

## Fort Mill Ridge

### Commanding the Northwest Turnpike



Col. Jacob M. Campbell

In the March of 1863, a brigade under the command of Colonel Jacob M. Campbell of the 54th Pennsylvania, fortified a low ridge on the west side of the South Branch of the Potomac River about a mile west of Romney. The brigade consisted of the 54th Pennsylvania Infantry and 1st West Virginia Infantry, along with Battery E, 1st West Virginia Artillery and the Ringgold, Washington, and Lafayette (all Pennsylvania) Cavalry. Campbell's command blocked Confederate attempts to control the South Branch, thus shielding the B&O Railroad and the Northwest Turnpike. The place Campbell selected commanded the turnpike as it passed into Mechanicsburg Gap and southern approaches to Romney. The location also provided some protection from the ever-present threat of surprise Confederate raids. With a camp along Mill Creek, Campbell's men were safe under the guns on the ridge.

Campbell's men erected a near textbook fortification. The 3-inch Rifles of Captain Alexander Moor's Battery E easily commanded the turnpike and the gap to the west of the fort.

Operationally speaking, the highlights of the garrison's limited activities included brushes with Captain John H. McNeill's Confederate raiders. However when elements of the Army of Northern Virginia entered the Shenandoah Valley in June 1863, exposing Campbell's fort and with the defeat of Federal forces at Winchester and Martinsburg, Campbell fell back to the west. This opened the South Branch for General John Imboden's command, who occupied Romney then later Cumberland, Maryland in support of the Confederate invasion of Pennsylvania.

*Courtesy of Craig Swain  
February 14, 2010  
markerhunter.wordpress.com*

## Fort Mulligan

### Jumping off point for raids

The valley of the South Branch of the Potomac River saw an incredible amount of troop activity and action. Its story is hauntingly similar to that of the famed Shenandoah Valley, albeit on a smaller scale. Indeed, if the Shenandoah was the granary of the Confederacy, then this bountiful region may well have been known as its stockyard, for it managed to supply stock to Confederate forces in Virginia at least as late as November 1864.

The Valley was a middle ground, situated between the all important Middle Shenandoah Valley and the Upper Potomac region with its vital coal resources and the B&O Railroad infrastructure centered around Cumberland, Md. The railroad itself cuts across the lower South Branch Valley and its adjacent drainages. In addition to offering agricultural products to the South, it offered a mostly sympathetic populace and innumerable remote avenues of approach for a mobile force bent on the destruction of the railroad.

Federal or Confederate troops occupied this hill and its surrounding area beginning at least as early as August 1861, and were on the ground for at least part of every year of the war. Federal forces time and again tried to use this strategic point as a choke hold against raids on the B&O to the north, and as a "jumping-off" point for their own raids further south.

The Fort as it exists today, was constructed August-December 1863, by troops under the command of Colonel James A. Mulligan, from Chicago, Illinois. Infantry, cavalry and artillery from West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Illinois carried out the backbreaking labor.

The rugged earthworks bear silent witness to the sacrifices of the thousands of Americans who marched, dug, fought, froze and died here during the war. The tide of war ebbed and waned across the South during the war, but when troops were in the South Branch, they were always "at the front."

*Courtesy of the Grant County Press*



## Battle of Moorefield

### Running for the Hills



Midmorning, August 7, 1864 ... Confederate soldiers are running for the hills.

Confederate Gen. John McCausland's cavalry brigade was bivouacked close to Moorefield on the South Branch of the Potomac River, while he was sleeping in Samuel A. McMechen's house in Moorefield, two miles away. His brigade and that of Gen. Bradley T. Johnson had taken part in Gen. Jubal A. Early's raid on Washington, D.C. They had burned

Chambersburg, Pa., after trying unsuccessfully to extort money from the town fathers in retaliation for Federal "depredations" in the Shenandoah Valley, which had likewise been in retaliation for Confederate "atrocities." Union Gen. Wm. W. Averell, whose command was in pursuit, surprised them at Old Fields by attacking with "Jesse Scouts" (Federal soldiers in Confederate uniforms). Johnson's men forded the river and attempted to form a defense with McCausland's brigade, but they were outflanked and outgunned. The 3rd West Virginia Cavalry charged three times across the river and made the Confederates run for the hills. In the Meadows, the McNeill family took shelter in their cellar from the bullets.

Averell captured four cannons, more than 400 men with their weapons, and about the same number of horses, which were as difficult to replace as the soldiers. Early claimed that "this affair had a very damaging effect upon my cavalry for the rest of the campaign" in terms of both morale and horses. That campaign ended with the loss of the Shenandoah Valley, the "breadbasket of the Confederacy."



Willow Wall, Old Fields near the battle site

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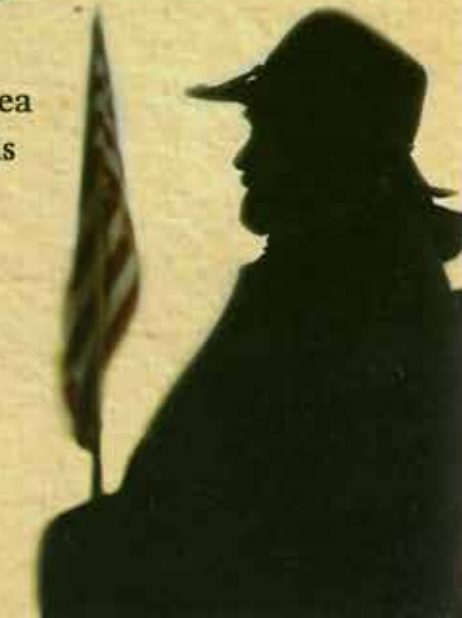
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Front cover photo courtesy of Albert Mach Fine Art

West Virginia  
Civil War Trails  
of Hampshire,  
Hardy and  
Grant Counties



Your free map  
and guide to area  
Civil War Trails  
markers





McMechen House - Home of Confederate sympathizer Samuel A. McMechen, who entertained Confederate officers at when they controlled Moorefield.

Capt. George W. Stump  
Confederate Officer  
from Romney



Confederate attack on Union wagon train.  
*Harper's Weekly, Oct. 31, 1863*



Gen. John C. Fremont  
led his troops through  
Wardensville



Fort Mill Ridge Civil War trenches  
*Courtesy of Justin A. Wilcox*

Gen. Wm. T. "Grumble" Jones  
defeated Union troops  
at Greenland Gap



Mill Island - served as a hospital,  
especially for McNeill's Rangers  
*WV & Regional History Collection*



Fort Mulligan, overlooking the  
South Branch of the Potomac

Moorefield Presbyterian Church - used as a  
hospital for both sides. Union forces  
burned the pews for firewood and also  
stabled their horses inside.



1861

MAY  
Citizens of  
Romney  
gather to  
vote on  
secession

JUNE  
Engagement  
at  
Romney

OCTOBER  
Wire Bridge  
Engagement  
near  
Romney

1862

JANUARY  
Stonewall Jackson  
plans to pursue federal  
forces out of Romney  
and also capture  
Cumberland, Md.

FEBRUARY  
Federal troops  
attack and  
capture  
Confederates at  
Bloomery Gap

MAY  
20,000 Union  
troops march  
through  
Wardensville after  
defeat there.

Union troops  
protect Maple Hill  
Cemetery and use  
adjacent church as a  
commissary, which  
was later burned.

1863

Fort Mill Ridge  
near Romney, is  
built by Union  
soldiers but used  
by both armies  
during the war

Union Troops  
construct Fort  
Mulligan near  
Petersburg to  
help protect the  
B&O Railroad.

APRIL  
Greenland  
Gap  
Engagement  
near Scherr

JUNE 20  
West Virginia  
secedes from  
Virginia to become  
a state and remain  
part of the Union.

SEPTEMBER  
Fighting erupts  
on Cemetery Hill  
near Moorefield,  
to the detriment of  
Union troops.

1864

JANUARY  
Union troops leave  
Fort Mulligan, which  
is subsequently  
demolished by Gen.  
Jubal Early's men.

JUNE  
Engagement  
at  
Johnson  
Run

AUGUST  
Battle  
of Moorefield  
begins



Engagement at Romney. The 11th Indiana Zouaves crossing the  
bridge over the Potomac to attack Confederate forces.

The Hampshire County Courthouse  
was occupied by both Union and Confederate forces.



Petersburg Presbyterian Church.  
Congregation members abandoned  
the original church at Maple Hill  
Cemetery after being occupied by  
Union troops.

Capt. John Hansen  
McNeill led his  
Rangers on raids of  
the Union Army  
throughout the  
South Branch Valley

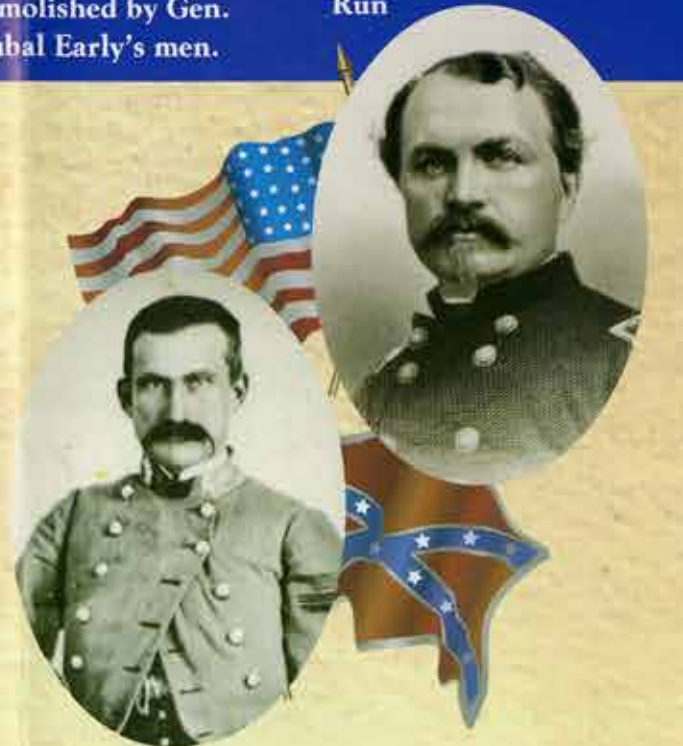


Fort Mulligan - Federal or Confederate troops occupied this hill and its  
surrounding area beginning as early as August 1861.

*Courtesy of the Lewis G. Alt Collection*



West Virginia attains statehood June 20, 1863  
*J.C. Alder drawing of the state seal done in 1911,  
courtesy of the West Virginia State Museum*



Gen. Wm. W. Averell (right) soundly defeated  
Gen. John McCausland (left) and his Confederate  
troops at the Battle of Moorefield.

### Local Information

Grant County Convention & Visitors Bureau

[www.grantcountywva.com](http://www.grantcountywva.com)

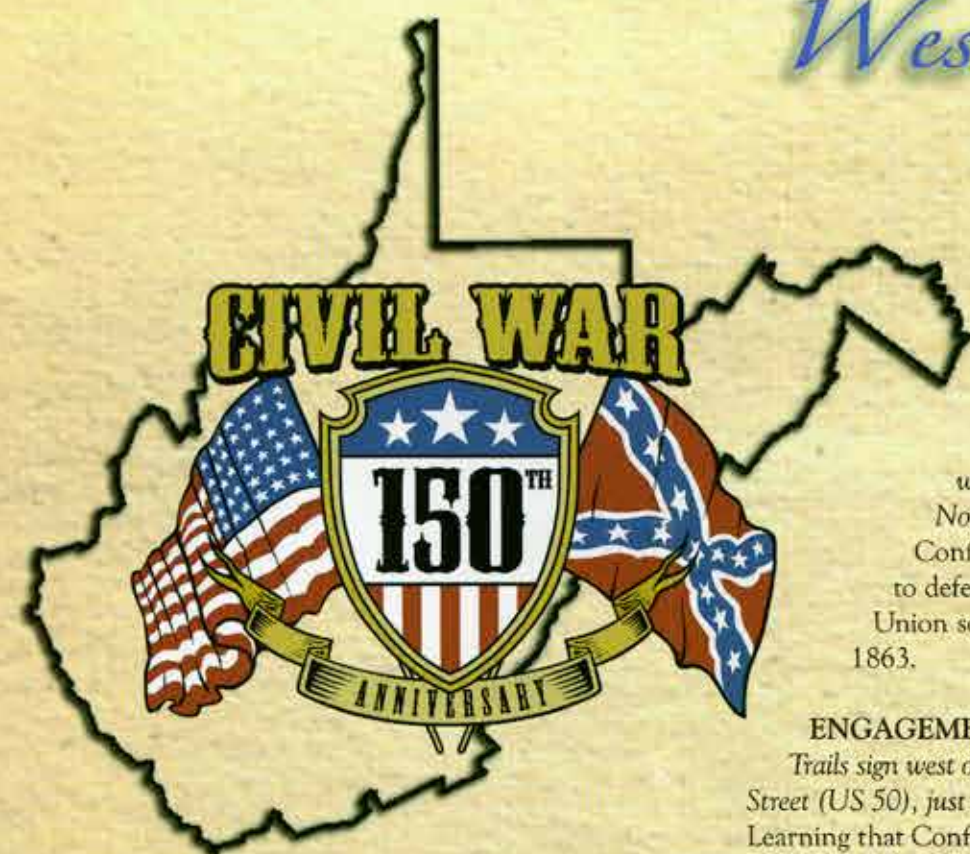
Hampshire County Convention & Visitors Bureau

[www.cometohampshire.com](http://www.cometohampshire.com)

Hardy County Convention & Visitors Bureau

[www.visithardy.com](http://www.visithardy.com)

# West Virginia Civil War Trails of Hampshire, Hardy and Grant Counties



## Natl Register of Historic Places

### HAMPSHIRE COUNTY

- Capon Springs, Capon Springs
- Old District Parsonage, Romney
- Fort Van Meter, Romney
- Hampshire County Courthouse, Romney
- Kuykendall Polygonal Barn, Romney
- Literary Hall, Romney
- Capt. David Pugh House, Hooks Mills
- Scanlon Farm (Log House), Three Churches
- Sloan-Parker House, Junction
- Sycamore Dale, Romney



Washington Bottom Farm (above), Springfield  
Wilson-Wodrow-Mytinger House, Romney

### GRANT COUNTY

- Fairfax Stone Site (monument)
- North of William at corner of Grant, Preston and Tucker counties.
- Gorman Presbyterian Church, Gorman
- Grant County Courthouse (old), Petersburg
- Hermitage Motor Inn (Cunningham; Taylor Hotel), Petersburg
- The Manor, Petersburg



Rohrbaugh Cabin / Allegheny Cabin (above)  
Monongahela National Forest, Petersburg  
Noah Snyder Farm (Snyder House), Lahmansville

### HARDY COUNTY

- Judge J.W.F. Allen House (Ingleside), Moorefield
- Buena Vista Farms, Old Fields
- Henry Funkhouser Farm & Log House, Baker



- Stump Family Farm (above), Moorefield
- Garrett VanMeter House, Old Fields
- Westfall Place, Moorefield
- Lost River General Store, Lost River
- Hickory Hill, Moorefield
- P.W. Inskeep House, Moorefield
- Moorefield (Downtown) Historic District
- Old Stone Tavern, Maslin-Gamble House
- Old Hardy County Courthouse
- Oakland Hall, Moorefield
- The Meadows, Moorefield

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY

### FORT MILL RIDGE

2 miles west of Romney on US 50  
Interpreted trail winds through this well-preserved fort commanding the Northwestern Turnpike (now US 50). Confederates earlier used this position to defend the approaches to Romney. Union soldiers built the existing fort in 1863.

### ENGAGEMENT AT ROMNEY

Trails sign west of Romney on south side of Main Street (US 50), just west of the bridge.  
Learning that Confederates were occupying Romney in June 1861, Union troops under Lew Wallace (later of Monocacy fame) marched toward town. As they approached the covered bridge over the South Branch of the Potomac River, they came under fire from Sycamore Dale (across the river and upstream) and a couple of pieces of artillery. Wallace dislodged the Confederates, who fled. Wallace searched the town for weapons before returning to his base in Maryland.

### ROMNEY IN THE CIVIL WAR

Trails sign at 340 E. Main Street  
Romney, West Virginia  
Romney's strategic location along the turnpike connecting Winchester, Va. with the Ohio River and its proximity to the B&O Railroad led to numerous troop movements, battles and skirmishes during the war. The town allegedly changed hands 60 times. Caught in the middle of Northern and Southern sentiments, most of the citizens backed the Confederacy.

### WIRE BRIDGE ENGAGEMENT

Trails sign located at the south base of the Route 28 Bridge  
On Oct. 24, 1861, the Union high command ordered Gen. Benjamin Kelley to strengthen his position on the B&O Railroad by taking the strategic position at Romney. Part of Kelley's force tried to cross the river here but ran into stiff Confederate resistance and a partially destroyed bridge. This group returned to Maryland. Kelley's other force occupied Romney until Jan. 10, 1862, when they also withdrew over this bridge to Maryland.

### STONEWALL JACKSON HEADQUARTERS

Trails sign at 272 Main Street  
Romney, West Virginia  
Jackson made his headquarters here in Romney at the home of John B. White on Jan. 14, 1862. He planned here to pursue the Federal force that had just abandoned the town and perhaps capture Cumberland, Md. Low morale, bad weather and other factors prevented Jackson from carrying out his plans.

### HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

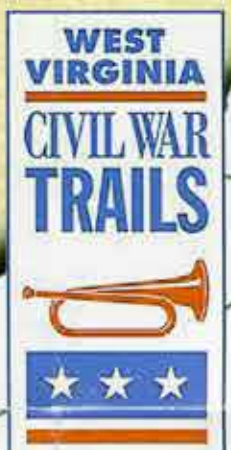
Trails sign at West Main and North High streets  
Romney, West Virginia  
On May 23, 1861, citizens of Romney gathered at the courthouse to vote on the question of Virginia's secession. 1,188 voted for and 788 voted against. Although West Virginia became a state during the war, most residents continued to side with the Confederacy. The building suffered rough treatment during the war after being occupied by one side, then the other.

### SHEETZ GUN FACTORY

2514 Old Jersey Mountain Road, Gore, West Virginia  
Gunsmith Jacob Sheetz found himself with more business than he could handle when, in 1861, he was busily converting old flintlock rifles found in storage in the courthouse to the more modern percussion type. This is the site of his shop and near the Confederate camps that were set up to be near Sheetz and his production.

### BLOOMERY GAP

Trails sign on Route 127, just west of the Virginia border  
Confederates occupying the gap in early 1862 threatened the B&O Railroad and Union operations near the Potomac River. In mid-February a Federal force under General Frederick Lander attacked the Confederate position, scattering the troops and capturing 67. The Confederates soon reoccupied the gap.



### CAPTAIN STUMP

Trails sign on County Route 8 just off Main Street southwest of Romney, West Virginia  
Hickory Grove was the home of Capt. George W. Stump, known as "Stump's Battery" because he was always heavily armed. He rode with the Confederate McNeill's Partisan Rangers and Gen. John Imboden during the war, finally meeting his end when he ran afoul of Union troopers in February 1865.

### SOUTH BRANCH INNS MOOREFIELD & ROMNEY

### CIVIL WAR TRAILS MARKERS



## HARDY COUNTY

### BATTLE OF MOOREFIELD (START)

Trails sign located at 5196 US Route 220  
Old Fields, West Virginia  
Union troopers, under Gen. William W. Averell, surprised, attacked and routed Confederate cavalry under Gen. Bradley T. Johnson and camped in Moorefield Aug. 7, 1864.

### MATHIAS HOMESTEAD

Trails sign located at 195 Howards Lick Road  
Petersburg, West Virginia  
After John T. Mathias enlisted in the Confederate army, his family faced tough times during the war. Both Confederate and Union troops periodically swept through taking produce and livestock.

### WOODLAWN

Trails sign located at 8079 State Route 259  
Lost River, West Virginia  
The house, still standing, was the home of James W. Wood, who grew up there and was 15 years old when the war began. He joined the Confederate army in January 1864 and fought at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania and Cold Harbor. He also served with Jubal Early's Valley army. After the war, he served three terms in the West Virginia House of Delegates.

### MOOREFIELD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sign located at 109 S. Main Street  
Moorefield, West Virginia  
The leader of this church, Rev. William Wilson, and his congregation were strong Confederate sympathizers. Wilson left town in 1862 to become a chaplain in the Confederate army. During the war, both sides used the church as a hospital. Union soldiers stabled their horses inside and burned pews as firewood.

### MCMECHEN HOUSE

Trails sign 121 N. Main Street  
Moorefield, West Virginia  
This circ. 1853 house served as headquarters for both sides as Moorefield changed hands several times during the war. Confederate Gen. John McCausland, was asleep in the house after the famous 1864 "Burning of Chambersburg" action when his troops were attacked 4 miles north of his location. Union Gen. John C. Fremont used this home as his headquarters in May 1862.

### CEMETERY HILL

Sign located at 192 Olivet Drive  
Moorefield, West Virginia  
Fighting erupted among the tombstones Sept. 10, 1863, when Union troops camped there were surprised by a variety of Confederate troopers. The Union position was soon overrun. The Confederates captured 160 soldiers plus wagons, horses, guns and ammunition.

### MILL ISLAND

Sign located at 710 Mill Island Road  
Moorefield, West Virginia  
This mansion was built about 1840 for Felix Seymour and his wife. During the war, the home was used as a Confederate hospital (especially for sick and wounded McNeill's Rangers). The prosperous 1,500-acre farm suffered the loss of crops and livestock to both sides during the war.

### FREMONT'S CAMP

Sign located at 8790 State Road 55  
Moorefield, West Virginia  
Union Gen. John C. Fremont and his 20,000-man army arrived and camped at this location May 28, 1862. Fremont had been defeated by Confederate Gen. Stonewall Jackson at the Battle of McDowell earlier in the month. President Abraham Lincoln then urged Fremont to return to the Valley to help defeat Jackson. Rain and road conditions slowed the Federals as they broke camp two days later to return to the Valley.

## GRANT COUNTY

### FORT MULLIGAN

Trails sign located at 203 Virginia Avenue  
Petersburg, West Virginia  
Interpreted trail leading to the preserved remains of the fort is accessible from the Grant Memorial Hospital parking lot south of Route 55, Petersburg  
Constructed by Union troops in 1863 on a site formerly occupied by both sides, this strong point protected Unionists in the South Branch Valley and served as a supply depot and jumping-off points for Federal activities protecting the B&O Railroad. The fort was evacuated on Jan 31, 1864 because of an impending attack by Confederate Gen. Jubal Early. Early's men "demolished the works" and, although military activity continued in the area, the fort was never reoccupied.

### MAPLE HILL CEMETERY

Trails sign located at 301 N. Main Street  
Petersburg, West Virginia  
Union commanders ordered the protection of this cemetery while the brick church was used as a commissary. The local congregation had stopped meeting at the church after Union occupation in 1862. It was later burned and its bricks were used for flooring in winter cabins and at Fort Mulligan.

### GREENLAND GAP ENGAGEMENT

Trails sign located in Scherr, West Virginia  
A small Union detachment occupied the gap April 25, 1863, defending it at the approach of Confederate Gen. William Jones, who was en route to Rowlesburg to burn the B&O Railroad bridge there. Jones's overwhelming numbers eventually forced the surrender of the Union force but the delay perhaps saved the Rowlesburg bridge.

### WAR IN GRANT COUNTY: ENGAGEMENT AT JOHNSON RUN

Trails sign located at 199 S. Main Street  
Petersburg, West Virginia  
Union Home Guard members clashed with a detachment of Confederate Capt. John McNeill's Rangers near Johnson Run June 19, 1864. The Home Guard, returning with supplies from the B&O Railroad, successfully defended its wagon train and withdrew.

### HISTORICAL HIGHWAY MARKERS



**GREENLAND GAP** - Scene of skirmish in 1863 between General Jones' cavalry and Federal troops from New Creek. WV 93, at junction with Co. Route 1 (Greenland Rd.), just north of junction with WV 42, Scherr.

**MCNEILL'S RAID** - Here in 1865, McNeill's Rangers under Lt. Jesse C. McNeill, started a raid on Cumberland, where they captured Union generals Kelley and Crook. The Rangers, organized by Capt. John Hanson McNeill, performed many daring deeds.

US Route 220/WV Route 28, Moorefield  
**BLOOMERY GAP SKIRMISH/BLOOMERY IRON FURNACE** - Feb. 14, 1862, Brigadier General Frederick W. Lander, commanding the 5th and 8th Ohio, 14th Indiana Infantry, and 400 men of the 1st West Virginia Cavalry, attacked a Confederate brigade of the 31st, 51st, 67th and 89th Virginia Militia under Colonel J. Sencender. The Confederates were routed and fled toward Winchester.

WV 127, 1.5 miles east of junction with WV 29.  
**BLUES GAP BATTLE** - Confederate troops under Captain George F. Sheets, were defeated by Colonel S.H. Dunning's 5th Ohio Infantry here, Jan. 87, 1862. North River Bridge and a number of buildings were burned by the Federals.

U.S. 50, 14 miles east of Romney.  
"STONEWALL" JACKSON/ROMNEY IN 1861-65 Jackson arrived here Jan. 13, 1862, after capturing Bath (Berkeley Springs). His Valley Campaign followed. Sitting astride the natural invasion route from the Shenandoah Valley to the Potomac and B&O Railroad, Romney was scoured by both armies. No great battles were fought here, but during the war the town changed hands 56 times. U.S. 50, courthouse square, Romney.