legislative Resolution;
- Peter Dalton: The story of Captain Ira Gardner, 14th Maine;
- Keynote address by David Cheever, former Maine State Archivist;
- Morris Berry: Sons of Union Veterans, Monument Dedication;
- Monument Unveiling and Salute;
 - Just prior to the final unveiling all Mainers present assisted in covering the foundation with Maine earth so the monument would sit on solid Maine earth.

Unfortunately, just prior to the scheduled ceremony the company providing the monument informed the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation (which worked to get approval and funding for the monument) that the monument would not be there. This disappointment did not stop the dedication and it was replaced with the photograph seen above. Special thank you to Nicolas Picerno, Chairman-Emeritus of SVBF, and Cindy and Peter Dalton for their continued work for the monument. Nicolas, Peter, and the featured speaker, David Cheever, have all been guest speakers at the Joshua L. Chamberlain CWRT.