



**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)**

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property (Check only one box)**

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>0</u>	<u>76</u>	buildings
<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	sites
<u>13</u>	<u>6</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>16</u>	<u>88</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**The Civil War in Virginia, 1861-1865: Historic and Archaeological Resources**

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)**

Cat: <u>Defense</u>	Sub: <u>battle site</u>
<u>Domestic</u>	<u>single dwelling</u>
<u>Transportation</u>	<u>road-related</u>
<u>Funerary</u>	<u>cemetery</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)**

Cat: <u>Domestic</u>	Sub: <u>single dwelling</u>
<u>Transportation</u>	<u>road-related</u>
<u>Transportation</u>	<u>rail-related</u>
<u>Recreation and culture</u>	<u>outdoor recreation</u>
<u>Funerary</u>	<u>cemetery</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____

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**7. Description**

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**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19th Century

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**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

roof metal

walls wood

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other earth

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**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.
-

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Military

Period of Significance 1864

Significant Dates September 22-24, 1864

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property approximately 700 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet.

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title: John S. Salmon

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ date April 5, 2004

street & number: 5102 King William Road telephone (work) 804-788-6485

city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23225

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

- Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Milford Battlefield, located in Warren and Page Counties, contains about seven hundred acres of mostly hilly terrain bounded by the South Fork of the Shenandoah River on the west and the Blue Ridge Mountains on the east. At the time of the Civil War, the land was less wooded than at present, but otherwise the terrain appears little different. Recent signs of human activity on the landscape are mostly limited to a highway (U.S. Route 340), a railroad track, and some scattered dwellings and related structures that do not adversely affect the ability to understand the course of the engagements that occurred there during the war.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The Milford Battlefield is located in Warren and Page Counties in the Page or Luray Valley in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and encompasses approximately seven hundred acres. It is bounded on the west by the South Fork of the Shenandoah River and on the south, east, and north by Beecher Ridge, Brush Mountain, and Acorn Hill, each a part of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Overall Run, a tributary of the South Fork, flows west to the river from Brush Mountain, and an unnamed intermittent stream flows down Sandbank Hollow to join Overall Run a few hundred yards east of its mouth. The terrain is generally hilly, with the run and the stream flowing through deep ravines. Unpaved, historic residential roads parallel the watercourses, and a modern highway (U.S. Route 340) and railroad (Norfolk Southern) run through the site in a northeast-southwest direction. Most of the land is presently heavily wooded except along the western portion of the residential roads, U.S. Route 340, and the bottomland bordering the Shenandoah River. A few early- to mid-twentieth-century houses are scattered along U.S. Route 340 and the residential roads, with the densest concentration of dwellings and associated buildings being located north of Overall Run and west of the highway at the former Camp Skymont. Although almost all of the houses and other buildings are noncontributing, even at their densest concentration they do not adversely affect the battlefield or understanding the course of the battle.

With the exception of the postwar dwellings, the site has changed little since the Civil War. A circa 1864 sketch map of the area by Confederate topographical engineer Jedediah Hotchkiss shows a small cluster of buildings (then Milford, now Overall) near the mouth of Overall Run, "old roads" on the same course as the present-day residential roads, and the Luray and Front Royal Turnpike (the course of which today is approximated by U.S. Route 340). The turnpike was the major north-south transportation route at the time of the war, and both Union and Confederate armies used it frequently. In addition to the roads, the site also includes such battle-related contributing features as entrenchments and rifle pits.

The Page Valley narrows at Overall, which (with the turnpike) made the site strategically important during the war. To the west, a side ridge off Massanutten Mountain extends eastward to form a large horseshoe-shaped bend in the South Fork, with Overall lying just across the river from the eastern apex of the bend. In addition, the river is all but unfordable there and immediately downstream (north), and during the war there was no paralleling road on the western side of the river to permit a flanking maneuver. Furthermore, on the east, Overall Run's deep

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drainage with its steep slopes made the site the most easily fortified and defended position in the Page Valley. The Confederates especially took full advantage of this opportunity.

*In 1864, the battlefield area apparently consisted of mixed wooded and open ground. Records refer to wooded areas (OR vol. 12, 1, p. 815), especially on the eastern side of the battlefield adjacent to the Blue Ridge (OR vol. 43, 1, p. 157). The open nature of at least part of the area then is implied by the widespread use of artillery, which would not have been possible if the battlefield had been heavily wooded.*

The battlefield district includes three contributing sites (the Overall House ruin, a historic cemetery, and a historic turnpike bridge abutment) and thirteen contributing structures (U.S. Rte. 340 [historic Luray and Front Royal Turnpike], one historic road trace, Overall House cistern, Overall House well, seven rifle pits, and two earthworks). There are seventy-six noncontributing buildings (thirty-one dwellings, six barns, thirty-four sheds, two studios, and three garages), six noncontributing structures (a railroad bed, one carport, two bridges, one coop, and one privy), and six noncontributing sites (five ruins and one cemetery).

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## LIST OF CONTRIBUTING AND NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Note: See pages 6- 12 for more descriptive information of each resource.

### CONTRIBUTING

1. Overall House ruin (site)
2. Overall House cistern (structure)
3. Overall House well (structure)
4. Rifle pit (structure)
5. Earthwork (structure)
6. Rifle pit (structure)
7. Rifle pit (structure)
8. Rifle pit (structure)
9. Rifle pit (structure)
10. Rifle pit (structure)
11. Rifle pit (structure)
12. Historic cemetery (site)
13. Historic turnpike bridge abutment (site)
14. Earthwork (structure)
15. Historic Luray and Front Royal Turnpike, U.S. 340 (structure)
16. Historic road trace (structure)

### NONCONTRIBUTING

1. Andreae House, 1972 (building)
2. Andreae barn, 1982 (building)
3. Atwood House, circa 1890 (building)
4. Atwood guesthouse, circa 1990 (building)
5. Atwood studio, circa 1990 (building)
6. Atwood shed, circa 2000 (building)
7. Atwood shed, circa 2000 (building)
8. Randy Rinker House, circa 1899 (building)
9. Randy Rinker shed, n.d. (building)
10. Randy Rinker shed, n.d. (building)
11. Randy Rinker shed, n.d. (building)
12. Otto cabin, circa 1950 (building)
13. Corviello House, circa 1930 (building)
14. Mobile home, n.d. (building)
15. Mobile home, n.d. (building)
16. Shed, n.d. (building)
17. Shed, n.d. (building)
18. Shed, n.d. (building)
19. Shed, n.d. (building)



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NONCONTRIBUTING (Continued)

20. Otto barn, n.d. (building)
21. Otto shed, n.d. (building)
22. James Rinker House, ca. 1890 (building)
23. Bobby Thomas House, 1946 (building)
24. Bobby Thomas shed, n.d. (building)
25. Bobby Thomas shed, n.d. (building)
26. Wayne Thomas House, ca. 1990 (building)
27. Traister House, 1928 (building)
28. Traister shed, n.d. (building)
29. Traister carport, n.d. (structure)
30. Downey shed, n.d. (building)
31. Downey shed, n.d. (building)
32. Downey shed, n.d. (building)
33. Downey shed, n.d. (building)
34. Downey House, circa 1790 but either razed or remodeled ca. 1890 (building)
35. Foster House, circa 1930, constructed atop C-13, bridge abutment (building)
36. Railroad trestle, 20th century (structure)
37. Fristoe cabin, circa 1957 (building)
38. Fristoe cabin, circa 1957 (building)
39. Shed, n.d. (building)
40. Shed, n.d. (building)
41. Shed, n.d. (building)
42. Fitzwater House, n.d. (building)
43. Shed, n.d. (building)
44. Coop, n.d. (structure)
45. Cabin ruin (site)
46. Cabin ruin (site)
47. Cabin ruin (site)
48. Cabin ruin (site)
49. Cabin ruin (site)
50. Shed, n.d. (building)
51. Dwelling, n.d. (building)
52. Dwelling, n.d. (building)
53. Forrest Fristoe House, ca. 1900 (building)
54. Shed, n.d. (building)
55. Shed, n.d. (building)
56. Virgil Printz House, ca. 1950 (building)
57. Shed, n.d. (building)
58. Shed, n.d. (building)

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**NONCONTRIBUTING (Continued)**

59. Privy, n.d. (structure)
60. Heard House, n.d. (building)
61. Shed, n.d. (building)
62. Kovalchick House, 1932 (building)
63. Studio, circa 1980 (building)
64. Barn, n.d. (building)
65. Barn, n.d. (building)
66. Imler House, circa 1960 (building)
67. Shed, n.d. (building)
68. Broadbent House, 1991 (building)
69. Garage, n.d. (building)
70. Shed, n.d. (building)
71. Andreae tenant house, circa 1960 (building)
72. Barn, n.d. (building)
73. Garage, n.d. (building)
74. Cabin, circa 1990 (building)
75. Shed, n.d. (building)
76. Woodell/Mathews House, circa 1990 (building)
77. Garage, n.d. (building)
78. Cook mobile home, n.d. (building)
79. Shed, n.d. (building)
80. Barn, n.d. (building)
81. Mobile home, circa 1970 (building)
82. Headley House, circa 1900 (building)
83. Shed, n.d. (building)
84. Shed, n.d. (building)
85. Shed, n.d. (building)
86. Skymont cemetery, circa 1970 (site)
87. U.S. Rte. 340 bridge, 1938 (structure)
88. Railroad bed, 20th century (structure)

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## INVENTORY OF RESOURCES

### CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

C1. Overall House site: ruins of limestone foundation of early 1800 plastered log home built by Isaac Overall (b. June 1776). *photo #2*

Sources: The Overall Family genealogy compiled by Mrs. Gurney O. Kiger of Chattanooga, TN, and privately published – no date.  
The Undying Past of the Shenandoah National Park by Darwin Lambert, published by Roberts Rinehart Inc, 1989.

C2. Cistern at Overall House site– stone-lined. *photo #3*

C3. Well at Overall site – stone-lined

C4. Probable Confederate rifle pits and skirmish location based on archeological evidence (both Union and Confederate fired bullets/cartridges). *photo #4*

C5. Confederate Earthwork:

West of Otto driveway, discontinuous rifle pits and boulder piles, 250 feet, east flank of Confederate defensive line. *photo #5*. East of Otto driveway, continuous rifle pits/trench approximately 150 feet long. *photo #6*

C6. Confederate Rifle pit

C7. Confederate Foxhole

C8. Confederate Foxhole, *photo #7*

C9. Confederate Foxhole

C10. Foxhole on steep slope facing north, towards end of Confederate line

C11. Foxhole, extreme eastern end of Confederate line

C12. Overall Cemetery above Downey House (NC 34). Fenced and recently cleared of thick, shoulder-high overgrowth of brush and trees. Contains non-inscribed limestone markers, inscribed small slab-type markers predating 1864, and inscribed “monument” type markers dated late 1800s. *photo #8*

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From Overall Family geneology (*op cit*): p. 39 "John Froman Overall, b. abt 1756, died abt 1819. Buried in Overall graveyard."

From Lambert (*op cit*): p.117, 119: "Descendants here don't know exactly when Isaac [Overall] died, or from what cause, but county records of 1843 show a distribution of his estate. . . Isaac was buried in a little cemetery on a hill in Overall, near the grave of his father John."

C13. Historic Front Royal-Luray Turnpike Bridge Abutment – stone ruins on south side of Overall Creek. *photo #9*

C14. Confederate earthworks/trench line, immediately west of Downey House on hillside south of Overall Creek. *photos #10 and #11*

C15. Historic Luray and Front Royal Turnpike, U.S. 340

C16. Historic road trace, north side of Overall Creek. *photo #12*

### **NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES**

NC 1. Andreae house, 1972, wood frame on slab, redwood siding, cedar shingles, metal chimney flues.

NC 2. Andreae barn, 1982, wood frame on block, clapboard siding, metal and fiberglass roofing.

NC 3. Atwood house, circa 1890, two-story, wood frame, vernacular farm house built by Zacchary Kibler, stone foundation piers, wood clapboard siding, tin roof, front porch, brick chimney. Rear addition on concrete slab mid-1950s.

NC 4. Atwood guest house, 1990s, one story, one room frame house, vinyl siding, asphalt shingled roof

NC 5. Atwood studio, 1990s, one story frame dance studio, vinyl siding, asphalt shingles

NC 6. Atwood shed, 2000, wood frame, vinyl siding, asphalt shingles

NC 7. Atwood shed, 2000, wood frame, vinyl siding, asphalt shingles

NC 8. Randy Rinker house, c.1890, vernacular two-story farm house on stone foundation, part log, part frame, vinyl siding, tin roof, front porch, later addition and back two-story porch.

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NC 9. Randy Rinker shed, wood

NC 10. Randy Rinker shed, wood

NC 11. Randy Rinker shed, wood

NC 12. Otto cabin, c.1950, single story log house, asphalt shingles, on stone foundation; creek stone chimney.

NC 13. Corviello House, c.1930, built by Hilda Smith, one-story wood frame, clapboard siding, enclosed porches, tin roof.

NC 14. Mobile home

NC 15. Mobile home

NC 16. Shed

NC 17. Shed

NC 18. Shed

NC 19. Shed

NC 20. Otto barn

NC 21. Otto shed

NC 22. James and Mary Rinker house, circa 1890, warehouse for barrel staves/bunk house for Borden Lumber Company; later a general store, Rinker's Store. Two story frame building with additions, vinyl siding, tin roof.

NC 23. Bobby Thomas House, 1946, built by Ed Foster, single-story frame house, full basement, vinyl siding, asphalt shingles.

NC 24. Thomas shed

NC 25. Thomas shed

NC 26. Wayne Thomas House, circa 1990, mobile home sided with T-111 plywood, asphalt shingles, attached carport.

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NC 27. Virginia Traister House, 1928, two-story, frame house on concrete foundation, aluminum siding, tin roof, brick chimneys.

NC 28. Traister shed

NC 29. Traister carport

NC 30. Downey barn, tin roof

NC 31. Downey shed

NC 32. Downey livestock barn, metal

NC 33. Downey barn

NC 34. Downey House. Original house built circa 1790 by John Froman Overall, log on limestone foundation. Current structure: wood frame, two-story plantation-style house with central hallway, two rooms over two, and brick chimneys at either end on a stone foundation with a front porch. Tin roof, aluminum siding, replacement vinyl columns on porch. At rear of house, a 1920 two-story frame addition with one story porch (enclosed post-WWII) on block foundation.

Sources: Lambert (*op cit*): "When Isaac [Overall] was about 20. . .they [Isaac's parents, John Froman Overall and his wife Elizabeth Ann Waters] built a new plantation house. It remained for almost a century the central landmark of the village that was first called Centre Mills, then Milford (Milford), then Overall. When stagecoaches began running along the high bank of the Shenandoah, the big porch was extended so passengers could step directly under the roof and out of the rain. The location was about hundred yards east of the present US 340."

Interview with Col. Clyde and Frida Downey, 9/03: Kitchen of the original house was located in basement. The house was used as a field hospital during the battle of Milford. At that time, Dr. Zacharia Compton and his wife Elizabeth McKay owned the house. Compton was both a minister and a medical doctor.

Interview with Raymond Fristoe, great-grandson of Zacharia Compton, 1993.

WPA historical inventory, 1937, researched by Connie C. Morris of Shenandoah, VA.

NC 35. Daniel Foster house, circa 1939, single-story cinder block with basement, vinyl-sided enclosed porch and wood/masonry shed which sits on top of old Bridge Abutment (C-13) Site of old barrel stave mill, according to 1993 interview with Raymond Fristoe.

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- NC 36. RR Tressel Bridge, 20<sup>th</sup> Century structure.
- NC 37. Fristoe Cabin, 1957, one-story, wood frame, asphalt shingles, block foundations, stone chimney.
- NC 38. Fristoe Cabin, 1957, one-story, wood-frame, asphalt shingles, block foundations, stone chimney
- NC 39. Single story storage shed, plywood.
- NC 40. Single story storage shed, stone facing, tin roof.
- NC 41. Single story shed and ruin of limestone foundation of a hotel, Fristoe Inn, that burned late in 1970.
- NC 42. Skymont, Fitzwater house: one-story field-stone house with basement and stone chimney; multi-level deck overlooking river, built on foundations of old house, stone chimney still standing and incorporated into deck.
- NC 43. Skymont, small shed
- NC 44. Coop
- NC 45. Camp Skymont Cabin site ruin, standing brick chimney.
- NC 46. Camp Skymont Cabin site ruin, standing brick chimney.
- NC 47. Camp Skymont Cabin site ruin, standing brick chimney.
- NC 48. Camp Skymont Cabin site ruin, standing brick chimney.
- NC 49. Camp Skymont Cabin site ruin, standing brick chimney.
- NC 50. Small wood-framed house with tin roof now used as shed.
- NC 51. Camp Skymont dwelling: renovated vernacular farm house, two-level, wood frame, clapboard siding, tin roof, two brick chimneys.
- NC 52. Camp Skymont dwelling: one-story renovated vernacular farm house with half basement on block foundation, wood frame, clapboard siding, tin roof, stone chimney.
- NC 53. Forrest Fristoe house, circa 1900 vernacular two-story farm house, vinyl siding, tin roof
- NC 54. Small wooden shed with asphalt shingle roof.

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NC 55. Small wooden shed with asphalt shingle roof.

NC 56. Virgil Printz house, circa 1950, one-story brick with asphalt roofing shingles.

NC 57. Shed, wooden

NC 58. Shed, wooden

NC 59. Privy

NC 60. Harry Heard tenant house, two-story, aluminum siding, asphalt roofing shingles, twin front doors.

NC 61. Shed, truck box and corrugated aluminum siding, tin roof.

NC 62. Kovalchick House, 1932 two-story vernacular farm house with 1978 addition, wood-frame, aluminum siding, tin roof.

NC 63. Kovalchick studio and garage, 1980 wood frame, aluminum siding, asphalt roof shingles.

NC 64. Barn, wood, tin roof.

NC 65. Barn, wood, tin roof

NC 66. Imler House, circa 1960, brick, split-level "Ranch-style" house, asphalt shingles, brick chimney, attached carport and enclosed sunroom, vinyl siding.

NC 67. Plywood shed with asphalt shingles.

NC 68. Broadbent house, 1991, modular home on block foundation with asphalt-shingled roof, vinyl siding.

NC 69. Broadbent garage, same construction as house.

NC 70. Small wood-frame pony shed.

NC 71. Andreae tenant house, 1960 composite of trailer and frame additions on block and slab, plywood and vinyl siding, asphalt roof shingles.

NC 72. All metal livestock barn.

NC 73. Cinderblock garage with metal roof.



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NC 74. 1990 contemporary log and wood frame cabin with cedar shingled siding and asphalt roof shingles.

NC 75. Small plywood shed.

NC 76. Woodell/Mathews House, circa 1990 Colonial-style two-story house, brick foundation, vinyl siding, asphalt roofing shingles.

NC 77. Garage, same construction.

NC 78. Jeff Cook mobile home on blocks.

NC 79. Small plywood shed

NC 80. Cook two-story equipment barn and workshop, wood frame, wood siding.

NC 81. 1970s mobile home with attached small metal geodesic dome.

NC 82. Jerome Headley house, circa 1900 vernacular farm house, two-stories, asphalt shingle siding, tin roof, brick chimney.

NC 83. Shed, concrete with tin roof

NC 84. Small shed

NC 85. Small shed

NC 86. Sky mont burial ground, 1970, one grave marker remains, others have disappeared.

NC 87. Route 340 and Overall Run Bridge, 1938, steel and concrete, arched truss construction, eligible for listing.

NC 88. Railroad bed, 20<sup>th</sup> century

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## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Of the several military engagements that took place at Milford (present-day Overall) during the Civil War, the most significant occurred on September 22, 1864. This engagement is associated with the 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign, specifically with Union Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan's victory over Confederate Maj. Gen. Jubal A. Early at Winchester on September 19, Early's retreat south up the Shenandoah Valley and Sheridan's pursuit, and Early's subsequent stand and defeat by Sheridan at Fisher's Hill on September 21. The action at Milford the following day occurred because Early had posted forces there to protect his right flank and rear at Fisher's Hill (about a dozen miles northwest of Milford), and Federal troops en route to attack Early's flank assaulted the forces at Milford. The Confederates held their ground, thereby preventing the flank attack. In the principal action at Fisher's Hill, meanwhile, Sheridan routed Early's army. The Milford engagement is considered locally significant.

## **JUSTIFICATION OF CRITERIA**

The Milford Battlefield Site is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as locally significant under Criterion A for its association with the Civil War. It meets the registration requirements outlined in the Multiple Property Documentation Form titled *The Civil War in Virginia, 1861-1865: Historic and Archaeological Resources*. Specifically, the historic landscape remains largely intact and retains integrity of location, association, setting, feeling, design, and materials. Besides the landscape, the battlefield contains remnants of historic roads, buildings, entrenchments, and rifle pits.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Milford's location and terrain made it strategically important during the Civil War. The Page Valley narrows at Overall, which (with the turnpike) contributed to its importance. To the west, a side ridge off Massanutten Mountain extends eastward to form a large horseshoe-shaped bend in the South Fork, with Overall lying just across the river from the eastern apex of the bend. In addition, the river is all but unfordable there and immediately downstream (north), and during the war there was no paralleling road on the western side of the river to permit a flanking maneuver. Furthermore, on the east, Overall Run's deep drainage with its steep slopes made the site the most easily fortified and defended position in the Page Valley. The Confederates especially took full advantage of this opportunity.

Several actions occurred at or near Milford during the Civil War. They included cavalry engagements on June 24, 1862, in early May 1864, and on October 25-26, 1864. In addition, Union and Confederate troops camped or bivouacked there at various times during the war.

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The most significant engagement at Milford, however, occurred on September 22, 1864. This engagement was essentially the final phase of the actions that followed Union Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan's victory over Confederate Maj. Gen. Jubal A. Early at the Third Battle of Winchester on September 19, 1864. Early retreated southward and occupied a strong defensive position at Fisher's Hill, then extended his lines across this narrow section of the main valley between Massanutten Mountain on the east and North Mountain on the west. Early realized, however, that he could be flanked and attacked from the rear by a force that moved up the Page Valley and crossed Massanutten Mountain at New Market Gap. He therefore sent two brigades of Maj. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry (commanded by Brig. Gen. Williams C. Wickham) to prevent such an occurrence. It was fortunate that he did, as Sheridan successfully flanked Early on the west side of the Confederate lines at Fisher's Hill, and again routed his army and sent it retreating southward for the second time in three days (Lewis, 1987).

#### Events leading to the Milford Engagement

Wickham first encountered Union cavalry of the 3d Division commanded by Brig. Gen. James H. Wilson (under Maj. Gen. Alfred T. A. Torbert) on September 20 near Front Royal. An engagement began near Crooked Run and the Front Royal Road that resulted in the Confederates being driven across the South Fork of the Shenandoah River (Hale, 1986). Wilson renewed his attacks on September 21, and part of his force succeeded in flanking the Confederates by crossing the river at Kendrick's and Richard's Fords. A running battle then ensued as the Confederates retreated up the valley (southward) toward Luray. They made two stands, and retreated from the first but held the second on the south bank of Gooney Run. An artillery duel then began that lasted well into the night (Hale, 1986). Later that evening, Wickham's troops withdrew and entrenched along the slopes immediately south of Milford, extending their lines from the river eastward to the steep slope in the vicinity of the present-day Shenandoah National Park boundary (see topographic map). The Southerners burned, or at least partially burned, the little bridge over Milford Run in their front (*Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*, vol. 43, 1, p. 441; hereafter referred to as *OR*). Some accounts refer to the bridge as if it were present during the battle (Fortier, 1993).

During the night, Brig. Gen. Wesley Merritt's cavalry reinforced Wilson, bringing total Union strength to two divisions, the First and Third (each composed of two brigades), with each division supported by three to five batteries of artillery (Kovalchick, 1998). Brig. Gen. George Armstrong Custer commanded the 1st Brigade (consisting of one New York and four Michigan regiments) of Merritt's 1st Division. After midnight, the Federals discovered Wickham's new position at Milford. The Union cavalry and horse artillery then moved southward and set up their guns (some of which were placed at the present-day location of Skymont).

#### Troop Strength

The exact strength of the Confederate forces at Milford on Sept. 22, 1864 is difficult to determine, as reliable records from this confused, fast-paced period are sketchy. Confederate forces included two brigades: Wickham's, consisting of the 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th Virginia Cavalry Regiments, and Col. William H. F. Payne's, including the 5th, 6th, and 15th Virginia Cavalry (Kovalchick, 1998). In an inspection report following the October 19, 1864 battle of Cedar Creek, Wickham's Brigade, at that point commanded by

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Col. Thomas T. Munford, was reported as having approximately 1,500 men present (Driver, 1991). Driver (1991) further states that Wickham had about as many men "present for duty as did the other two brigades of the division combined," which included Payne's and Brig. Gen. Thomas L. Rosser's brigades (Wert, 1997). Payne had only three regiments as opposed to Rosser who had four. Payne's brigade, therefore, probably contained 500 to 700 men at Milford in September. Based on these numbers, Confederate forces at Milford may have numbered as many as 2,200, though probably the actual figure was lower. The numbers in troop-strength reports listing "men present" were larger than the number of men actually available for fighting at any given time (Starr, 1991). And since both sides fought dismounted at Milford, some men would have been in the rear holding the various units' horses, and thus were unavailable for actual fighting.

The Confederate cavalry was supported at Milford by a portion of Major James Breathed's Battalion of Horse Artillery, known as the 1st Stuart Horse Artillery Battery of Virginia. Both Breathed and Capt. Philip P. Johnston were present at Milford and commanded the Southern artillery.

The Union troops at Milford included the 1st and 3d Divisions, under Merritt and Wilson, respectively. Troop-strength reports for the divisions during August 1864 noted 8,262 officers and men "present for duty" (Starr, 1991), but the actual number of men available for combat probably was less. Indeed, Sheridan reported in August 1864 that he had only 7,500 cavalymen. Less than two weeks before the battle of Milford in September, Torbert reported 6,465 officers and men "present for duty equipped" in Wilson's and Merritt's divisions (Starr, 1991). But again, this classification would have likely included a larger number of men than actual available-for-fighting troops. Also, Brig. Gen. Thomas C. Devin's 2d Brigade was absent from Merritt's division at the time of the engagement (Kovalchick, 1999 communication). The exact number of troopers in Devin's brigade at that time is unknown but, based on the relative numbers of regiments in the various Federal cavalry units, a rough reduction of perhaps 1,000 men from the division's total strength is reasonable. It is therefore likely that the Union cavalry fielded 4,000 to 5,000 officers and men and outnumbered the Confederates by about two to one.

Fighting on September 22

Wickham had posted Payne's Brigade on the left (or west) between the roadway and the river. He then positioned his own brigade to the east, with the 4<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry along the roadway and the other three regiments extending eastward to the steep slope at the foot of the Blue Ridge on the right (Stiles, 1985). Wickham then placed Munford in command of both brigades before departing for a conference with Early at Fisher's Hill. He was therefore not present during the actual fighting.

Skirmishing began very early in the morning (Driver, 1995). Torbert arrived at Milford about 11 A.M. and deployed his artillery (OR, vol. 43, I, p. 428), then began "a furious shelling" of both the Southern defensive lines and artillery, which was posted farther to the south on higher ground. The Confederate horse artillery responded "with vigor" (Fortier, 1993), and the Confederate troops delivered, in the words of Munford, "a ringing fire" (Wert, 1997).

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Early in the battle, Torbert realized the strength of the Confederate position, and the continuous skirmishing across Overall Run indicated Wickham's determination to hold against the attacks by the superior Union force. In Torbert's after-battle report, he described the strong Confederate position: "Their left rested on the Shenandoah [River], which runs so close under the [Massanutten] mountain it was impossible to turn it, and their right rested against a high mountain [Blue Ridge]. The length of their line was very short, and the banks of the creek [Overall Run] so precipitous it was impossible for the men to get across in order to make a direct attack. In addition to their naturally strong position they were posted behind loophole breastworks, which extended clear across the valley" (*OR*, vol. 43, 1, p.428). Torbert probably realized that he could have taken the position with an all-out effort given his superior force, but he also realized that driving the Confederates from their position would have resulted in a large number of Union casualties.

Other reports of the battle on September 22 indicate that the Union attack was not as heavily pressed as it could have been, with several units (such as Merritt's) largely being held in reserve and only "slightly engaged" (*OR* vol. 43, 1, p. 441). Col. James H. Kidd, serving under Custer with the 1st Brigade, 1st Division, wrote in his post-war book that his Michigan regiments were held in the rear listening to the firing, but were never committed to the fight (Kidd, 1908). He also wrote that if Custer or Merritt had been given the chance, they likely would have taken the field. No record of Custer's opinion has been found (Kovalchick, 1999).

#### Flank Attack

Later in the afternoon, while continuing the attack along the Confederate left, the Union troops initiated a flanking maneuver to the east in an attempt to dislodge them. At least two regiments of dismounted cavalry, including the 22d New York and the 1st New Hampshire (Hale, 1986), participated in the flank attack.

Munford quickly reacted to the flank attack by sending a Capt. Strother along with the buglers of the 1st, 2d, and 4th Virginia Cavalry and several squads (subdivisions of a regiment) to reinforce the men already positioned on the right flank (Stiles, 1985). The dismounted troopers took positions at fifteen-pace intervals parallel to the "wooded ravine" of Overall Run (Stiles, 1985). As the Federals advanced, Munford pulled a smaller-scale version of a trick that his opponent Wilson had used against him the day before during the foggy dawn attack near Front Royal. Munford had the buglers sound the charge as the entire line opened fire. Given all the noise, the Federals were unsure of the size of the force facing them, and before long retreated (Nanzig, 1989).

Wilson's after-battle report (*OR* vol. 43, 1, p.157) suggests that the Confederates used another ruse during the flank attack. He wrote that Col. William Wells, commanding the 2d Brigade of Wilson's division, "heard the enemy in the woods giving commands, 'load,' 'fire,' & c., not usual in the cavalry." Apparently Munford's men acted as though they had infantry in the trenches (infantry being of greater strength and thus of greater danger to the attackers). Wilson also wrote that information from pickets and civilians indicated the presence of Confederate infantry at Milford, supposedly Maj. Gen. Joseph B. Kershaw's *Brigade*, which was not in the area at that time.

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At the beginning of the flank attack, Munford asked Confederate artillery commander Breathed if he thought his cannons would be safe if he diverted troops to the east to counter the flank attack (Wert, 1997). Breathed responded, "If Billy [Col. Payne] can hold that bridge—and it looks like he's going to—I'll put a pile of canister near my guns, and all hell will never move me from this position. I'll make a horizontal shot turn in full blast for them to come through; you need not be afraid [for] my guns" (Fortier, 1993). The "bridge" Breathed referred to was no doubt the one over Overall Run, reportedly burned by the Confederates immediately prior to the battle.

#### Personal Accounts

Randolph K. McKim, the new chaplain of the 2d Virginia Cavalry, reported of the September battle at Milford that the regiment held the Union attackers off all day, "losing some of our men in the fight" (Driver, 1995). He further reported that they were "so early and so busily engaged that we had neither breakfast or dinner that day. However, we had a good supper." Another

member of the regiment, named Whittle, who was involved in the action on the right against the flank attackers, reported that they "drove the enemy line back repeatedly" (Driver, 1995).

A Pvt. White, of the 5th Virginia Cavalry, later wrote of the action at Milford: "Here there was a sharp fight with them. Our men being dismounted and deployed across the road, gave them a warm reception from behind piles of rocks, rails, & c. . . . Our regiment . . . was at first dismounted with the others, but was afterwards mounted and sent to the right in the mountains to prevent a flank attack" (Driver, 1997).

White recalled a tragic accident that occurred during the night following the battle while he was posted on the right flank (lower slope of the Blue Ridge). "We picketed here that night and lost by a sad mistake, a member of the regiment, who was killed while relieving the post, being fired upon by the picket, who was very much excited in the darkness owing to the nearness of the enemy" (Driver, 1997). Such accidents occurred when troops were on edge following a battle and knew of the enemy's aggressive posture and presence nearby.

#### Casualties

Both sides suffered casualties. Capt. Emmons, assistant-adjutant general in Merritt's Reserve Brigade, was severely wounded (*OR* vol. 43, 1, p. 490), though he reportedly survived (Kovalchick, 1999 communication).

At least two other Union soldiers were mortally wounded during the battle, apparently by Confederate artillery fire, later dying at homes in the Bentonville area (Hale, 1986). There may have been other Union losses as well (Kovalchick, 1998). An unofficial account gave Confederate casualties as two killed and six wounded. A greater number of casualties may have actually occurred, as battle records during this fast-paced period tend to be sketchy.

The light casualty figures resulted from several factors. The Confederates were well fortified with trenches and other cover, reducing their casualties considerably. Union casualties were minimized by the fact that the attacks were not pressed to the point of actual charges that would have lead to sustained close-range fighting (where small-arms fire was particularly deadly). The flank attack was an exception, but it appears to have **Section**

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been of short duration and it is doubtful that the attackers ever drew very close to the Confederate entrenchments. In addition, the troops on both sides had been fighting, almost nonstop, for several days, allowing little time for cleaning of firearms fouled by black powder. Also, the Confederates fielded only a few cannons, and Union artillery fire from their more numerous guns probably forced them to move their guns to safer, but less effective, positions in the rear. Lastly, cavalrymen generally fought less effectively dismounted than regular infantrymen, and most cavalry battles, whether fought mounted or dismounted, produced relatively few casualties.

Torbert's Withdrawal

At dark, following the repulse of the flanking forces, Torbert decided to withdraw from Milford to a position opposite McCoy's Ford several miles to north of the battlefield. Torbert later wrote that he thought "the sacrifice would be too great" to take the Confederate position (*OR* vol. 43, 1, p. 428). At the time, Torbert had no way of knowing that Early was in the process of retreating in disorder from Fisher's Hill, heavily pressed even through the night by Sheridan's forces. Early's panicked retreat did not stop until he had withdrawn into Brown's Gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains near Port Republic (Lewis, 1987). His loss at Fisher's Hill, and subsequent retreat, presented a grand opportunity for Torbert to figure prominently in the destruction of the Confederate Army of the Valley if he had carried out Sheridan's orders to move up the Page Valley and over New Market Gap.

Sheridan was bitterly disappointed by Torbert's failure. But, surprisingly, given Sheridan's temperament, he took no harsh action against Torbert, though he never forgave him. In a communication to Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant regarding his victory at Fisher's Hill prior to learning of Torbert's defeat, Sheridan stated; "If General Torbert has pushed down the Luray Valley according to my directions, he will achieve great results."

The next day Sheridan sent another message to Grant, saying "I have been disappointed in the cavalry operations which were to have formed a part of this battle [Fisher's Hill]." And the following day from Harrisonburg, in a final mention of the incident to Grant, Sheridan wrote that "Torbert's cavalry overtook me this evening. Its operations in the Luray Valley, on which I calculated so much, were an entire failure" (*OR* vol. 43, 1, p. 27-29). Sheridan had his chief of staff tell Torbert, "If you had gone down the Luray Valley, as the general thought you would, we would have captured nearly all of Early's army" (*OR* vol. 43, 2, p. 56).

Most of Torbert's forces camped in the vicinity of Bentonville on the night of September 22, withdrawing farther northward during the day on September 23, 1864. Merritt proceeded through Front Royal and on to Cedarville, and Wilson proceeded to Buckton Ford on the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. At about 4 P.M. on September 23, Torbert finally learned of Early's defeat at Fisher's Hill (*OR* vol. 43, 1, p. 428). Sheridan's chief of staff directed Torbert "to push down the Luray Valley without regard to horseflesh" (*OR* vol. 43, 2, p. 156). Torbert ordered an immediate return to Milford, and his troops arrived there at dawn the next day.

September 24 Engagement

Torbert found that the Confederates had withdrawn all but Payne's brigade to Luray. The larger and this time more determined Union force then attacked, and after "a stint of fighting" the Union attackers pushed

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“the Yankees advanced the next morning in large numbers upon our small regiment; we retired slowly and leisurely back, and camped that night near Luray” (Driver, 1997).

Two companies of the 5th Virginia Cavalry, including Company I, commanded by Lt. William C. Carrington, and a company commanded by a Capt. Fitzhugh, were ordered to hold a mountain road on the Confederate flank. The road's location is unknown, but presumably it lay along the Confederate right flank or east side of the battlefield (adjacent to the slopes of the Blue Ridge). The two companies held it successfully, but when the main portion of the brigade was pushed back, they were attacked from the flank and rear by a Federal regiment, with the loss of a dozen men as prisoners. Fitzhugh and Carrington reportedly escaped by hiding in a stream. Payne later told Fitzhugh that his defense of the mountain road had prevented the capture of the brigade's horses (Driver, 1997), which were presumably being held somewhere to the rear of the Confederate battle lines along the turnpike.

Following Payne's retreat, Torbert marched southward, engaging the Confederate cavalry in a running fight to near Luray. There the Federals inflicted more severe losses (*OR* vol. 43, 1, p. 429), but the opportunity for the grand victory that Sheridan had envisioned had been lost.

In his memoirs, Sheridan mentioned the Milford incident, saying “the only drawback [at Fisher's Hill] was with the cavalry, and to this day I have been unable to account satisfactorily for Torbert's failure. No doubt, Wickham's position near Milford was a strong one, but Torbert ought to have made a fight. . . . His impotent attempt not only chagrined me very much, but occasioned much unfavorable comment throughout the army” (Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs* [from Wert, 1997]).

Because Sheridan notoriously assigned blame for failure to subordinates while excusing himself from responsibility, it is difficult to assess the accuracy of his comments, especially since he was not at the scene of the action at Milford. Although Torbert did not succeed in turning Early's right flank, Maj. Gen. George Crook flanked the left of the Confederate line and contributed to the rout that followed. The Union victory removed Early's force as a serious threat to Federal domination of the Shenandoah Valley for a month, until the Confederate general surprised Sheridan's army at Cedar Creek on October 19. From the Confederate viewpoint, Wickham's and Payne's stand at Milford at least kept a bad situation from becoming worse.



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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Milford Battlefield  
Page and Warren Counties

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5. 17/731260/4297500
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BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Starting at Point A at the mouth of an intermittent stream on the eastern bank South Fork of the Shenandoah River; thence northerly along the riverbank to Point B at the mouth of a stream on the eastern bank of the river; thence northeast up the stream to Point C at a fork in the stream; thence southeast up the stream to Point D at a trail; thence southeasterly up the trail to a ridge at Point E on the Shenandoah National Park boundary; thence south along the park boundary to Point E at a gate on a vehicle trail; thence southwest along the park boundary to Point F at a ravine and intermittent stream; thence northwest down the intermittent stream to the beginning at Point A.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The Milford Battlefield boundary follows natural features such as watercourses and high terrain, and encloses the area in which the engagement of September 22–24, 1864, occurred. That area is based on the sources cited in Section 9, including a contemporary troop-movement map published in the *Atlas to Accompany the Official Records*. The boundary follows natural features, specifically watercourses and high ground, that served to confine the area of conflict during the engagement. The natural features include the South Fork of the Shenandoah River, several streams, and mountain ridges. The maneuvers directly related to the engagement, the positions occupied by the Union and Confederate troops engaged, and the contributing resources such as rifle pits, are located within the battlefield boundary.

