

where he found the whole army in retreat. He was directed by General Early to close up the rear, with Jackson's cavalry brigade behind him. The rear passed through Rockville that day, where Jackson was hard pressed by the Second Massachusetts Cavalry, who made it very warm and uncomfortable. Getting tired of this General Johnson ordered Captain Wilson C. Nicholas and Lieutenant Thomas Green to take a squad of the First Maryland and charge into Rockville. This they did, scattering the pursuers in all directions, but the dismounted men took refuge in the houses and poured in a galling fire. The horses of Nicholas and Green were killed, and their riders wounded and taken prisoners. As soon as Johnson discovered the condition of affairs he led another charge, and Lieutenant Green was recaptured, but Captain Nicholas had been put on a horse and run off the field.

During the rest of that day the pursuers kept at a respectful distance, and on the next day (the 14th) the command reached Poolsville. There General Johnson effectually held the enemy in check with his cavalry until everything had crossed the Potomac to the Virginia side, when he withdrew, closely pressed by cavalry and infantry.

Thus ended one of the most remarkable episodes of the war. It had failed in the main object of the expedition, which was to release the prisoners at Point Lookout. The audacity of this movement was its safety, and no higher military skill was displayed on either side during the war than that shown by General Early in his daring attempt to surprise the Capital of the enemy with so small a force, and which was only averted by the energy and foresight of one man — John W. Garrett, President of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. He had foreseen when Early crossed the Potomac that his objective point was Washington, and at once began to assemble all the means of transportation possible on his road at Locust Point, and had himself hurried to Washington on a special train to inform the authorities of his suspicions, and urged that reinforcements be sent for from Grant's army. They came, means of transportation were at hand, and the Capital was saved by oh, how narrow a margin !