Lew Wallace: An Unsung Hoosier Hero

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Thesis title: Lew Wallace: An Unsung Hoosier Hero
Intended date of commencement: May 10, 2014

Thesis adviser(s): B. Bigelow
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Certified by: Judith Harper Mardel

Magna Cum Laude
High Honors in History
Honors in Political Science
Lew Wallace: An Unsung Hoosier Hero

A Thesis
Presented to the Department of History
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
and
The Honors Program
of
Butler University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for Graduation Honors

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April 28, 2014
Introduction

The way in which the American Civil War is remembered varies from one region to another. People, places, and events bring moments of pride and sorrow for those who remember, and distinct figures rise and fade into memory over time. Some individuals, however, cling to their place in history through the words of those who remember them. For the state of Indiana, I feel as if one individual in question is overlooked. We remember Benjamin Harrison, the future president, born in Ohio, serving as a colonel to the 70th Indiana, and eventually a general over an entire brigade. We remember Governor Oliver Morton, the man who led Indiana politically through the great Civil War. However, only a handful of people remember Lew Wallace, who had also been a military leader, a politician, and a widely renowned author. Wallace had mingled with all of these highlighted figures of the nineteenth century: he was Adjutant General under Oliver Morton, he was a Major General under Ulysses S. Grant, he served alongside William Sherman, he had been swayed to the Republican party because of his experiences with Abraham Lincoln, and he had negotiated with infamous outlaws such as Billy the Kid. He fought valiantly in many battles during the Civil War, his actions at the Battle of Monocacy arguably saving the capital from Confederate capture. He had been an established politician and lawyer, and he had held such positions as the governor of the New Mexico Territory and the United States Minister to the Ottoman Empire. He had written the book Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ, which made him a renowned author of the century. Despite his impressive list of accomplishments, it is difficult to see how he had been so easily forgotten. When historians discuss the history of Indiana, Lew
Wallace gets little more than a mention. When students learn about the history of their state, Lew Wallace is not a part of these lessons. If you ask Hoosiers who Lew Wallace was, the response is often a blank stare accompanied with a shrug. The purpose of this writing is to highlight key moments in Mr. Lew Wallace’s life; to demonstrate how and where this man had made a real impact on American history; to discuss his strengths and accomplishments as well as his flaws and shortcomings; but ultimately to shed some light on a figure who I believe absolutely deserves to be remembered as an indispensable figure of Hoosier history during the nineteenth century.

No proper history can be written without the use of primary source material. In order to answer the question of who Lew Wallace was and why he should matter to Hoosiers today, primary sources such as Lew Wallace’s autobiography, assorted letters from him and other major figures of the time period, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*\(^1\), and his works of fiction will be used. It goes almost without saying that any primary source will come to the table with its own inherent biases. It is because of this that Wallace’s autobiography will be used in conjunction with a handful of other primary sources from the time period. Drawing from several voices of the period at once will offer a richer image of what may have actually happened. Records such as the OR are stocked full of military orders, and are generally trusted as accurate. The issue of which orders were received when, however, brings up the concept of “fog of war” that will prove crucial to Wallace’s experiences.\(^2\) In terms of Wallace’s works of literature, I hope to use them as

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1. The acronym for a massive collection of military orders, letters, and reports made by both armies.
2. Fog of War is a term that refers to situational uncertainty during military engagements. This can be uncertainties about the position of allies, enemies, as well as intent of both parties.
indications or parallels to his own life. The historical validity of these sources is essentially empty considering it is fiction, but the text itself gives the reader some insight to the thoughts and feelings of Wallace himself.

Early Life

The interests and skills that Lew Wallace cultivated throughout his life were not concepts that were foreign to him at a young age. The thrills that later drove Wallace to greatness – the military, drawing, writing, and reading – were very much present throughout the first sixteen years of his life. With little doubt, Wallace developed these skills until he ultimately claimed the success that he deserved. He was very much determined, confident, and often stubborn about how he wished to conduct himself. These traits are visible when he was only a child. Throughout his childhood there are clear indications that Wallace has a distinct love for the military, for drawing, for reading, for writing, and a desire to be a story book hero that accomplishes great deeds in his time.

In terms of his lineage, Wallace came from a family that consistently mingled with figures of history. His grandfather, Andrew Wallace, moved to Cincinnati, Ohio from Pennsylvania. Andrew Wallace, a surveyor, was friends with William Henry Harrison. This friendship would prove beneficial to the Wallace family, especially David

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Wallace. Interestingly enough, Lew's grandmother was the niece of John Paul Jones, the famous revolutionary, and was from the state of Virginia.\textsuperscript{4} Andrew Wallace moved his family from Cincinnati to Brookville, Indiana. Lew's mother was also from Indiana, and was the third daughter of John Test, a judge and politician of the fledgling state.\textsuperscript{5} The Tests had moved to Indiana from Pennsylvania, although John Test was originally from New Jersey. At any rate, this was the background that Wallace found himself born into, and he had remained in the town that his grandfather had moved his family to nearly a decade earlier throughout the early portion of his upbringing.

Lew Wallace was born in Brookville, Indiana on April 10, 1827. He spent the first five years of his life here.\textsuperscript{6} As opposed to being filled with the constant action and adventure that Wallace would soon favor, these first five years of his life were fairly uneventful. He referred to them as "days of ignorance".\textsuperscript{7} The adventurous Wallace would blossom, however, but it occurred after David Wallace, father of Lew, moved his family to Covington, Indiana in the summer of 1832.\textsuperscript{8}

While the family was moving from Brookville to Covington, David Wallace was busy fulfilling his duty to the state of Indiana. When the family had arrived in Covington, Wallace had written that "the Lieutenant Governor of the state was quite content with his new residence".\textsuperscript{9} Certainly no man receives such a position without being deserving to it to some extent. David Wallace, son of Andrew Wallace, had the background that won

\textsuperscript{4} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 2.
\textsuperscript{5} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 5.
\textsuperscript{6} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 8.
\textsuperscript{7} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 8.
him a political position. He had attended and graduated from the United States Military Academy, or West Point, in 1821. He had actually received the honor because William Henry Harrison, a friend of his father, had given one of his own son’s appointments to the academy to David instead. Immediately afterward he instructed students as professor of mathematics for three years. He then resigned his post after he had felt that he had repaid the government for his education. Although David had not served in any major U. S. conflicts, his involvement in the military would attract the eyes of his son Lew, who had fond memories of his father and his military training. He wrote: “Almost the earliest of my recollections is the gray uniform of Cadet Wallace. The small tail and shining bullet buttons of the coat captured my childish fancy. None of the good man’s after honors exalted him in my eyes like that scant garment.”, and it is here that Wallace’s love of the military began.

At age six, Wallace began his education. However, unable to stay put in the classroom, Wallace began to practice truancy, something that he would continue to do throughout his education. Unfortunately for the young boy, truancy was quick to earn him a beating. He wrote: “he [his Irish instructor] made a playground for his practice of my back. With him lying and thieving were trifles light as air compared with truancy.” This behavior of cutting class and exploring his surroundings is the kind of free spirited and intensely curious Wallace that would come later. His stubbornness to do what he wanted, not necessarily what he should do, labeled him a non-conformist while he was an

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10 Early Life, page 206.
adult. For now though, it seemed that Wallace was much more intrigued with natural landscapes than with textbooks and canings.

There are a couple important discoveries that Wallace made while he was at this school. Firstly, the boy discovered that he could draw. "I could draw a portrait in profile or full face. Thereafter I was kept busy." His love for drawing took him away from the real purpose of the classroom, and he eventually grew indifferent towards school itself. He fondly remembered students bringing him paper and pencil and asking for portraits, as well as his growing distaste for learning and being caned. His love for learning did not return until he was shown the power of literature.

The second important event of the time period was the Black Hawk War. This ongoing fight with the Native Americans truly drew Wallace's attention because it meant images of war. He discussed that final moment where the volunteers collected their bags, their rifles, and marched off as a procession of civilians sent them on their way. He wrote: "There was no school, to be sure, while that scene was enacting, and I saw it all, and was filled with it." After watching these men form up and march out to defend the region from the Native Americans, Wallace's imagination ran wild. He began drawing extensive pictures of battlefields, stuffed full of men fighting for their lives. "My hours in the contracted academy were divided between making pictures and fighting battles on my paper slate." The imaginary battles became more elaborate, and Wallace seemed to realize that the men lining up to face one another led to the more chaotic of battles. This

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was opposed to the manner in which he had seen soldiers, because they had marched in columns of two.

Wallace’s love for the military became quite personal when his father raised a force to defend Covington from another potential attack when he was seven. The death of a few settlers in Illinois by more Black Hawks prompted David Wallace to begin training a militia within his town. The men dressed in the way that many militias did during the time period. They had worn uniforms of varying quality and color, but generally they were seen as similar to one another. Lew reflected that when a group of men had come to collect his father, he was “too overcome with awe to follow them, except at a more than respectable distance.” Another vivid memory the child Wallace had of these events was the men gathering in the town center. They had drilled and marched, and he had watched; his imagination pouring romantic ideas of war and glory to the forefront of his thoughts. Finally, there came the day where the militia, led by Colonel Wallace, marched off with the American flag billowing about before them. “They took the road to the river-bottom, and over their heads in the going I saw for the first time the flutter and stream of colors, or, more simply, the flag which was to become better known to me as ‘Old Glory’.”

Wallace wrote that as soon as this militia had fired their muskets, the thunderous noise had sent him sprawling back towards his home. Assuming this did occur, it functioned as the boy’s first glimpse of the darker portion of battles that he had not yet seen.

Despite his constant truancy, Wallace’s early education did serve a proper purpose for him. The Irishman that had been his schoolteacher, aside from the beatings he

frequently gave to Wallace, had also managed to teach him how to read. Lew had an incredible passion for reading stories, for imagining the characters within them, and also having a strong empathy and compassion for the characters. After he had finished his first book, Wallace wrote “The craving it[reading] awoke is not yet satisfied.”

When young Wallace began to read stories about war, his imagination overtook him once again. With the company of his older brother, William, and some friends that lived nearby, the children reenacted the stories that they had read. They created helmets with pasteboard, swords with seasoned clapboards, hazel-shoots into shields, pretended ironweeds were horses and lances, and would conduct major campaigns against the enemy in eight hour segments. Wallace wrote “Then in deadliest earnest, we went to war with the haughty English.” One day, Lew would go to war, and his appreciation for those moments of glory would drive him to both success and failure.

Only a few years later, dramatic changes occurred to Wallace’s home life. Firstly, his mother died of tuberculosis. Next, his older brother and fond playmate, William, was sent off to Wabash College. Finally, Lew was sent to the countryside, away from the towns that his father believed distracted him from his studies. Lew learned to enjoy his new life in the country, living with the Kerrs on a farm just six miles north of Crawfordsville. On the farm, he learned how to fire a rifle and hunt. How predictable it would be for the now older Wallace to reach for the weapon that all of the soldiers in his drawings carried on their shoulders. Instead of going to war, however, Lew took his rifle out and hunted small game. He was determined to learn, and he grew quite skilled at his

22 Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 44.
craft. "In brief time I attained singular cleverness as a shot, and, as I managed to keep the
table fairly supplied with rarities in the line of game, my indulgent guardians not only
winked at my wanderings, they condoned my aversion to work, and actually supplied me
with ammunition." Wallace’s time in the countryside did not only lead to his ability to
hunt. He also had read Plutarch while he was here, his thirst for books only growing in
intensity.

In 1837, David Wallace was elected governor of Indiana. Consequently, the
family was uprooted once more from Crawfordsville to Indianapolis. It was here where
the curious Wallace gained a new-found obsession with painting. This was due to a Jacob
Cox, a tinner who spent his spare time painting. Curiosity got the best of Wallace and he
stumbled into the man’s studio one day, but the intrusion did not cause any problems.
This was due to the fact that David Wallace had been present as Mr. Cox had agreed to
paint his portrait. Being one who enjoyed drawing and sketching, it was no wonder that
the young Wallace took such an interest to painting. What was it but sketching on a larger
scale, and with color. Young Wallace had found a new reason not to attend his lessons.
"We became good friends, and not a few of my truancies were passed watching him at
work." Armed with a new trade that worked in combination with a vivid imagination,
Wallace’s attraction to the arts gave him additional problems at school. There was an
instance where he had drawn a rabbit on the school’s chalkboard, and was beaten
severely for doing so. This, coupled with his father’s disapproval of art, seemed to

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23 Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 44.
24 Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 47.
weaken the overwhelming and distracting influence of painting.\textsuperscript{26} Lew did not give up the skill entirely as he had continued to sketch throughout his life.

Soon after he had moved away from painting, Wallace replaced the passion with something that I imagine his father found much more tolerable. That yearning to read and devour books that had existed within the boy had been reawakened when he had visited the library of the statehouse. When walking down the aisles of books, Wallace wrote that he had “an intense desire to handle separately every book in the array, exactly as one boy always wants to feel the pocket-knife and marbles he sees in the hands of another boy.”\textsuperscript{27} Wallace had become the most common visitor to this library, and was enthralled by fiction like never before. Although his school marks suffered due to his unyielding attention to the wrong books, it seems fair to state that this love for fiction would bring him success in a manner that his academics may not have.

Reading is only the first of two skills Wallace needed in his future. At age thirteen, he moved to Centerville, Indiana, where he found a teacher that was able to keep him inside of the classroom. “Professor Hoshour was the first to observe a glimmer of writing capacity in me.”, wrote Wallace, and it’s definitely a good thing he had.\textsuperscript{28} Whereas his previous teachers had either given up on the boy or attempted to beat compliance into him, Samuel Hoshour instead understood where Lew’s interests lay. He was able to cultivate Lew’s writing ability, and even encouraged it, which led to a much more positive learning experience. Mr. Hoshour walked his pupil through many stories and literatures, and had him focus almost exclusively on the ability to read and write.

\textsuperscript{26} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 52.  
\textsuperscript{27} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 52-53.  
\textsuperscript{28} Lew Wallace, Autobiography, page 56.
well. When reflecting Lew writes, "Now I know wherein I am most obliged to you—unconsciously, perhaps, but certainly you taught me how to educate myself up to every practical need." He called this year the turning point in his life, and surely without it Wallace would have had a much poorer education than what he had ended up with. This same Professor Samuel Hoshour later became an instructor at North Western Christian University, which is now known as Butler University.

One of the most important moments for Lew Wallace as an adolescent was his experiences within the literary society in Centerville that he became a part of at age fifteen and sixteen. Although this society was far from a formal club, it gave Wallace the opportunity to practice reading, writing, and speaking. It covered subjects such as fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. Ultimately, it gave him good practice for his future professions as both a lawyer and a writer. This society, however, also led him to begin writing for the local newspaper. Doing well here, he decided to attempt his first book of fiction. He chose to write a story of love and war, which seems appropriate considering his love of romanticism, and, for the most part, completes the story. He noted that the book was at least two hundred and fifty pages, but he had ultimately lost the manuscript and could not find it after he had returned from Mexico.

The last important moment of Wallace's childhood was his attempt to join the conflict in Texas in 1842. He was only sixteen, and the idea of war had drawn his attention. He, along with his school friend, sailed down south and joined the conflict alongside the Texans. Here one can see that Wallace's desire for military glory, for a tale

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of heroism of his own, drove him to do something rather unreasonable and foolish. While traveling south from Indianapolis, the two boys were caught. Wallace was dragged back to Indianapolis in shame.\footnote{Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 77.} Although he had failed, this definitely shows a piece of Wallace's character that would never diminish. When there was a conflict, Wallace wanted to be there. Also, the immense stubbornness and tenacity of Wallace's character continued to drive him throughout his career. His desires for military glory and heroism had a large effect on his actions throughout the American Civil War.

Throughout his childhood, Wallace had frequently been drawn into a subject: reading, writing, drawing, painting, or hunting, and allowed it to fuel his passions. His imagination ran wild, and his yearning for new stories and romanticized accounts was very overpowering. All of these crucial moments in his childhood, despite the fact that they generally kept him from the classroom, functioned as the foundation to his actions, beliefs, and interests. He would enlist in the military and attempt to be that glorified hero he yearned to become; he would become a politician and give powerful speeches; he would become a governor in the West, where he had read so many stories of lawlessness and heroics; and he would compose and publish a handful of books, one of which would become one of the most well-known of the century.
Early Adulthood and Mexican-American War

The 1840’s and 1850’s for Lew Wallace were full of the subjects he enjoyed. He began reading about Mexico, traveled to Mexico as a soldier, began writing the manuscripts that would one day be his first published work of fiction, and slowly but surely be swept into the movements that would ignite and become the American Civil War. These were his early attempts at being a soldier, a writer, and even a politician. These were the moments where he had to begin becoming his own person, and leave the shelter of his father’s home. These years definitely demonstrated that Wallace, despite the fact that he did not receive a university education, would conduct himself quite well in the field of soldiering, writing, law, and politics.

Sixteen-year-old Wallace, now considered an adult, began to seriously generate ideas for his own work of fiction. He had taken a job of writing and organizing cases and other legal work in Indianapolis under the county clerk, Robert Duncan.33 In his spare time, he chose to relieve himself of the reality of law and move towards the same subjects that had given him comfort throughout his life thus far. With the extra money he had made from work, where he had been making about eighteen dollars a week, Wallace purchased himself a rifle. He used his weapon to hunt squirrels outside of the city, and he likely did so thinking fondly of his time on the farms north of Crawfordsville.34 However, this was not all Wallace would do in his spare time. He began to conceptualize his own work of fiction. Drawing the idea after reading William Prescott’s *Conquest of Mexico*,

33 Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 85.
34 Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 86.
Wallace began taking notes on sources from Prescott’s references to develop his own story with his own research. This would be the beginning of his work that he would publish in 1873, almost thirty years later, called The Fair God. He did not have any idea where this project would eventually lead him though, and had mostly done this work for his own entertainment and enjoyment. “There was no thought of publication in the beginning, and during the years until its completion the work continued what it was at first—my reserve pastime.”

Wallace was never a character for following the paths that were laid out before him. He always seemed to be a part of this outside group, looking into the clique-filled world around him. One of the first examples of his experiences in such a role came when he became a member of a militia company called the Marion Rifles in 1843. Yes, Wallace joined the group because of his love of the military dress, the processions, and the potential moment where he would be called into active duty. However, there was more to this than that.

The Marion Rifles were formed as a second local militia, behind the City Greys. Naturally, there was some competition between these two militia companies. The Greys were led by a captain named Thomas Morris, a recent graduate of West Point. They were middle-aged men who were established and probably moderately wealthy. Wallace joined the Marion Rifles, the younger and poorer militia company. The distinction between the two militia companies was quite clear: the Greys were dressed well and carried muskets with bayonets and the Marions wore considerably less in terms of

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uniforms and were carrying antiquated weaponry. Here was Wallace, a young man, and was the position of the man who was distinctly of a lower class. This was his first engagement with a West Point graduate, and he continued to interact with these graduates, typically in negative experiences, throughout the remainder of his life.

There was a redeeming moment for the Marion Rifles and Lew Wallace during a staged reenactment on Washington Street. The Marion Rifles, being teased by the finer-tuned and well-established City Greys, were waiting for an opportunity to find some sort of revenge. This mock battle was where it all occurred. The Marion Rifles were to flee after exchanging fire with the City Greys; however, the order to retreat never came. The Marions continued to fire, crawled along the ground, took prisoners, and ultimately forced the Greys to retreat. Yes, this was a mock battle, but it was clear that this was the moment where Wallace learns that he truly wished to be a soldier. “It put a final finish upon the taste for military life by turning it into a genuine passion. It was my initiation into the Ancient and Honorable Order of Soldiers.”

By age eighteen, Wallace was doing well, but had a lack of direction in his life. He wrote: “The ego in me began its wrestle with the question, probably the most serious of life to every one not in condition to exist without labor—what am I to do with myself?” Wallace responded by beginning to study law. He studied under his father, much like his older brother William. Of course, during this time, Wallace was still indulging himself with his true passions. He found the time to continue reading and

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38 Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 94.
41 Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 98.
learning from Infantry Tactics written by Winfield Scott as well as writing his own composition *The Fair God* in his leisure.\(^{42}\) Wallace became rather good at practicing law due to his father who had systematically taught him the trade, and was quite content with practicing as he wrote more about Mexico. However, a true distraction took him much further away than a powerfully written book; war with Mexico was coming, and Wallace was yearning to answer its call.

In 1846, the United States sent troops under General Zachary Taylor to sit on the banks of the Rio Grande. It led to the Mexicans attacking, and the outbreak of war. Meanwhile, in Indiana, Wallace was applying to get his license to practice law. However, he was also determined to receive every bit of news about the war. "I was hungry for war. Had I not been reading about it all my life? And had not all I had read about it wrought in me that battle was the climax of the sublime and terrible, and that without at least one experience of the kind no life could be perfect?"\(^{43}\) Wallace fell in love with this wish to go to war. So much so, that he neglected his studies and did not adequately prepare for his license exams. "The weeks which should have been devoted, day and night, to persistent review had been taken up with Scott's Infantry Tactics. The precious contents of the law-books, when I tried to look back over them, refused to rise at call."\(^{44}\) In the true spirit of his character, Wallace was unable to focus on what mattered in the present. He could have received this license, gone to war in Mexico, and returned to practice law. Licenses did not expire. Instead, his romantic mind, stuffed full of fictional accounts of

\(^{42}\) Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 94, 98.
\(^{43}\) Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 103.
valor and war, was too busy meticulously digging through the news, waiting for the moment that he could enlist in the United States Army.

Lew did sit for his exam, despite the lack of preparation he had conducted the months leading up to this moment. He finished the exam, packed up his things, and left a single note. He stated “I hope the foregoing answers will be to your satisfaction more than they are to mine; whether they are or not, I shall go to Mexico.” Wallace’s answers were not sufficient to pass the exam, and really that was all he needed to hear. His mind was far away from Indianapolis at this point anyways, as he went directly to Washington Street, and opened a small recruiting office. Within his little rented room was a desk, an American flag, and a sign that read “For Mexico. Fall in.” Wallace’s company filled up in three days. He would become the company’s second lieutenant, making twenty-five dollars a month. It was never about the money for Wallace though, as he would embark on a journey that he held very high hopes for. He would finally see it himself, see the battle, march with his company, and hear the sounds of drums and instruments. He would be marched through cities, victorious, and experience the glory of a soldier he had always wanted. This was likely what he imagined, but it was not what he would receive.

Lew Wallace, the second lieutenant, was part of Company H, 1st Indiana. He, along with the other regiments from Indiana, left in July for New Orleans. The crucial moment for Wallace was the words given by his father prior to departure. He said “Goodbye. Come back a man.” Off he went, reaching New Orleans, and then continuing into

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47 Sword and Pen, page 24.
Mexico, and what he hoped was a soon to come battle. Camped near the mouth of the Rio Grande, Wallace instead found himself in the midst of poor camp conditions and sickness. In his autobiography, he wrote “I remember yet the sense of desolateness that shocked me viewing the place for the first time.” It was no exaggeration. Men were commonly in states of sickness. Wallace, being the lowest ranking officer, had to break the boredom of camp life with drills. The men became weaker and weaker, and the sickness passed over the unnamed camp like a plague. Men died so often proper funerals could not be given. Coffins were in short supply, and men began being buried in blankets. What Wallace found here was not what he had expected. Great battles full of acts of heroism and valor were replaced with dull camp life plagued with sickness. There were no heroic deaths for Wallace to see here; instead, he saw men fall to inadequate sanitation and the lack of proper provisions. These images, however, did not seem to tarnish his romantic idealization of war. He’d cling onto it throughout his career.

At last, the regiment was given the order to travel to Walnut Springs, where General Zachary Taylor was camped. However, within a day’s march away the majority of the regiment was turned back to the plague-ridden camp that had been their home. A few companies, including company H, continued to move to Matamoros under the orders of General Taylor. The visit to the town was essentially unprotected, as the only meager force of opposition fled before the companies could even enter the town. Soon after, the companies headed to Walnut Springs and to General Taylor’s camp. Wallace did get to see General Taylor the day he had arrived, and he reflects that the man was so poorly

49 Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 123.
dressed and of such poor stature that he did not even recognize him. "I saw a man of low stature, dressed in a blouse unbuttoned and so faded it could not be said to have been of any color, a limp-bosomed shirt certainly not white, a hang-down collar without a tie of any kind, trousers once light blue now stripeless, rough marching shoes, foxy from long wear—such the dress of the man." It is strange to see Wallace speaking so poorly of a man that would soon become the president of the United States; however, briefly it did last. It seems that Wallace was bitter for the manner in which the general had treated his men. He did not get to participate in any major engagements, his regiment spent the majority of their time in a disgusting camp, or marching back and forth without any orders to engage. Wallace wanted a leader that would give him the opportunity to fight in a battle and become a man. He wanted these kinds of experiences, but instead saw little more than the aftermath of battles. I think it is fair to state that perhaps this is the reason why Wallace portrayed Taylor in such a poor light.

Wallace had two more noteworthy experiences before the war concluded, and he then had to go home. The first was when a captain of the 3rd Indiana asked Colonel James Drake if he could have a riding companion as he hurried off to rejoin his regiment. Wallace was that man. "Here was another chance for me. Borrowing a mustang and riding-gear, I was on the road with the captain within thirty minutes. A double-barrelled shotgun of caliber to carry a service cartridge lay across my lap." Wallace made a stop at a Kentuckian's house, where he had a simple meal of biscuits and onions. He also collected news of where Taylor had been heading before he headed off again towards the positions of the 3rd Indiana. He would not make it on time. Instead, he found men of the

53 Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 159; Sword and Pen, page 32.
2nd Indiana, who gave him stories of the conflict. Wallace rushed onward, and was able to view the wreckage of Buena Vista after the Union victory. He reflected: "There the wrecks still lay in awful significance—dead men and horses, bayonets, accoutrements, broken muskets, hats, caps, cartridge-paper, fragments of clothing. The earth and rocks were in places black with blood, here a splotch, there a little rill." Soon after, the Indiana regiments were ordered home. Wallace did not receive his battle full of acts of valor. Instead, he had to rebury dead men of his regiment who had died previously and had since been re-surfaced. He wrote: "The sorrowful duty done, I lingered to take a farewell look at the shifting cemetery." After these moments, Wallace boarded a boat that took him back to New Orleans. Soon after, he found himself back in Indiana, despite the fact that a fellow officer had robbed him of his pay. Thus ends Lew Wallace’s experiences during the Mexican-American War. They were nothing of what he expected them to be, but his love and yearning for military glory was untouched.

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54 Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 164; Sword and Pen, page 33.
The next decade of Wallace's life was quite enjoyable, and he would find himself living a happy civilian's life. During this time, however, he'd turn back to writing, law, and enter the field of politics. Never complacent, Wallace continued to find topics he enjoyed and dedicate himself to them. During this decade, however, Lew was definitely waiting for another opportunity to become a soldier. The last experience had left him disappointed, and he was surely ready for the dreamed experiences he wanted. He would briefly run a newspaper, find love and a wife, begin to practice law, and begin a new political career in the meantime, and the connections he'd make here would lead him directly into the next chapters of his life.

Lew Wallace did not forget people who he believed wronged him. The first of these individuals, who may have undeservingly received Wallace's bitterness, was Zachary Taylor. Immediately after returning from the great Mexican-American War that had been so fruitless for Wallace, he had accepted a job running a newspaper that sided with the Free Soil Party and slandered Zachary Taylor of the Whigs. This paper lasted six months, and was printed by Wallace himself in Indianapolis. He, and the man who ran the financial side of the endeavor, had no assistance. When Wallace was motivated, he was absolutely determined. The paper ran a large amount of anti-Taylor sentiment. Yes, Zachary Taylor did win the presidency in 1848, but he did not win Indiana. Lew reflected and wrote: "General Taylor became president, but not — and I devoutly thanked God for

56 Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 204.
57 Lew Wallace, Autobiography, page 204.
it — not with the electoral vote of Indiana."\(^58\) When the election ended, the paper was of no use to Wallace and his partner. They were not reimbursed for their services as promised, and Wallace walked away from the experience thinking "I knew how to punctuate, an acquisition that abides with me. Did the worst come, I had the rudiments of a trade."\(^59\)

The private life of Lew Wallace took a turn for the better as well, as he met the woman that would become his wife in 1848. Her name was Susan Elston, and she was a daughter of Major Isaac Elston of the 1\(^{st}\) Indiana.\(^60\) He met his wife at a party held by Henry Lane, the lieutenant colonel of the 1\(^{st}\) Indiana, in Crawfordsville.\(^61\) He recalled his first encounter with his wife, fifty years prior to writing, quite fondly: "I can blow the time aside lightly as smoke from a cigar, and have a return of that evening with Miss Elston, and her blue eyes, wavy hair, fair face, girlish manner, delicate person, and witty flashes to vivify it."\(^62\) Wallace did not come with his prospects, and he was judged poorly for his behavior as a child. Despite these faults, eventually he won Susan’s approval and they married.

Wallace practiced law, his second attempt at the exam much more fruitful than that of his past. The judge, Isaac Blackford, signed a simple note to Wallace along with his license. Blackford had been one who Wallace had hassled as a child, and the judge’s

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\(^58\) Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 204.
\(^59\) Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 205.
\(^60\) Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 207.
\(^61\) Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 207; Major Elston moved to Indiana from New Jersey.
\(^62\) Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 207.
friendliness prompted him to apologize for his actions. Blackford accepted the apology, and Wallace had found a friend in his new field of law.63

Easily seeing that there were already too many established law offices in Indianapolis, Wallace chose to move somewhere with more demand. He returned to a place he had such fond memories of, Covington, where he would be considerably more useful as an attorney. Covington is also relatively close to Crawfordsville and his soon to be wife, and so it serves multiple purposes. He began his profession with a meager seventy-five cents to his name, but began to fair very well.64 This was largely due to the friendships he had made with Edward Hannegan, senator and a friend of his father, and Daniel Voorhees, another lawyer of Covington. Both of these men were Democrats, and it explains his latter political affiliation. Dan had often came to his practice, and Lew had played the fiddle for him. He threw himself in a chair and exclaimed: “Come, now, put your work up and let’s have the fiddle.”65

The most important person that led to Wallace’s name being known in Covington was that of Joseph Ristine, also a Democrat.66 He had been a county clerk at the time, and asked Lew for his assistance with record-keeping. No stranger to the task, Wallace began to work for Ristine along with his practice, and was soon on his feet again. He wrote: “At the end of the session I paid off all bills against me, bought a new suit of clothes out and in, and had a firm friend besides.”67 Wallace had always been defiantly loyal to those who treated him well. During the Constitutional Convention of 1850, Judge Ristine had

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63 Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 213; Sword and Pen, page 36
put his name into the ballot to represent the county. Wallace had anonymously threw his support to Ristine in the papers, and the contender then attacked Wallace in the same paper.\textsuperscript{68} There would be a debate, open to the public, where the judge and his contender could discuss why they were more deserving of being elected. This is where Wallace puts his name on the map. The citizens of the area were described as settlers primitive in habits. “Instead of taking their quarrels into court, they settled them on the spot, resorting to their fists.”\textsuperscript{69} Wallace did not want to be seen as a coward, and so he temporarily adopted the habits of those around him. When he was giving an introduction for Ristine, the contender Mallory interrupted him by grabbing his arm. “Hardly had I entered upon it when Mallory advanced and protested that I was not a candidate. In his eagerness he laid a hand on my arm. That was justification enough, and I struck him.”\textsuperscript{70} Wallace was fined, and the crowd, seeing his actions as just, immediately paid his sum. Wallace’s practice was never vacant from that moment on.

One day, Voorhees entered Wallace’s practice and asked him to accompany him to Danville, Illinois. What appeared to be a meaningless trip to another city in order to watch the court sessions would turn into a very important moment in Lew Wallace’s life. It was in Danville, Illinois where Wallace had entered a tavern where several men were engaged in story-telling and exchanging anecdotes. They were three men from Indiana, including Hanegar, as well as two men from Illinois that Lew did not know.\textsuperscript{71} He described one man as “the gauntest, quaintest, and most positively ugly man who had

\textsuperscript{68} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 219.
\textsuperscript{69} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 219; Sword and Stone, page 38.
\textsuperscript{70} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 220; Sword and Pen, page 36; The sodonym of MY was used to protect the identity of a Mr. William Mallory.
\textsuperscript{71} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 222.
ever attracted me enough to call for study."\textsuperscript{72} That man won the contest, and held the floor. That man, who had enthralled Wallace with his excellent story-telling, was none other than Abraham Lincoln. Initially, Wallace had been critical of the idea of Lincoln ever leading the Union. He reflected "I had laughed at the idea but a little less heartily than I laughed at the man. Afterwards I came to know him better, and then I did not laugh."\textsuperscript{73} This initial encounter with Mr. Lincoln proved useful to Wallace in his future, as he was a familiar face to the future president during a war where Wallace needed every ally he could get.

The early 1850's were without a doubt some of Lew's happiest moments as a young man. In 1850, Lew secured the position of prosecuting attorney, which he claimed he was lucky to receive considering his comparatively fewer years of experience. Furthermore, he married on April 6, 1852, to Susan Elston.\textsuperscript{74} That same year he was re-elected to his position as prosecuting attorney. In 1856, not yet thirty years of age, he took the Indiana state senate seat as a Democrat. He attempted to pass two bills, but neither managed to pass\textsuperscript{75}. Lew had become well-known, and definitely was an up and coming figure in Indiana. He had consistently been bold, driven, and tenacious. His determination and refusal to accept losses was what would ultimately make him both a military success as well as an enemy of those who had seniority over him within the military. It was here in Wallace's early adulthood where the qualities of his independence and refusal to conform would blossom.

\textsuperscript{72} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 223.  
\textsuperscript{73} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 223.  
\textsuperscript{74} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 224, 225.  
\textsuperscript{75} Sword and Pen, page 42.
Wallace’s literary work, *The Fair God*, had come back to the forefront of his mind. In 1853, he began the finishing touches on the book. He reflected that he “laid it away with downright regret.”\(^7^6\) He still had no wishes to publish it; however, opportunities would rise that would make him rethink the matter. In short, Wallace was scammed. A strange man had come to Crawfordsville, his new home, and offered to write a recommendation to a publisher for the book. He charged Wallace fifteen dollars for the letter, and he disappeared. This sort of behavior probably is one reason that Wallace did not actively pursue publication fervently as he so commonly did with many of his other endeavors. He would eventually have the book published, but it would not occur for another two decades.

With issues like the failed compromises of the 1850’s constantly at the forefront of politics, it was no surprise that Wallace was prepared for another opportunity at a military engagement. As states like Indiana boiled within themselves as well as with Kentucky to the south, Wallace reflected that he would be ready to seize any opportunity to enter the fight a soldier. He claimed that a war would be “crowded with opportunities for distinction not in the least inconsistent with patriotism.”\(^7^7\) Lew understood his limitations though. He wrote that he was “shut out of West Point” and forced to teach himself how to be an effective military leader. His long days spent digging through the libraries as a child coupled with his systematic legal education from his father gave him the skills needed. He organized the lists of books he needed, and then began his studies at night. “Thus provided, I began giving my nights to the study, and it proved another

\(^7^6\) Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 229.
\(^7^7\) Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 244.
delightful pastime.⁷⁸ Reading was not enough for Wallace, though, as he needed to put the theories to practice. Thus, he formed a company called the Montgomery Guards, which was largely based in Crawfordsville.⁷⁹ A book detailing the prowess and techniques of the Zouaves, a French military unit based in Algeria, found its way into Wallace’s possession.⁸⁰ Wallace loved the manner in which they fought, drilled, and dressed. These elaborately dressed figures likely complemented his romantic idealization of war quite well. After all, what is war without the incredible uniforms, banners, and organization that distinguished one unit from the next. Wallace noted that his unit received “little sympathy and no material support” from other people in the town.⁸¹ These individuals believed that no war would occur, and the events in Kansas and Nebraska were not indications of future military engagements. Wallace was very prideful that he was correct, and he preached to his men at the time about how this would guarantee them positions of leadership in companies in their future. As Lew had put it “the commissions will come hunting for you.”⁸²

In the years leading up to the war, from 1856 to 1861, Wallace continued to be a politician. He reflected that “I cannot be proud of my career as a law maker.”⁸³ These years do hold another significance though, as Wallace had been present at the fourth Lincoln-Douglas debate in Charleston, Illinois.⁸⁴ Wallace watched the debate with much interest, as he himself was very much still a Democrat. However, after hearing Lincoln speak, he was swayed. He reflects “how many of the unbelieving like myself were

⁷⁸ Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 244.
⁸⁰ Sword and Pen, page 44.
⁸¹ Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 245.
converted to his thinking — I could not know."\textsuperscript{85} It took considerably longer for Wallace to be sold on the idea of slavery being abolished, but he did continue to support the Republican party, especially Morton and Lincoln, from that point onward.

The nation was on the brink of war in 1859. No resolution seemed to keep all parties appeased. It was time to pick sides, and Wallace had made his choice. Democrats told him that the South's cause was just, and they should support their fellow Southern Democrats. Wallace replied with "This is my native state. I will not leave it to serve the South."\textsuperscript{86} Soon after, Wallace met with Oliver Morton, and apologized for politically opposing him. He said "You were right in quitting the Democratic party. Now I, too, will quit it."\textsuperscript{87} It was here, before any state seceded, that Lew Wallace pledged himself to Morton's cause.

\section*{American Civil War}

For Lew Wallace, the Civil War marked some of the most important moments of his life. He saw glory and fame, but also dismissal and discrimination. He had been one of the highest ranking men from Indiana, but his reputation had been forever tarnished in 1862. Even after his attempts at redemption, his begging for pardon, he would never free himself from the stain on his record. However, the glorious and romantic views of war that he had always dreamed of had been his, if only for a short while. Where the

\textsuperscript{85} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 255.  
\textsuperscript{86} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 260.  
\textsuperscript{87} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 261.
Mexican-American War had failed to give him, the American Civil War filled his cup to the brim. Lew Wallace proved incredibly important at such battles as Fort Donelson, Shiloh, the defense of Cincinnati, and the Battle of Monocacy.

Lew Wallace’s first role in the war was not that of a combat position. Instead, his relationship with Governor Oliver Morton and his eagerness to fight for Indiana, gave him the position of adjutant general.\textsuperscript{88} Oliver Morton stated that Lincoln was calling for 75,000 men to enlist, and Indiana would contribute six regiments to that total. With Wallace serving as adjutant general, the state of Indiana was able to more than double the six regiment count.\textsuperscript{89} Being the romantic that he was, Wallace ensured every regiment marched in a prideful manner. He hired two bands to play the men into the city of Indianapolis and created Camp Morton for the men to stay in until they were ordered off. The streets were lined with thousands cheering the men on, and Governor Morton would end the procession with a patriotic speech.\textsuperscript{90} Wallace had asked for a favor from Morton for his services. In exchange for assisting in the mustering of troops, Wallace asked if he could command one of the regiments. He was then given command of the 11\textsuperscript{th} Indiana as colonel.\textsuperscript{91} He reflected “I, so lately content with the thought of a captaincy, was a colonel going to my command!”\textsuperscript{92} As quickly as he had come, Wallace had taken the position of adjutant general, done his duty, and moved on to join the conflict as a officer.

Colonel Lew Wallace of the 11\textsuperscript{th} Indiana drilled and trained his men just as he had trained his Montgomery Guard. He had ordered a thousand uniforms, modeled similarly

\textsuperscript{88} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 265.\textsuperscript{89} Sword and Pen, page 47.\textsuperscript{90} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 267.\textsuperscript{91} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 266; Sword and Pen, page 48.\textsuperscript{92} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 268.
to that of the Zouaves, to be made for his new regiment. He described his men in uniform: “though in line two thousand yards off they looked like a smoky ribbon long drawn out.” Lew Wallace had three months to train these men who knew nothing about the Zouaves, and he did an admirable job. He drilled them in the same fighting style, bugle system, and fierceness of the Montgomery Guard that had been so renowned before.

Lew Wallace would not be Lew Wallace without making a romantic gesture before leaving Indianapolis. He did not disappoint. Years later, he wrote about his oration: “I wished to impress it memorably, and to that object bent my best endeavor.” Lew Wallace asked his men to drop to one knee. He then asked the men to raise their right hands. He reminded them of the Battle of Buena Vista, where the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Indiana, misunderstanding an order, fell back out of line. Jefferson Davis, the leader of the rebellion, had called the Hoosiers cowards, and the word spread through the official reports. After explaining the story of the past, he went on to note that Indiana had forever been stained by such accusations. Wallace implored his men to remember the phrase “Remember Buena Vista!”, and it would soon be chanted by every Indiana regiment during the war. The effect was quite powerful, and Wallace was remembered for this moment. “They took the oath and accepted the motto. The witnesses of the scene shouted, their eyes full of tears.”

Wallace had done so well here that he caught national attention. Harper’s Weekly had a full page illustration of the event in an issue. This was one of Wallace’s proudest moments, and he undoubtedly began his military service with the honorable and redemptive qualities that he had always dreamed of.

\textsuperscript{93} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 270.
\textsuperscript{94} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 271-272.
\textsuperscript{95} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 272.
\textsuperscript{96} Sword and Pen, page 6.
Wallace’s first orders were to head to Evansville, Indiana. The purpose of the trip was to search boats to ensure goods were not being sent south. The time at Evansville was short-lived, as Wallace received orders to move to the Cumberland by Winfield Scott himself. Naturally, Wallace was thrilled to receive orders from the man that had been, in his mind, the ideal soldier. “To be known to Winfield Scott, to be addressed by him — what an appeal to my vanity! What encouragement!” So Wallace moves to Cumberland, Maryland, and reported under General Patterson by June of 1861. It is here he had his first engagement, but also demonstrated characteristics that would be repeatedly seen in his behavior throughout the war.

Wallace made a very decisive decision that will continue to make him a known figure in the early portions of the war. Instead of reporting directly to Cumberland, he decided to take his force on a detour to Romney, West Virginia. Soon after, he chose to report to Cumberland and leave a small detachment of his regiment. He believed that he could be harassed by these forces anyways, so he planned to strike first. He noted: “Instead of waiting for them to trouble me, why should not I take the initiative?” He marched the majority of his troops towards Romney, and arrived at the town by morning. A small detachment of horsemen saw Wallace’s approaching force, and he wrote “Then I knew a surprise was no longer to be hoped.” Wallace drove the enemy out of the town, and secured himself his first victory. The battle was not tactically important, but the
papers published it because they were desperate for war news. Wallace was thrilled, however, to receive a congratulations from Winfield Scott.\textsuperscript{104} He wrote: "It was all very sweet, indeed; but the climax came in an autograph note of congratulations from General Scott"\textsuperscript{105}

Wallace’s next moment in battle came at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson, but these battles would not come until 1862. By this point, he had been promoted to Brigadier General. After receiving the notice from the adjutant general, he made the comment to another general named Charles F. Smith "Will you tell me if I ought to accept that appointment?", and General Smith replied with "Why not?" Lew responded openly and honestly. "Because I don’t know anything about the duties of a brigadier-general."\textsuperscript{106} He took this appointment, but not before General Smith concisely explained his new duties. Wallace met General Ulysses Grant, and he recalls that he was not impressed: "there was nothing about him suggestive of greatness, nothing heroic."\textsuperscript{107} Grant was a plain man; however, it seems fair to note that Wallace came to the table bitter that he had not been publically freed of the damage his reputation took at Shiloh. Grant never relieved him of such a debt.

Fort Henry was a battle that was very much dependent on the artillery. The fort sat on the Tennessee River, and ships shelled it incessantly as they passed along. Wallace sat back in the distance, watching the Union artillery pound the fort until it surrendered on February 6.\textsuperscript{108} He was proud of the victory, but then was disappointed as he had been

\textsuperscript{104} Sword and Pen, page 49.  
\textsuperscript{105} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 292.  
\textsuperscript{106} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 343.  
\textsuperscript{107} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 352.  
\textsuperscript{108} Sword and Pen, page 50.
ordered to stay back and guard the fort while Grant moved on to Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River.

Lucky for Wallace, a week later on February 14, 1862, Grant asked him to join him to assist in the taking of Fort Donelson. He arrived at Grant’s headquarters at 11 in the morning, eager for his command.\footnote{James A. Treichel, “Lew Wallace At Fort Donelson”, Indiana Magazine of History 59 (1963, pp. 2-18 [hereafter Donelson] Donelson, page 7. Donelson, page 8. Donelson, page 11. Donelson, page 15. Donelson, page 16. Sword and Pen, page 53.} He was ordered to take the center position in the formation, and command the newly formed 3rd Division.\footnote{Donelson, page 7.} Wallace had General John Alexander McClernand’s division to his right, and the division of C. F. Smith to his left.\footnote{Donelson, page 8.} Wallace was under explicit orders from Grant not to engage the enemy, but General McClernand requested assistance twice.\footnote{Donelson, page 11.} On the second request, Wallace conceded and sent one brigade to assist.\footnote{Donelson, page 15.} The right division was cracking, and Wallace responded by sending his second brigade forward to steady the line. Wallace sent the remainder of his forces, that had regrouped, into a massive assault on the Confederate line. The force included his former regiment, the 11th Indiana.\footnote{Donelson, page 16.} By the 16th of February, white flags raised over Fort Donelson, as Wallace had not only retaken the ground lost, but had commanded on a hill that looked over the fort.\footnote{Sword and Pen, page 53.} It was at this battle where Grant would gain his nickname “Unconditional Surrender” Grant.\footnote{Sword and Pen, page 53.} Wallace had explicitly disobeyed orders, however, and his romantic spirit demanded it. If he had not acted on his own accord, the battle may have been lost as the right of the line was on the verge of
collapse. In this instance, Wallace was rewarded for his personal actions on the battlefield.\textsuperscript{117} In his memoirs, Wallace wrote “The success, it may as well be admitted, more than gratified me. With a brigade thrust between it and its overconfident pursuers, I had been instrumental in relieving the first division from an imminent peril.”\textsuperscript{118} This independent action became the standard response made by Wallace throughout the war.

Before the Battle of Shiloh that crippled Wallace’s reputation, two events of importance occurred. Firstly, all three division commanders – Smith, Wallace, and McClemand – were promoted to Major General after the surrender of Fort Donelson. Wallace looked back and noted the rank had been “a height above my ambition.”\textsuperscript{119} The other important moment for Wallace was when he had received a sword from Montgomery County, Indiana. It was to congratulate him on his victory at Fort Donelson, and he described it to be “One had only to look at it to know it was intended for occasions of highest ceremony.”\textsuperscript{120} Wallace was likely loving his life at this point, as he was receiving even more military valor and credit than he had ever dreamed of. These moments of immense fame were soon overshadowed by a massive failure that forever tarnished his name, which I believe made the injury that much more painful.

In April of the same year, Wallace lost the reputation he had worked so hard to develop. The Battle of Shiloh, and its repercussions, never stopped haunting him. The Union planned to attack the Confederate Army at Corinth, Mississippi. They first concentrated their forces near Pittsburg Landing, which was roughly twenty-five miles

\textsuperscript{117} Donelson, page 17.
\textsuperscript{118} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 409.
\textsuperscript{119} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 438.
\textsuperscript{120} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 439.
away from Corinth. General Buell was to meet the rest of the army here; however, he did not arrive as quickly as Grant had wanted. Grant made a mistake, that was quite deadly. He did not anticipate Confederate General Johnston to leave Corinth and make the first move. He attacked on the morning of April 6, 1862, initiating the battle with 40,000 troops. The account begins to become confusing as Wallace had apparently noticed that Corinth had been vacated, and sent a scout to notify Grant on April 4. Apparently, the message never reached Grant. At any rate, Wallace was sitting at Crumps Landing, awaiting orders. Grant arrived and explained to him that he should be ready to move at any moment. It is from this moment on that the truth is difficult to decipher.

The battle is riddled with miscommunication, and Wallace bore the brunt of the frustration. Wallace received orders from Grant to engage, sent by his Quartermaster Baxter, and moved out from Stoney Lonesome. The order had apparently been dictated, and Baxter had written it down. It did not have Grant’s signature. Wallace moved to engage slowly, as his orders were not clear. He was then only six miles from Crumps Landing, and had not even come close to engaging the enemy. Captain Rowley was sent with another message to Wallace, urging him again to engage. Wallace ordered a countermarch and took the river road back towards the battle. The main issue at hand was the fact that Grant was wanting Lew to take the River Road, whereas Wallace

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122 Gale Stephens, Shadow of Shiloh (Indianapolis, 2010) [hereafter Shadow]
123 March, page 20.
125 Struggle 129; March, page 21.
126 March, page 23.
assumed Grant understood he planned to take the Shunpike. This was largely because Wallace did not know Sherman had lost so much ground. While marching here, Wallace realized he was at the flank of the enemy, not of Sherman. By this point, it was too late, and he had to turn back and take a different path. He then found a path that led directly to the river road from his current path, and decided to take it. This road was wet and muddy, as it had just rained, and it slowed Wallace considerably. Had he had better maps and scouts, perhaps he would have had information showing that he should not have taken such a connecting path. Provided that Grant and Wallace had a stronger relationship that was filled with communication, the entire disaster could have been avoided. The incredibly unfair point is that this was not an issue until the Union Army needed someone to blame, and that Grant and Sherman take no blame for the actions that was arguably the fault of all the military leaders, not exclusively Wallace. At any rate, Wallace marched his troops across Snake Creek, which had previously been suspected to be under attack. Frustrated, angered, and exhausted, Wallace arrived at the battlefront by seven at night. This was roughly eleven hours after the initial orders. This was the “fog of war” at its worst. Wallace had literally moved and then backtracked, tiring his troops in an effort to reach the proper position.

The next morning, April 7, the battle ensued. Wallace’s division, now present, was able to push the Confederate line all the way back to about where the battle had started the morning of April 6. Although he had countered powerfully and negated the tactical ground lost the previous day, he had not escaped the blame and torment of

128 Shadow, 74.
129 Shadows, page 86.
knowing he had not been present on the day of the first attacks. Wallace spent the rest of his life attempting to rectify his reputation, but was never successful with clearing his name.\textsuperscript{131}

Months later, in August of 1862, Wallace resolved to continue being an active member of the military. He chose to go to Cincinnati and offer his services to General Horatio G. Wright, the man responsible for the Department of Ohio.\textsuperscript{132} Just weeks after, the Battle of Richmond occurred.\textsuperscript{133} The forces under General William Nelson were soundly defeated by Confederate General E. Kirby Smith, effectively leaving Cincinnati vulnerable to attack.\textsuperscript{134} Wright immediately sent telegrams to Wallace, and instantly, Wallace found an opportunity to redeem himself.

Cincinnati was defended by the forces under Nelson, who had escaped, but the majority of his forces had been captured at the Battle of Richmond, Kentucky. In description of Cincinnati, it was said by Lew’s staff: “There is nothing at Cincinnati with which to make a defence — not a soldier, not a gun, not a fort. To try must end in failure.”\textsuperscript{135} Lew’s decision to defend Cincinnati was incredibly complex. After his failure at Shiloh, he was in tremendous danger of being punished if he associated himself with another military loss. Wallace took the risk however, believing that he could save Cincinnati, or make a valiant attempt to do so. He chose not to leave Cincinnati defenseless, and risked his already tarnished reputation to save it.

\textsuperscript{131} Struggle, page 150.
\textsuperscript{133} This is Richmond, Kentucky. It is sometimes confused with Richmond, Virginia.
\textsuperscript{134} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 604.
\textsuperscript{135} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 604.
Lew Wallace went into action immediately. He set up his own office in Cincinnati in the house of Thomas Saunders, one of the only men he knew from the city. When asked how he planned to defend Cincinnati without soldiers, Wallace replied with “there is a resource that you do not see.” Wallace invited George Hatch, the mayor of Cincinnati, to his base of operations and explained his plan. In short, Wallace suspended all businesses, suspended the ferries, and demanded that all able-bodied men meet to begin preparation of the city’s defense. Governor Morton of Indiana and Governor Tod of Ohio sent arms for the civilians. Most importantly, he declared martial law. “Martial law is hereby proclaimed in the three cities; but until they can be relieved by the military the injunctions of this proclamation will be executed by the police.” Amazingly, and as Wallace planned, the civilians raced to arms to defend their cities. He met no resistance from other local authorities or newspapers; instead, he found adamant support and the spread of his words. This is what Wallace wanted; he wanted the role of the hero saving the city. “The drilled companies assembled in their armories and organized themselves into regiments; the air throbbed until the beat of drums and unnumbered flags on the house-tops and suddenly flung from the windows freshened the beauty of the sunshine.” The city mobilized quite quickly and were ready to take orders from General Lew Wallace.

The civil engineers became military tacticians as Wallace instructed them on how to dig breastworks and rifle pits. Fifteen thousand civilians, under the command of the

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137 Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 605.
141 Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 609.
civil engineers and Wallace, were escorted about by a meager three regiments around their cities, and began digging with plows, picks, shovels, and scrapers that had been collected from hardware stores.\textsuperscript{142} In under a week, Lew Wallace’s army arrived. About seventy-two thousand men gathered near Cincinnati to see to Ohio’s defense. Sixty thousand of the men were called irregulars, or fondly named squirrel hunters. “Coming with pistols, shot-guns, sporting-Rifles — in short, all the arms usual to the unwarlike citizen — we called them ‘Squirrel Hunters’.”\textsuperscript{143} Wallace’s breastworks formed a defiant line facing Kentucky, ready for any move General Kirby Smith planned to make. He sent a second column under General Henry Heth to take Cincinnati.\textsuperscript{144} The forces numbered around nine thousand, and approached Covington and the defenses of Cincinnati just over a week after the battle at Richmond.\textsuperscript{145} General Heth saw what was before him, and remained idle for two days. During this time, Wallace sent civilians from Lawrenceburg around behind Heth’s forces. They claimed to be looking for some fugitives, and were permitted to search around Heth’s position. This brilliant move by Wallace allowed him to have rough estimate of the troops that Heth had under his command.\textsuperscript{146} The battle would never come. Heth retreated from his position starting on the 12th, and would not return.\textsuperscript{147}

The citizen-soldiers returned to Cincinnati in a great ceremony. Wallace entered the city to a warm welcome, and a large amount of thanks.\textsuperscript{148} He wrote: “Indeed, that was
one of the gladdest days of my life."149 The city of Cincinnati passed a unanimous
resolution stating: “this community is largely indebted to Major-General Lewis Wallace
for his untiring energy in organizing the forces and completing the preparations for
defense”150 Wallace had his victory, and was seen as a hero by civilians. Generals such as
General Henry Halleck, however, never gave him what he truly desired. Still battered by
the Battle of Shiloh, Wallace never received a field command. Instead, on September 18,
1862, less than a week after his heroic organization of Cincinnati, Wallace received
orders to head to Columbus, collect paroled troops, and then go to Minnesota to fight
Native Americans in what is now known as the Sioux Uprising.151 This action was done
with malicious intent, as generals like Halleck did not approve of politically appointed
generals like Wallace. He did follow his orders, however, and continued to request a new
field command.

Two years later, Lew Wallace received another opportunity to redeem himself.
After being relieved from command time and time again, and being thrashed and blamed
by his peers for the death toll at Shiloh, Wallace had become increasingly bitter. General
Halleck, yet another West Point graduate, regularly insulted Wallace’s intelligence, and
Lew began to understand the differences between West Point officers and politically
appointed officers.152 However, he continued to remain in the military, and was never
stripped of his rank. The shaming he endured was almost intolerable, but he held his post
as Major General of Volunteers. He begged for another chance to lead, but would not
intentionally receive it.

152 March, page 27.
In 1864, Wallace finally received a new command. He was ordered to the Eighth corps in the Middle Department. The department, Delaware and most of Maryland, was generally free of battles, and there was no intent for Wallace to engage any Confederate generals outside of small skirmishes.\(^{153}\) Robert E. Lee, who was currently locked in combat with Ulysses Grant, sent Jubal Early to the North in late 1863 to throw the Union off guard.\(^{154}\) Lee’s goals were to put pressure on the North, and perhaps have Grant send troops north to defend the Union capital, effectively shrinking Grant’s forces marching on Richmond. Lee had high hopes for Jubal Early to reach striking range of Washington, and he did get such an opportunity. However, Wallace scrambled a force together to meet the Confederates. Wallace had seen reports of Early’s men moving in the direction of the capital, and assumed the worst.\(^{155}\) On July 5, 1864, John Garret, the President of the B&O Railroad, explained to Wallace that he had spotted Confederate soldiers between Cumberland and Harper’s Ferry.\(^{156}\) In the true Lew Wallace spirit, he ignored orders, and acted on his own without consulting superiors. When Wallace did this, however, it worked. Lew Wallace reflected on this moment and wrote: “The duty grew clearer and more imperative as I ran over the consequences of a capture of our capital.”\(^{157}\) Much like he did in Cincinnati, Wallace quickly developed a defense force, and began to engage Early on July 7, 1864 near Frederick, Maryland.\(^{158}\) Wallace took an excellent position

\(^{153}\) Struggle, page 134.
\(^{154}\) Sword and Pen, page 71.
\(^{155}\) Sword and Pen, page 72.
\(^{157}\) Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 710.
\(^{158}\) Sword and Pen, page 72.
alongside the Monocacy River with his headquarters upon some higher ground giving him a great view of the terrain.\footnote{Desperate Engagement, page 78.}

Somehow, Wallace's forces were able to repel the initial attack made by Early. These were just small detachments, however, and the majority of the army was behind them. Two more attacks came, and Wallace was able to repel them both.\footnote{Desperate Engagement, page 89.} Luckily enough for Wallace, he received reinforcements by evening of July 7. By July 8, Wallace was holding his position and sporadic combat ensued. He seemed confident in holding the position, and was thrilled to see the amount of soldiers that were rallying stoically to the cause.

Early attempted to attack again on July 9, with an army easily twice the size of Wallace's.\footnote{Sword and Pen, page 73.} It contained three entire divisions, and Wallace was forced to retreat from Frederick, Maryland and make a last stand at Monocacy.\footnote{Desperate Engagement, page 94.} Wallace had been able to make contact with Grant by this point.\footnote{Sword and Pen, 73.} Furthermore, Halleck, due to the words of Wallace, had urged Grant to send troops back north towards Washington.\footnote{Desperate Engagement, page 94-95.} On the morning of July 9, Early's divisions began to engage the Union troops.\footnote{Desperate Engagement, page 98.} Skirmishing began the battle at Baltimore Pike, just west of the Monocacy Bridge. Soon after, fighting began at the Georgetown Pike.\footnote{Desperate Engagement, page 99.} At this point, Wallace had about 5,800 men in his collective force.\footnote{Desperate Engagement, page 100.} Early did not want to fight at Monocacy; his goal was to get to Washington. Wallace did not let this happen, and forced an engagement. Early's troops
had been marching extensively and were tired, but were dragged into open combat once again.\textsuperscript{168} Confederate artillery numbered about twice that of those under Wallace's command. This softening of Wallace's position prompted 1,000 Confederate cavalry, led by John McCausland, to assault the Union forces directly.\textsuperscript{169} Union forces, desperate and determined not to give up their positions, stood with General James Ricketts, and did not fire until the Confederates were about a hundred yards out.\textsuperscript{170} Wallace recounts the condition of the Confederate line after the Union attack: "Not a man of it was to be seen, only the green of the trodden corn, some horses galloping about riderless, and a few mounted officers bravely facing the unexpected storm."\textsuperscript{171} The attacks kept coming, and soon the retreat had to be made. Before leaving, Wallace ordered the large wooden bridge that separated his small force from Early's three divisions be burned. He recounted: "I lingered awhile to see that the flames did their work reliably. A great smoke began to fill the sky and blot out the sun. Soon the floor timber fell into the water."\textsuperscript{172}

By the latter half of the day, Wallace later wrote with a sense of optimism. "A sense of relief came to me: if the day was lost to me, General Early might not profit by it."\textsuperscript{173} Indeed, Early did not profit from it. He was stalled for an entire day, the element of surprise lost, he could not make an attempt to take Washington, D.C.\textsuperscript{174} Wallace, by collecting forces from all over the region, had been able to slow a force twice as large as his. The extra day it had cost Jubal Early to get to Washington was the difference

\textsuperscript{168} Desperate Engagement, page 101.
\textsuperscript{169} Desperate Engagement, page 103.
\textsuperscript{170} Desperate Engagement, page 105.
\textsuperscript{171} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 770.
\textsuperscript{172} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 778.
\textsuperscript{173} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 796.
\textsuperscript{174} Sword and Pen, page 73.
between success and failure as Washington’s defenses were bolstered considerably by this point in time.

Ironically, Wallace never received credit for Monocacy until a later date. He was initially relieved of his command entirely by Grant, who did not fully comprehend the situation. Four days later, after an understanding of what happened became public, he was re-instated as the Commander of the Middle Department.\textsuperscript{175}

Two months after the Battle of Monocacy, Grant became much more friendly with Wallace. Lew wrote to his wife: “In short, he seemed to be taking pains to make me forget that there had ever been anything of an unpleasant nature between us.”\textsuperscript{176} Sadly, this sort of relationship did not last. Even twenty years after Shiloh, Grant continued to blame Wallace for the errors of the first day of the battle. Wallace was never forgiven for the actions at Shiloh, despite the fact that the error had been a group effort. With better communication and trust between generals, such an error may not have occurred. Perhaps then, Wallace could have moved on with his life instead of continuously asking for repentance for a crime that was not exclusively his fault. Despite the blame on his shoulders even though he did hold a redeeming stand at Monocacy, Wallace still held the tarnished reputation of the politically appointed officers. He resigned in November of 1865 as the rest of the military was being mustered out of service.\textsuperscript{177}

\textsuperscript{175} Sword and Pen, page 75.
\textsuperscript{176} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 811.
\textsuperscript{177} Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 865.
Although the war in the United States had come to an end, Wallace’s involvement in the military did not. He did not serve as an officer with a field command, but instead was a secret member of the Mexican military.178

Wallace spent a large amount of his time appealing to U. S. leaders and generals to support the Mexicans expel the French from their country. This conflict was likely so dear to him for two reasons. Firstly, Wallace had a deep infatuation with Mexico. This is made clear through the manner in which he threw himself at its history, learning so much that he was able to write fiction that had accurate depictions of their culture and architecture. This writing would turn into The Fair God. Secondly, I believe Wallace saw this as an ongoing conflict with the Confederacy. Whereas the Union supported the Mexican Republicans led by Juarez, the Confederacy supported Maxamillian, the French imposed emperor of Mexico.179

Before the Civil War had even ended, Wallace had been getting his hands dirty in Mexico. He had personally gone to inspect the situation, writing to Grant, stating “Matamoras is to all intents and purposes a rebel port, free at that, and you can readily imagine the uses they put it to.”180 Naturally, the Union was worried that the Confederates would bring the Civil War to Mexico, and continue fighting from there. However, this was not the case, as Wallace continued to plan for the time if this were to happen. However, during this process, the Civil War ended, and the chances of the Confederacy assisting the French imperialist forces was destroyed.181 After the

179 French Intervention, page 32.
181 French Intervention, page 35-36.
Confederacy had surrendered, Wallace continued to lobby for the Union to send resources and weapons to the Mexicans. He created the Mexican Aid Society. His goal was to mobilize towns and soldiers to prepare to assist Mexico, but this assistance never came to fruition. However, the societies did succeed in sending clothing and other resources, which proved valuable for the Mexican Republicans under Juarez. His successes in gathering aid for the Mexicans as they fought the French partially contributed to the French expulsion from Mexico as well as the capture of Maxamillion. Although this conflict never escalated into a new war for the Union, Wallace did positively contribute in assisting the Mexicans regain their independence.

Post-War

After the Civil War, Wallace did more than defend himself against claims of incompetence at Shiloh. He returned to the world of fiction, which had once distracted him from his occupation so easily. The same books that had once kept Wallace from attending class now functioned as an outlet of healing for the wounded general. He found himself enjoying Mexico’s history much more considering his visits both in the 1840’s and at the end of the Civil War. This new-found energy; and distraction, allowed for him to revise the decades old draft. Wallace published A Fair God in 1873, over twenty years after it had been written. The book did quite well in England, where it was praised as a

182 French Intervention, page 38.
183 French Intervention, page 32.
deep work of "historical fiction". The text was about Wallace's fictional account of the invasion of Mexico by the Spanish conquistadors. It follows the story of Hernan Cortes and of Montezuma, and explained how the Spanish had conquered the native peoples. Although the story itself is not very important, this creation of fiction and the enjoyment Wallace found in it would ultimately lead to his determination to continue to be an author. By his death in 1905, Wallace had managed to sell 145,000 copies of the book.

Interestingly enough, General Sherman, who had played a role in his condemnation ten years prior, sent him friendly letters of congratulation and appreciation of his fictional work. Contact with these men of his past probably did continue to haunt him, and Wallace seemed to live a large portion of his life ruminating over his actions during the American Civil War. This book, however, would only be a small glimpse into the success he found as an author under a decade later.

Outside of being an author, Wallace spent the time between the Civil War and his term as Territorial Governor of New Mexico in Crawfordsville, Indiana, where he continued to practice law. He gave up law by the time he took office in New Mexico, stating it was "the most detestable of human occupations". It is very likely that Wallace came to this conclusion considering the large amount of excitement he had lived through by this point. He had fought in the Civil War, assisted Mexico receive independence from the French, and had found massive successes in writing fiction. Why then, would he want to return to the comparably dull life of practicing law?

185 Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 889.
188 Sword and Pen, page 3.
Wallace did not end his political career after the war either. He became the territorial governor of New Mexico in 1878 under Rutherford B. Hayes, and held the position until 1881. He was actually appointed Territorial Governor because of his role in the recount of the 1876 elections. In New Mexico, his most notable actions dealt with attempting to bring resolution to the Lincoln County Wars. The issue was solved through the creation of demands of disbanding violence and threatening martial law if the order was not obeyed\(^{189}\) To be fair though, Wallace did not take this route until he saw that negotiating with both sides was not an effective process.\(^{190}\) Initially, Wallace attempted to give amnesty to individuals who would testify and admit to taking part in the insurrection. Billy the Kid was an example of one of these individuals. During a hearing against the murders of a man named Chapman, who had been killed by friends of Billy the Kid, Billy willingly testified in exchange for his freedom. Due to the severity of his crimes, the courts refused to honor Wallace’s wish to pardon him.\(^{191}\) Billy, angry and betrayed, broke out of prison and returned to his life of crime. Despite this failure, Wallace is often praised as the man who did bring about an end to an incredibly violent conflict.\(^{192}\)

His contributions to New Mexico did not end there. He made many new policy suggestions that would bring this untamed society in line with ideas found in the eastern portion of the United States. Firstly, he asked that public education would be more efficient and available. He also asked for the enforcement of English being learned. Aligning with the disaster that was the Lincoln County Wars, Wallace demanded that a

\(^{189}\) Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 915.  
\(^{190}\) Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 913.  
\(^{191}\) Sword and Pen, page 107.  
\(^{192}\) Sword and Pen, page 106.
proper criminal law code be put into place to prevent such violence again. He suggested all of these changes regularly to his local legislature.193 Like his father, Wallace encouraged the training of orderly militias to combat the Native American problems in the area. The Apaches were the “savages” that were plaguing New Mexico, and Wallace stated “Kindness makes no impression on them. They are what they were when the Spaniards found them – cunning, blood-thirsty, and untamable.”194 Lew continued to ask the U. S. government to send troops to New Mexico. In the meantime, he continued to train militias.195 Over time, however, Wallace grew tired of the situation that he simply could not seem to change in New Mexico. He wrote to his wife: “The Lincoln County reign of terror is not over, and we hold our lives at the mercy of desperadoes and outlaws.”196 Without proper military support, and with constant fighting with the Native Americans, Wallace could not bring lasting stability to the region. When he left New Mexico in 1881, after turning down another re-appointed term as governor, he was more than ready to return to peaceful Indiana.

Wallace’s time in Indiana would be short-lived. Almost immediately, President James Garfield asked him to become the American Minister to the Ottoman Empire, and perhaps write a sequel to Ben-Hur. Wallace took the position, as he did wish to see Europe, and had an incredibly positive experience in the Ottoman Empire. Most interesting was his unexpected friendship with the ruler of the Ottoman Empire, Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan II. At the first meeting of these two men, a witness named E. B. Grosvenor wrote: “As I looked upon that martial figure, clad in the uniform of a major-

195 Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 918.
general of the United States, splendidly erect, his head not bowed — so dignified, so composed, so manly — the one absorbing sentiment in my heart was pride". Wallace had a very unique first meeting with the Sultan because he asked to shake the man’s hand. This experience was very unorthodox and was unheard of in these highly custom-imbued ceremonies. At any rate, it began a friendship that would last the remainder of Wallace’s life.

Wallace’s principle duties while Minister to the Ottoman Empire were to maintain friendly relations, expand trade, ensure that the capitulatory system was followed, and ensure the safety of Americans who visited the empire. Throughout his time in the Ottoman Empire, Wallace did more than his specific duties. Not only did he ensure the safety of American trade and civilians, he also spent time as an advisor to the Sultan himself. An interesting instance that is worth mentioning of Wallace’s service actually came in the form of his aid to a group of eight Greeks who had been falsely imprisoned. Wallace asked for them to be allowed to be sent back to Greece, and the order was accepted by the Sultan. Wallace was thanked with an intricately-crafted wooden figurine and a poem from the Greeks. In another instance, Wallace had stopped an American dentist from being punished due to an accident involving a wound he had given to an Ottoman subject. Wallace was able to relieve Dr. Khatchadourian of his charges. Though these instances sound trivial, Wallace’s ability to charm and sway the Turkish

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199 Loyal Friend.
200 Lew Wallace Autobiography, page 967.
201 Loyal Friend.
people in a way that favored Americans was instrumental to larger interests that were never compromised during his term.

At the end of his four year term in the Ottoman Empire, the Sultan attempted to employ Wallace himself. When Wallace told Abdul Hamid Khan II of his resignation, the leader replied with: “Well, why not, when you leave the service with your own country, take service with me?”202 The Sultan was offering Wallace positions as a minister to France or England. Wallace politely refused, as he was ready to return home to Indiana. Before returning home, he received an interesting gift from the Sultan. An extensive photo album of the experience in the Ottoman Empire, complete with images of the Sultan himself and his family. Wallace returned to Indiana in late 1885, and began a life of casual reading and writing. He toured extensively throughout the country as well though, and presented on topics such as the Ottoman Empire and the great character of Abdul Hamid Khan II. His contact with Sultan Abdul Hamid Khan II did not conclude here however, as the two men continued to send letters throughout the rest of Wallace’s life. At Wallace’s funeral, another pin was placed on his breast from the Sultan himself, designating Wallace as First Class, Order Imperial Medjije.203

The final contribution of note from Lew Wallace’s life was his most well-known work of fiction, Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ. Started in the 1870’s, and finished at the end of the decade, the work follows the life of Judah during the first century, a Jewish man who accidentally injures a noble, seeks revenge, and then redemption. It was seen as an incredibly inspirational piece of Christian literature considering its messages of

203 Loyal Friend.
compassion and understanding. Interestingly enough, Lew Wallace was not a devout Christian. He did not regularly attend church, and only had recently developed any interest in religion. He wrote: “None the less I believe in the Divinity of Jesus Christ.” The book was largely a product of the studying he had done on religion because he had felt he was ignorant and ashamed of his lack of knowledge. Regardless of his own personal feelings, which he claimed to be accepting of Jesus, the book’s message inspired Christians worldwide. Although the initial sales were unimpressive, the book grew in popularity quickly. By the end of the century, it was one of the best-selling books of its time.

The story of Ben-Hur follows a Jewish man named Judah Ben-Hur, who is a prince of a royal family of Judaea. In the beginning of the story, his friend Messala travels to Rome in order to be educated. When he returns, Messala and Judah become rivals and enemies, and Judah aspires to learn military tactics in Rome in order to fight against Rome itself. A prefect of Judaea named Valerius is part of a procession that passes by Judah’s house. Debris from the roof strikes the man, and Messala points Judah out as a man who attempted to kill Valerius. Judah’s entire family is imprisoned and all of the family’s property is seized. Enraged, Judah vows revenge. He is forced to become a slave on a Roman warship and in route he meets Jesus, a young carpenter who gives him water. After three years on a warship as a slave, Judah Ben-Hur saves Quntus Arris, a Roman military leader, from a sinking ship. The man adopts him and Ben-Hur becomes a Roman citizen. After five years of military training, he travels back to his home, where

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204 Sword and Pen, page 110.
207 Sword and Pen, page 111.
he discovers his old rival Messala preparing for a chariot race. He stops the chariot from striking his mother and sister, and is eventually discovered by Messala to be a Roman citizen with restored honor. Messala attempts to strip Ben-Hur of his honor once more, and continues to threaten to do so. Ilderim, a chariot racer, is impressed with Judah’s skill and allows for him to become a part of his chariot team. Messala reveals Ben-Hur’s identity, and engages in a wager that would cripple his own funds if he loses. During the race, Ben-Hur deliberately scrapes his chariot against Messala’s, causing Messala to get trampled by the chariots behind them. Ben-Hur wins the race, and Messala is financially bankrupt and physically broken. Ben-Hur has been redeemed. Although the plot does continue, these are the crucial moments in which Wallace’s life can be easily paralleled.

Besides its explicit religious themes, I believe the book has much more to do with Wallace’s own life. The text begins with Judah Ben-Hur shaming his family and himself by being blamed for injuring a noble named Valerius. This is no different than Grant and Halleck blaming Wallace for his actions at the Battle of Shiloh. In both instances, it was not Judah’s or Wallace’s fault. Messala, the educated man from Rome, functions also as Grant or Halleck if one compares Rome to West Point. This was the high end military academy that Wallace was never able to attend. The fact that he didn’t always place him as a lesser individual to these other men. Judah is sold into slavery, and his property and family are shamed. In the same way, Wallace is relieved of a field command, and he feels as if his name has been permanently damaged by the Battle of Shiloh. When Judah returns to his home years later as a Roman citizen and a restored individual, he encounters Messala yet again. In the same way, Wallace has successful military commands at Cincinnati and Monocacy, but Halleck and Grant continue to refuse him
proper reward. In the story, Ben-Hur is redeemed by defeating Messala in a chariot race. Wallace would never receive such redemption. When the book was published in 1880, perhaps Wallace hoped he still would be cleared of his charges by Grant. That moment would never come, and Wallace is still seen as the man who failed his army at the Battle of Shiloh.

Wallace did appeal to Grant throughout his life, but one letter, in particular, was written to Grant just before Grant had died. In 1884, Wallace again begged for Grant to clear his name. This was mostly due to the fact that Grant was publishing another account of the battle in 1885. Grant wrote: “The mistake he made, and which probably caused his apparent dilatoriness, was that of advancing some distance after he found that the firing, which would be at first directly to his front and then off to the left, had fallen back until it had got very much in rear of the position of his advance. This falling back had taken place before I sent General Wallace orders to move up to Pittsburg landing and, naturally, my order was to follow the road nearest the river.” Grant wrote this opinion in the Century Magazine in 1885, just before his death. Grant continued to state that Wallace was at fault, only giving him the slight benefit of the doubt, stating “But my order was verbal, and to a staff officer who was to deliver it to General Wallace, so that I am not competent to say just what order the General actually received.” Grant held onto his word, even after a large amount of evidence was shown that could have explained his situation. Despite the fact that there was a large amount of fog and lack of clarity about who had issued which orders when, Grant did not give Wallace the benefit of the doubt.

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208 Ulysses S. Grant, Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant Volume 2 (New York, 1885), page 372. [hereafter Memoir]
209 Memoir, page 372
on his deathbed. While he commended many other officers for their service at Shiloh, his opinion remained critical of Wallace. Wallace, who had been in the Ottoman Empire in 1885, wrote to his wife: "Shiloh and its slanders. Will the world ever acquit me of them? If I were guilty I would not feel them so keenly." Twenty years later, in Crawfordsville, Wallace would die. Forty years after the Battle of Shiloh, his largest regret was still the fact that he could not receive repentence from his country, and specifically, Grant, for his actions.

Lew Wallace’s life was incredibly interesting, and full of a large number of unique experiences. He was a politician, a lawyer, a general, and an author. When one looks over Lew’s life, it seems hard to find subjects he did not have an interest in. He was a true renaissance man who devoted himself fully to everything he did. He was also incredibly stubborn, determined, and aggressive. Lew Wallace achieved his greatest military victories through acting alone and disobeying orders, his tenacity with his writing led to success, and his refusal to leave the military without another military victory redeemed him at Monocacy. Ironically, the same character traits that led to the tarnishing of his reputation also led to his successes. Most importantly, Wallace is a Hoosier that absolutely deserves the recognition of his state. The fact that students and adults alike cannot identify a man that played such a pivotal role in Hoosier history seems ridiculous, and hopefully a broader understanding of who he was will become much more commonly known.

210 Struggle, page 36.
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