RICHARD HERON ANDERSON, CONFEDERATE GENERAL

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ABSTRACT

The problem presented to the writer has been to determine the tactical contributions of Lieutenant General Richard Heron Anderson, to evaluate his military significance and to explain why an officer who attained the rank of next to the highest grade in the greatest army of the Confederacy, the Army of Northern Virginia, is an almost forgotten figure in the history of his country, his section and even his own state.

The task has not been an easy one. Of the many battles in which his command was actively engaged, General Anderson filed a report on only four of them, a failure that provoked no small amount of resentment among subordinates, and one which, in the final analysis, must figure into his anonymity. An excessive modesty which marked his character throughout the life of this able soldier is the invariable explanation for his reluctance to record these deeds, but, without a full conviction of the justice of his cause, the General may have simply followed the dictates of his conscience. Thus, he neither offered such plaudits nor wished to receive them.

The problem of Anderson is further aggravated by the fact that most of his official correspondence was lost during the war (see photocopy of letter following page 116) and most of the little that he salvaged was turned over to a professor at South Carolina College, in whose hands it suffered precisely the same fate.

There has been no thorough study of Anderson as a military commander, and, although himself a Confederate brigadier, his biographer, who fully captures the character of the General, falls short in describing

his military contributions. Although straightforward and honest, C. Irvine Walker's The Life of Lt. General R. H. Anderson tells enough of what Anderson did, but tells little of how he did it.

Hence the chief source of the writer has been the standard Official Records of the Civil War, and it is believed that enough evidence has been obtained to ascertain the martial qualities of his subject and to acquaint the reader with his part in the operations of that conflict. In keeping with the sentiment that war is not to be glorified, the thesis presents some of the letters written by the subject to shed new light on the temper, mind and character of General Anderson. Thus the writer has consulted various libraries and archives and has examined some of Anderson's unpublished papers and letters.

From the foregoing investigation, the writer now holds the conviction that General Anderson can well be considered one of the greatest tacticians and field commanders in American military history and believes that this study supports this conclusion.

PREFACE

It is hoped that the following study in some way will not only contribute to a reappraisal of the military achievements of Confederate General Richard Heron Anderson but, presently more important, that it will lead to a simple recognition of them. If such is the result, then his reputation will increase of its own accord.

Therefore, most of this work pertains to the military aspect of Anderson's career in the Civil War during his brigade, divisional and corps commands. Although cast as more a military study than a full biography, it has not neglected the importance of his early life and character. Indeed, the moral excellence of the man offers one of the few explanations for history's seemingly poor memory, and, for this reason, chapters on his pre-war and post-war careers have been added.

But the purpose of this work has been confined, in large measure, to a simple presentation of as much of his Civil War career as possible, and it has not been the writer's intention, nor is it within his capacity, to launch an exhaustive treatise on military science. It has not been attempted to analyze the General's every move on the battlefield, but the writer has tried to give more than a simple enumeration of them.

Acknowledgements are due to the staff of the Duke University Library for sending me photocopies of Anderson's letters and papers, to the staff of the Virginia State Library and the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress for the same service, to the staff at the North Carolina Department of Archives and History for allowing me to examine

the D. H. Hill Papers, to the staff at Wilson Library, University of North Carolina for access to the E. Porter Alexander Papers of the Southern Historical Collection, and a special note of thanks to Dr. Chalmers Davidson and his staff at Davidson College Library for their friendly assistance. An especial debt is due Professor Eugene Drozdowski, whose direction and guidance of this study have been invaluable.

Joseph C. Elliott August 3, 1970

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THE LESSONS OF FAMILY, SCHOOL AND WAR

(OCTOBER, 1821-FEBRUARY, 1861)

On October 7, 1821, Richard Heron Anderson was born in Stateburg, South Carolina, a little village just south of Camden and situated in a region known as the "High Hills of Santee." West of Stateburg lay the swift Wateree River, and along this meandering red estuary of the great Santee developed a culture from Camden to Charleston that rivaled any that every graced the Cooper, the York and the James.

The father of Richard Anderson was Dr. William Wallace Anderson, who left Maryland for South Carolina in 1810.[1] He was a graduate of New York's Medical College and became one of the most distinguished surgeons of his day. Dr. Anderson was the first on record to have removed a jawbone for cancer, a manifestly delicate operation for the nineteenth century physician, but a successful one nonetheless.[2] He did not entirely limit his energies to this ancient art, however, and became a quite respectable amateur architect.

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[1]For an interesting British ancestry see Josie Platt Parler, "AFTERGLOW: A Record of Two Centuries of Living at Borough House," reprinted from The South Atlantic Quarterly, XXXVII, no. 1 (1938), 73-85. Cited hereinafter as Parler, "Living at Borough House." The proud family tree casts a long shadow on William Faulkner's and others' shameful allusions to Southern genealogy. What is even more shameful and ungracious is the general acceptance of them.

[2]For this information the writer is indebted to Dr. Chalmers Davidson of Davidson College.

Before the American Revolution, Thomas Hooper[3] of Massachusetts bought a mansion in Stateburg known as "Borough House,"[4] built sometime before 1760. The curious appearance of this Boston Brahmin, who later became a Loyalist, had a special significance for Dr. Anderson. In 1818 Anderson married Mary Jane McKenzie, an English lady who was a niece of Hooper's wife. When Thomas Hooper died, possession of "Borough House" and its plantation went to Mary and was thereafter known as "The Anderson Place."

Dr. Anderson's father had been a Colonel in Washington's Continental Army[5] and, for a time, all seemed well in the house of the Tory daughter and the Patriot son--all but the house itself. The prevailing architecture of middle and late eighteenth century England was Georgian and wealthy Americans duplicated it with a persistent loyalty. Although the Borough House presented a fine Georgian example, Dr. Anderson simply would not have it. Colonial America was an era of the past and so must be its vestiges. In 1821 he stuccoed the house with a plaster of rammed earth, added wings on both flanks of the main structure and, as final

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[3]He was the brother of William Hooper, signer of the Declaration of Independence.

[4]The origin of the name "Borough House" comes from the fact that for quite some time it was the only structure in the area. Other popular names for the house were "Yellow House" and "Hill Crest." The plantation was also given these names at one time or another, but in ante-bellum days it was usually referred to as "Red Hill Plantation."

[5]He was Colonel Richard Anderson of the famous Seventh Maryland Line of Regulars. One of the heroes of the Battle of Camden, he fell wounded on its field, and has been closely identified with the area ever since. He revisited Camden in 1825 upon the occasion of the re-interment of Baron DeKalb, who was killed at the Battle of Camden. Lafayette laid the cornerstone and Anderson acted as a pallbearer. When he visited Camden again in 1832, Colonel Anderson was toasted at a banquet, W. M. Shannon, "The Family of Colonel Richard Anderson," address to Camden Historical Society, June, 1913, n. p.

addenda, sixteen proud columns boastingly displayed independence. The Revolution was now complete.[6]

The eldest of the Doctor's seven children, Richard Anderson, was born in the Borough House during its reconstruction. As a boy he probably asked many questions of the ancestral portraits that adorned the walls of his home, and their austere expressions captured by court painters, and famous American artists, such as John Singleton Copley, must have especially excited his curiosity.

Fond of the outdoors, young Anderson must have enjoyed his boyhood strolls through his father's gardens, where among the primeval oak that shaded the grounds were plants and shrubs of rare luxuriance. Some were planted by the statesman and world traveler, Joel Roberts Poinsett, a close family friend who died in the Borough House and, along with Mrs. Poinsett, was buried in the Anderson family plot in the old Episcopal cemetery across the way.

Young Anderson grew up in a community that possessed a dignity and charm all its own. His father was one of its pillars and to the people of the little village of Stateburg "Dr. Anderson was the beloved physician, the trusted confidant, the arbiter of family difficulties, the guardian of orphans, the trustee of estates, the father confessor of the entire neighborhood."[7] He was responsible for an unusual event that occurred only a short while before the outbreak of the War between the

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[6]For an architect's appraisal of this pise de terre structure, see Walter F. Perry, A. I. A., The Plantation Room (University of South Carolina Press, n. d.), opposite Plate 7.

[7]Parler, "Living at Borough House," pp. 76-78. For an obituary and biographical sketch of Dr. Anderson, see Charleston Daily Courier, May 27, 1864, Sec. A, p. 2.

States, an arrangement to accommodate an unusual family.

In Stateburg was a free Negro family, the head of which made parts for cotton gins. In most Southern communities free Negroes were, at best, only tolerated, but Dr. Anderson invited the family to attend services at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Cross, which he had helped to design in 1850. Assenting, the Negro family did not sit in the balcony as was the usual practice in those days, but was assigned a separate pew among the white families of the community.

Just north of, and adjacent to, the Borough Plantation was that of Governor Stephen Miller. He was the father of Mary Boykin Miller, who became the famous diarist and wife of United States Senator James Chesnut. Mrs. Chesnut wrote most of her diary during the Civil War, but she records the memories of a lifetime. Fondly remembering Richard Anderson as a "playfellow" of her youth, she styled him "the most silent and discreet of men."[8]

The Andersons had a butler whom they referred to as "Dick," obviously the namesake of the future General, and Richard Anderson had no greater admirer than he, who emulated Anderson to such a degree and became so silent that "he would make a veritable sphinx," insisted Mrs. Chesnut. After the war "Dick," the butler, was a proud individual and had little to say to any member of the white community. He did stop Mrs. Chesnut once to inquire about Richard Anderson, however. "He was my young master once," the whilom slave told the Senator's wife, "I always will like him better than anybody else."[9]

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[8]Mary Chesnut, A Diary from Dixie (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1949), pp. 266, 293. Cited hereinafter as Chesnut, Diary.

[9]Ibid., pp. 292-293.

Dr. Anderson had taken great pains to make "Dick" a polished butler. He easily acquired the necessary social graces and, at first, he proudly performed his duties. He was not too proud to fall in love, however, and in the course of but a few weeks Mrs. Anderson saw the impossibility of continuing the present arrangement. She conveyed the problem to Dr. Anderson: "Dick" had fallen in love with Hetty of the Miller plantation. Dr. Anderson solved the problem by allowing "Dick" to marry Hetty and join the Miller household. Mrs. Anderson in later years regretted only that "Dick" did not seem grateful, but she and the Doctor were happy for him in his new circumstance. "This was magnanimous on their part," wrote Mrs. Chesnut, "for Hetty was only a lady's maid," and had not the Andersons allowed the butler's removal, Hetty would have had to move to the Borough Plantation.[10]

The Andersons owned quite a large number of slaves[11] and the Doctor was forever the benign master. He could never be accused of "absentee landlordism" and he had no winter home in Charleston. He cared for "his people" as if they were his own children, but he never once thought of freeing them. His family in Maryland was of a different persuasion, however.

Dr. John Wallace Anderson was the youngest brother of William Wallace, and he died in early manhood. He dedicated his short life to the American Colonization Society, and worked with all the zeal his youth would indicate. At age twenty-eight he crossed the Atlantic to Liberia as the Society's agent and physician. Upon arrival, however, the young

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[10] Ibid.

[11] The writer has not determined how many slaves Dr. Anderson owned, but the number exceeded one hundred. For this information he is again grateful to Dr. Chalmers Davidson of Davidson College.

devotee was stricken with African fever and died before rendering his services. Somewhere, on the western coast of the "Dark Continent," he sleeps in a lonely, unmarked grave.[12]

The reticent young Richard Anderson said little of the institution that, as the eldest son, he would be expected to become a part of upon the death of his father. In the years to come, however, he would become convinced of its evils. Perhaps it even played a part in his decision to become a soldier. At any rate, when Anderson graduated from Edgehill Academy in Stateburg in 1838, he secured an appointment to the United States Military Academy through his father's friend, Poinsett, who was at the time the Secretary of War for President Van Buren.

Anderson was but sixteen years of age when he entered West Point in June, 1838, and he matriculated with such future military leaders as D. H. Hill, James Longstreet, Lafayette McLaws, John Pope, William Rosecrans and Abner Doubleday.

Educated in the Southern tradition of the "seven liberal arts," young Anderson did not excel in the Academy's engineering-oriented curriculum. He did manage to finish in the top half of the class of 1842, however, one of the most celebrated in the history of West Point.[13]

Upon graduating, Anderson became a Second Lieutenant in the U. S.

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[12]Like most of the many doctors in his family, John Wallace Anderson graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. Beyond this, little is known of him. His interest in the Society may have come from his brother, Dr. Alfred Anderson. Alfred married Elizabeth Ann Bolling, relative and friend of the Virginia Randolphs, founders of the American Colonization Society, W. W. Anderson, "The Anderson Family Record," July 28, 1906, n. p. The writer of this brief genealogy, also a physician, served as a courier for his first cousin, the General.

[13]G. W. Cullum, Biographical Register of Officers and Graduates of the U. S. Military Academy (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891), no. 1150.

Dragoons, and served at the Cavalry School for Practice in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. After one year at Carlisle he was transferred to frontier duty, where he would spend the next two years. Here, Anderson must have impressed his superior officers, for in 1844, the Governor of South Carolina, Pierce M. Butler, wrote his family that excellent reports concerning Lieutenant Anderson were coming in "from all quarters."[14]

"With good features and agreeable expression," the tall, muscular framed Anderson would have been a pleasing complement to King Frederick William's famous regiment of grenadiers.[15] Even by the strict standards of Robert E. Lee, he was already considered "a good officer." At this time Lee knew little else of the South Carolinian except that Anderson "was a favourite in his Regt."[16]

When hostilities ensued with Mexico, Anderson was with General Zachary Taylor. Later he was transferred from Taylor's Army to that of General Winfield Scott, and served under Scott from Vera Cruz to the capture of Mexico City. His great performance of the war was at San Augustine, where he led a detachment against a far superior Mexican force, which he held at bay to enable Scott to reach the Mexican capital much more quickly than he would have been able to do otherwise. For this action Anderson was brevetted First Lieutenant.

After the war Anderson, along with a small party of officers,

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[14] The State, Columbia, South Carolina, September 17, 1922, Sec. C, p. 2.

[15] Quote from Sorrel, Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer (Jackson, Tennessee: McCowat-Mercer Press, Inc., 1958), p. 128. Cited hereinafter as Sorrel, Recollections.

[16] Douglas Southall Freeman, Lee's Dispatches to Jefferson Davis (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1957), p. 10. Cited hereinafter as Freeman, Lee's Dispatches.

From an original negative in the Meserve Collection

RICHARD H. ANDERSON

which included U. S. Grant among it, secured leave to scale the foreboding heights of Popocatapetl, the highest volcano in the two Americas. The trek began from the little village of Ozumba and the only accident during the rugged ascent occurred when one of the overloaded pack mules lost its footing and rolled over the steep precipice. Later, having set up camp and believing that the poor beast had been dashed to bits, they were greatly amazed to view the owner coming up the ascent with mule and cargo intact; the load had provided the animal with a soft cushion and had protected it from injury.

The next morning the excursion was renewed, but the howling wind blew with such force that it picked up the loose snow from the mountain-top in such volume that it was impossible to continue. So the party descended below the snow line, mounted its horses, and by night it was back in Ozumba. Soon, on a bare dirt floor they were all asleep, but before morning, every member of the party began to scream with pain. "The feeling was about what might be expected from the prick of a sharp needle at a white heat," said one of the members, and by daylight the eyes of most of the party were swelled to such proportions that they were entirely blinded. Probably their eyes had been badly burned by the glare of the snow. After bathing them in cold water, however, the swelling went down. Most of the party concluded to give up the journey at this point, but not Anderson, however. He and a few brave companions determined to conquer the elements, and they resumed the trip upward. This time they succeeded in reaching the crater at the top. When he returned to Mexico City, Anderson sat down and recorded his account of the adventure, and it was published a short time afterwards.[17]

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[17]U. S. Grant, Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant (New York: Charles L.

After the Mexican War, Anderson returned to Carlisle as an instructor in cavalry tactics, where he met and married Sarah Gibson, the daughter of the Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, Judge John B. Gibson.[18] From 1852 to 1859 he was mostly assigned to frontier duty, and it was during this service that he received a curiously timed presentation for his service twelve years earlier in the Mexican War. In 1859 the state of South Carolina presented him a handsomely inscribed sword. At the top of the scabbard was a shield of gold ingrained with the state's coat of arms. What was ironic about the sword was the handle. To remind him of his loyalty, the hilt was surmounted with the head of John C. Calhoun. When the nullification crisis arose in 1832, along with their friend Poinsett, the Andersons were staunch Unionists, and were therefore opponents of Calhoun.[19] Nevertheless, Anderson graciously accepted the sword and wrote the following letter of appreciation.

Camp Floyd, Utah Territory,
April 28, 1859.

> Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter enclosing a copy of the resolution of the Senate and House of Representatives of the General Assembly of South Carolina, which conferred upon me the high distinction of its commendation and rewarded my military service by the gift of a sword.
>
> It is with unalloyed pleasure and deep gratification that I receive this token of remembrance and approbation from my native State, and it is with just pride that I welcome so unlooked for and flattering a recognition.

Webster and Company, 1886), I, 184. Hereinafter cited as Grant, Memoirs. That Anderson wrote and had published an account of this adventure is stated by Grant, ibid. The writer, however, has not been successful in his attempt to locate the publication.

[18]For a separate article on Judge Gibson, see Allen Johnson, ed., Dictionary of American Biography (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), VII, 254-256. Cited hereinafter as D. A. B.

[19]Anne Gregorie, The History of Sumter County (Sumter, South Carolina: Osteen-Davis Printing Company, 1954), p. 283.

It also affords me great happiness to remember that this high honor has been bestowed upon me for service in a campaign to the successful and glorious termination of which the heroic Palmetto Regiment so gallantly contributed. Twenty-one years ago I left my home to enter the Military Academy of the United States. Since that time I have revisited my native State only at long intervals, but my affection for it has not been diminished by my absence.

I have been led, by my services to our common country, into almost every quarter of her wide and magnificent domain; but I have no where found a land to prefer to our beloved State, nor have I ceased throughout all my wanderings to entertain the hope that at some future day I may find a home and a resting place upon its soil.

The feelings and reflections which your letter excites are all additional incentives to me to prove myself not unworthy of the commendation and regard so generously bestowed; to cherish attachment to the Government and institutions of my country; to preserve a high admiration of the noble patriotism of the great statesman whom you name; to be guided by his wisdom and to emulate the stainless purity of his private life.

The good wishes with which you present it, enhances the value of my country's gift, and increases the pleasure of acceptance.

Will you be so good as to communicate to the General Assembly my most grateful acknowledgements, to which I feel that I have given very imperfect expression. For your continued happiness and prosperity allow me to offer you my best wishes, and believe me, with great regard and respect your most obedient servant,

R. H. Anderson

To his Excellency,
R. F. W. Alston,
Governor of South Carolina.[20]

Thus Anderson had made his decision. If the need arose, the sword presented by his "country," as he referred to South Carolina in his letter to Governor Alston, would not be used against her, and South Carolina could assure herself of his loyalty. Although Anderson may never have said so publicly, he doubtlessly had reservations about secession, and one can safely surmise that the sentiments expressed by his father's friend Poinsett could have easily been his own. Poinsett stated in 1850 that "if revolution comes, for there can be no peacable secession or

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[20] C. Irvine Walker, The Life of Lieutenant General Richard Heron Anderson of the Confederate States Army (Charleston, South Carolina: Art Publishing Company, 1917), pp. 23-24. Cited hereinafter as Walker, R. H. Anderson. My italics.

dissolution of the Union, I am ready to take my part and my stand among the sons of the South in the ranks or in organizing our defences, but without hope."[21]

Anderson did not resign his commission until almost two years after he received this "honor" from his State Assembly, however, and the true "first shot" of the Civil War had already been fired when, on January 9, 1861, the "Star of the West" attempted to garrison Fort Sumter. On February 15, 1861, almost two months after South Carolina seceded, and while stationed at Fort Kearney, Nebraska, he resigned from the United States Army.

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[21]J. Fred Rippy, Joel Roberts Poinsett, Versatile American (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1935), p. 237.

CHAPTER II

FIGHTING WITH BRAGG AND JOHNSTON

(MARCH, 1861-MAY, 1862)

After resigning from the "Old Army," Captain Anderson was commissioned Colonel of the First South Carolina Regular Regiment, partly because of his earlier record of distinction, but equally dictated by the shortage of Academy-trained officers of that grade. Anderson commanded this unit as a reserve force during the initial firing at Fort Sumter, and, although he saw no action, he was commended for inspiring "good order, spirit and energy."[1] Anderson relieved General P. G. T. Beauregard as commander of the South Carolina forces and defenses on May 27, 1861, and he was promoted to Brigadier General four days later.[2] He served in this capacity until he was ordered to report to General Braxton Bragg, August 21, 1861, at Pensacola, Florida.[3]

Fort Pickens on Santa Rosa Island, which guarded the entrance to Pensacola Harbor, was the last fortress in the South to be held by Union forces. Wishing to enhance his prestige after a somewhat inactive season, General Bragg, the commander of Confederate troops at Pensacola, designed

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[1] U. S. War Department, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1892), Series I, Vol. I, p. 36. Cited hereinafter as O. R. In all subsequent citations of this work the series will be omitted.

[2] Ibid., VI, 1.

[3] Ibid., V, 1074.

an offensive under the pretext of a retaliatory measure for the destruction of the Confederate war schooner Judah. The mission was to destroy a camp and supply buildings set up outside of Fort Pickens, and General Anderson was chosen to effect it.[4]

On the night of October 9, 1861, General Anderson saw his first action of the war when he landed a force of one thousand men on Santa Rosa Island. In columns of battalions, Anderson launched a three-pronged attack on the Union outposts. To insure silence, he ordered two of the columns to march along the eastern beach of the island while the remaining battalion moved on the western beach. Averaging only three-quarters of a mile in width, the island permitted close contact between the troops, and, after a march of several miles, the force approached the Federal camp. The rear column led the assault as it sliced diagonally and stormed a party of unsuspecting New York Zouaves, driving them back toward Fort Pickens, while the remainder of the force burned the camp and supplies. Anderson then ordered his troops back to the steamers, and, for a while, it seemed as if there would be no pursuit. When a propeller of one of the steamers became entangled in some mesh, however, it delayed the transport long enough for the Federals to adjust their artillery. A panic then ensued that took several terrified Confederates overboard, where they either drowned or were shot in the water.[5]

Except for being one of the two night assaults of the war and to focus attention on Bragg, the consequences of this little nocturnal

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[4]William R. Boggs, Military Reminiscences of General William R. Boggs, C. S. A. (Durham, North Carolina: The Seaman Printery, 1913), p. 14. Cited hereinafter as Boggs, Military Reminiscences.

[5]O. R., VI, 460-463.

adventure did nothing to remove the Federals from Fort Pickens. Its importance was expanded to colossal proportions, however, and Bragg dispatched three separate reports concerning the affair to the Adjutant-General's office. He was lavish in his praise of Anderson. One of the accounts is worthy of note, however, for it demonstrates the early notice of Anderson's congenital modesty. Bragg informed Adjutant-General Cooper that "Brigadier-General Anderson commends in very just terms the gallantry of his little band, who have fully justified the high estimate I had formed of this excellent little army. They have shown it is only necessary to order and they will promptly execute, however desperate the undertaking. The general modestly omits to mention that at the close of the affair he received a painful wound in the left arm from a musketball, which will disable him for several weeks."[6]

The next encounter with Fort Pickens occurred on New Year's Day, 1862, and was occasioned when the Federals attempted to sink a small Confederate transport permitted by Bragg to land at the Navy Yard. Confederate batteries across the bay returned the salvo, but they did little damage to the fort. Due to superior Union artillery, however, proper range was effected from Fort Pickens and considerable destruction was done to the Navy Yard.[7] Incensed at the prospect of being discredited and seeing an opportunity to disparage his accomplished subordinate, Bragg wrote a very unfair account of Anderson's involvement in the incident. The result greatly damaged Anderson's reputation as a soldier at this time and gave birth to a rumor from which he never entirely escaped.

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[6] Ibid., pp. 458-460.

[7] Boggs, Military Reminiscences, pp. 105-109.

The following is a summation of Bragg's charges:

1. The firing from the Navy Yard into Fort Pickens was ordered by General Anderson.
2. General Anderson was intoxicated.
3. The steamer fired upon by the Federals was "imprudently allowed" by General Anderson to come up to the Navy Yard.[8]

Brigadier-General William R. Boggs, who had his problems with Bragg and resigned shortly after the affair, labeled the report "a vile libel on a gallant officer and an honorable gentleman." When hearing that Bragg had preferred charges against Anderson and that an arrest would probably follow, Boggs quickly wrote to Anderson and offered to serve as a witness on his behalf. A little earlier, he had written Bragg a letter that had vindicated Anderson of every accusation.

Boggs had been present at Anderson's private quarters when the firing had first begun, where Anderson and "his estimable wife" were greeting New Year's callers. "When the firing commenced," said Boggs, "all officers quickly mounted and rode to the Navy Yard." Boggs insisted that Anderson's conduct was so courageous in mounting the parapet that it "may have appeared to a new soldier an act of intoxication rather than that of a commander who wished to instill confidence in his command." Thus, if Boggs was with Anderson at his headquarters and the two generals arrived at the Navy Yard after the firing had begun, Anderson could not have ordered the shooting from the Navy Yard. It occurred precisely because Anderson had been absent. Finally, Anderson did not give his approval to permit the "private steamer," as Bragg chose to term it, to

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[8]For Bragg's report see O. R., VI, 497-498.

dock at the Confederate wharf at the Navy Yard. In fact, the so-called "private steamer," in reality was one of Bragg's own transports, under the direction of one of his officers on a special detail, by command and design of Bragg himself. Neither Anderson nor most of Bragg's own staff knew anything of this special detail, and, when questioned for bringing the steamer to the Navy Yard, the officer in charge of the detail admitted "That it was done with the knowledge and consent of General Bragg."[9]

Although Boggs did not choose it, perhaps the best defense he could have given Anderson involved the reverse process of simply an examination of the character of the accuser rather than of the accused. Braxton Bragg was the most contentious and unpopular general[10] north or south of the Potomac, and, before the end of the war, he stood indicted before almost every general officer in the Confederate armies. Curiously enough, however, chief among his few protagonists was the President of the Confederacy himself, and to oppose Bragg one would oppose Jefferson Davis and the Administration. The relationship between Bragg and Davis seems to be one of the few explanations for the retention of Bragg as a full general when he continued to discredit himself in almost every subsequent campaign that he entered.

Thus Anderson's brief career at Pensacola had not been a glorious one, and, although Bragg eventually dropped all charges against him, rumors of an affinity for alcohol followed Anderson into the Army of Northern Virginia,[11] where he was sent after Bragg had persuaded the President to

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[9]Boggs, Military Reminiscences, pp. 105-109.

[10]For a humorous anecdote concerning Bragg's disposition see Grant, Memoirs, II, 86-87.

[11]Freeman, Lee's Dispatches, p. 10.

have him supplanted. On February 15, 1862, Anderson was ordered from Pensacola to Virginia to assume command of a South Carolina brigade in the division of Major General James Longstreet, where he would redeem himself shortly afterwards.[12] All of Longstreet's brigades had competent leaders, said D. S. Freeman, but of all the brigadiers, "'Dick' Anderson, then forty-four, was the most brilliant."[13]

Anderson arrived in time to take part in the evacuation of Yorktown by General Joseph E. Johnston. Union General George McClellan had just superseded General Irwin McDowell and was planning an offensive. Johnston doubted the value of his position at Yorktown and anticipated an attack by McClellan. He believed that the Union general planned the destruction of Confederate water-batteries there and at Gloucester Point, and, if he could slip by the Confederate ram Virginia (Merrimac), to transport his army up the York River, attempt to break through the Confederate lines and thus threaten Richmond.[14] Acting on this belief, he informed the War Department that a retreat was in order.

After spiking the largest of the guns that would be left behind, Johnston ordered the retreat. It was an extremely hard march that followed and "rivers of mud" slowed logistics almost to a standstill, allowing

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[12] O. R., II, 488.

[13] Douglas Southall Freeman, R. E. Lee (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), II, 91. Cited hereinafter as Freeman, R. E. Lee. Freeman noted Anderson's age several other times and correctly on every occasion. The historian erred in the quotation above, however. Anderson's age in 1862 was forty-one.

[14] Joseph E. Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959), p. 112. Cited hereinafter as Johnston, Narrative.

the rearguard of D. H. Hill an average of less than a mile per h[illegible].[15] For a while it seemed as if Hill would be permitted to escape unm[illegible]sted[16] when General "Jeb" Stuart's little cavalry suddenly dug in to meet [illegible] assault. Immediately, a brigade of General John Magruder's division under General Paul Semmes was detached as the rear column, proximity determining the choice.[17] The brigade was placed in the bastioned ear[illegible] works of Fort Magruder and was soon afterwards reinforced by another bri[illegible] gade, both of which were placed under the command of General Lafayette McLaws. Just narrowly did the garrison have time to man the guns before they were attacked. But the action was brief and the Federals withdrew almost as quickly as they had come.[18]

At sundown on May 4, 1862, Fort Magruder was re-occupied by two brigades of Confederates under General Anderson. Longstreet had been ordered to send only one, but, as his brigades were small, he decided to send Anderson's and General Roger Pryor's.[19] Because of the approaching darkness and a driving rain, Anderson occupied but one of the thirteen redoubts that flanked the fort and could only await sunrise to adjust his lines. The next morning he occupied six more redoubts and braced himself

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[15] Edward Porter Alexander, Military Memoirs of a Confederate (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), p. 66. Cited hereinafter as Alexander, Military Memoirs.

[16] Alexander believed (ibid., p. 63) that McClellan's reluctance to attack was based upon misinformation supplied by the Pinkerton Detective Agency concerning the numerical strength of Johnston's army.

[17] Douglas Southall Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), I, 175. Cited hereinafter as Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants.

[18] Johnston, Narrative, pp. 119, 120.

[19] O. R., II, pt. 1, 564.

for the onslaught.[20]

The Federals were well-equipped for this engagement with their rifled cannon opposing the Confederate "smooth bore," and their telescopic rifles drew bead on Confederate pickets.[21] These pickets encountered the Federals at six o'clock that morning and met with a steadily increasing resistance. At ten o'clock Johnston sent Cadmus Wilcox' and A. P. Hill's brigades as reinforcement. This assistance temporarily shook the Federals loose, but, when they were reinforced by another division, Johnston detached George Pickett's and Raleigh Colston's brigades to Anderson.[22]

It was manifestly a demanding enterprise for a newly commissioned brigadier who, as yet, had not even had the opportunity to lead a single brigade into action.[23] Now, in his first general action, Anderson was commanding seven brigades[24] against three Federal divisions! For the most experienced officers, combining brigades on the field was a most difficult task, but, as he had been ordered to take advantage of any opportunity, Anderson arranged them in solid phalanx. Most of the brigades were maneuvered to the right toward the position being most threatened, and the Federals steadily moved back into the woods. Anderson's prime objective

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[20]James Longstreet, From Manassas to Appomatox (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960), p. 73. Cited hereinafter as Longstreet, From Manassas.

[21]Alexander, Military Memoirs, p. 64.

[22]Johnston, Narrative, p. 120.

[23]Except at Pensacola, Anderson had encountered little Federal infantry. His biographer states (Walker, R. H. Anderson, p. 67) that Anderson's and Cobb's brigades, on April 16, 1862, repulsed a "vigorous assault" at Yorktown. Even at this early date, however, the general consensus was that this action was a minor affair.

[24]General Jubal Early's brigade was also detached to Anderson, but Early decided to attack on the left side of the Williamsburg road. His advance was a complete failure.

was to keep their three divisions from setting up artillery. This he accomplished, and when darkness approached, Anderson moved his troops back into the fort, having captured or silenced all but one piece of the Union cannon.[25] Only the shortage of horses prevented him from hauling in two Federal batteries intact.[26] Johnston's rear was now safe, and he was allowed to continue his retreat with little or no pursuit.[27] It was now apparent that Richard H. Anderson was no ordinary brigadier.

The Battle of Williamsburg was soon foreshadowed by larger affairs and the circumstances of that engagement have been all but forgotten. Against a numerically superior force, however, Anderson, in his first general engagement, perhaps saved Johnston's army from defeat. A brigadier for less than one year, he commanded what amounted to half of Johnston's entire army. The action at Fort Magruder constituted the attack on the right at Williamsburg and was the only successful phase of the battle on the Confederate side.[28]

Concluding his official report of the battle Anderson states: "The fearless bearing, and the unceasing assistance rendered by them requires from me a particular notice of the members of my staff. Captain

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[25] O. R., II, pt. 1, 581.

[26] Daniel Harvey Hill, Bethel to Sharpsburg (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Company, 1926), I, 25. Cited hereinafter as Hill, To Sharpsburg.

[27] For Johnston's appraisal of Anderson's actions at Fort Magruder see Johnston, Narrative, p. 121.

[28] For a listing of the forces, both North and South, active at this engagement see: Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, eds., Battles and Leaders of the Civil War (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, Inc., 1956), II, 200-201. Cited hereinafter as B. & L. Union losses quoted in this volume totaled only 468 killed, but Johnston contends that Hooker stated under oath before the Committee on the Conduct of War that the losses in his division alone totaled seventeen-hundred men. See Johnston, Narrative, p. 123.

T. S. Mills, Assistant Adjutant General, Captain Edward J. Means, Acting Aide de Camp, and Mr. E. M. Anderson, Volunteer Aide de Camp. The last of these was my brother. He has given his life to his country's cause."[29]

Perhaps it will give us insight into the character of the General to read a letter to his father concerning the death of his younger brother McKenzie:

> A most heavy affliction has fallen upon you and me and all other members of the family in the death of McKenzie. The suddenness with which this calamity has befallen us, renders it appalling. The instantaneous transmission from life and health and excited animation to death of one so near to me fills me with inexpressible grief and wretchedness. I loved my brother with my whole heart, and during the last thirty days, in which he has been constantly at my side--his unconcealed satisfaction of being with me--his deep interest in all that was going on--his eager and cheerful performance of all his duties and his constant anxiety that all should go well with our country's cause--increased my attachment--if indeed anything could have done so.[30]

After he had visited his brother's remains at the home of a Dr. Garrick, he wrote another letter to his father. "It was here," said Anderson, "that I, for the first time, fully realized the dreadful fact. The hand of death was laid upon the face of him whose countenance had only a little while before delighted me by its animation, its courage, its intelligence and its strong affection. It was the most agonizing moment of my life."[31]

It was a painful duty, surely, for the General "to bury the love and affection of a lifetime" and to resume his responsibilities as a soldier.[32] But as Jackson's actions in the Valley had militated against

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[29] O. R., II, pt. 1, 581.

[30] Walker, R. H. Anderson, p. 71.

[31] Ibid., p. 72.

[32] Ibid., p. 71.

any conjunction between McDowell and McClellan, Johnston saw a good opportunity to attack.[33]

Part of McClellan's army was camped at Seven Pines to which several roads from Richmond led. The vanguard of Johnston's army was the division of D. H. Hill, who became engaged on the morning of May 31st. At this time, Anderson was in command of the left wing of Longstreet's division, but, when Longstreet ordered him to send a brigade to Hill's support, he instructed Anderson to accompany it and direct its operations. Anderson selected his own brigade and reported to Hill.[34] Before he arrived, the brigades of Gabriel Rains and Robert Rodes had entangled themselves in the abatis on the right of the Williamsburg Road, and, after Rodes received a wound in the arm, his senior colonel, John B. Gordon, withdrew his men from the woods. The situation was even more critical on the left of the road as the enemy mercilessly mowed down from behind their strong position Hill's two remaining brigades.[35]

After a quick survey Anderson divided his brigade into regiments and the regiments into battalions, a division that D. H. Hill believed had not yet been attempted during the war.[36] Although the division of forces was not in accordance with the maxims established by the great French theorist Antoine Jomini, the results were soon to justify Anderson's action. As the troops on both sides were busily pre-occupied and the

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[33] O. R., II, pt. 1, 933.

[34] Anderson to Hill, October 26, 1867, D. H. Hill Mss., 70-3360, Virginia State Library, Richmond.

[35] O. R., II, pt. 1, 239-243.

[36] Southern Historical Society Papers (Richmond: Southern Historical Society, 1876-1944), IX, 92. Cited hereinafter as S. H. S. P.

enemy being driven slowly back into the form of a horseshoe, Anderson ordered two of his regiments under Colonel Micah Jenkins to get position in the rear of the unsuspecting Federals through the cover of the thick woods.[37] As Jenkins attacked, Anderson rammed his column into where the Federals had retired. The three regiments "attacked like demons possessed"[38] and, after being joined by one of G. B. Anderson's regiments, one after another of the Union brigades were swept aside. At the end of the day, Anderson's troops held the most advanced position of the battle, having driven back the Federals for more than a mile beyond their main line of works, capturing two gun positions and several camps, including commissaries and quartermaster's supplies.[39] The extent of the force with which Anderson hit and the ensuing panic which gripped the retreating Federals is testified to by the fact that not a single soldier commanded by him was taken prisoner![40]

Seven Pines seemed destined to legend and Anderson along with it. James L. Coker, writing some years after the war, still maintained that "it was the most bloody, while it was our most successful fight of the whole war. Three regiments of R. H. Anderson's brigade led in this tremendous onslaught."[41] Even Longstreet, who was disappointed at not getting into the action, had to concede that "The severest part of the

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[37] James L. Coker, A History of Company E 6th S. C. V. Infantry, Company G 9th S. C. V. Infantry, C. S. A. (Charleston: Walker, Evans & Cogswell Co., 1899), p. 66. Cited hereinafter as Coker, History.

[38] Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, I, 242.

[39] O. R., II, pt. 1, 947.

[40] Statement by James L. Coker, who served as a Captain in Anderson's brigade, Coker, History, p. 66.

[41] Ibid. Although this quotation is an obvious exaggeration, it does represent the pride which the Confederates took in their great success at Seven Pines.

work was done by Major General D. H. Hill's Division, but the attack of the two brigades under General R. H. Anderson, one commanded by General Kemper and the other by Colonel Micah Jenkins, was made with such spirit and regularity as to have driven back a most determined foe--this decided the day in our favor."[42]

Hill would have been the last to question Longstreet's assertion and so impressed was he by Anderson's performance that his praise was the most generous of all. "These three regiments,"[43] he affirmed, "which say 1,800 men, began that march to victory, which has but few parallels in history, fighting the most of Heintzleman's Corps with fragments of Keye's Corps."[44]

The wounded Johnston also had a kind word and recommended Anderson's promotion.[45] But the praise that Anderson cherished most of all was probably that which was affectionately bestowed upon him by his men--the accolade of "Fighting Dick" Anderson.

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[42] From Longstreet's report, O. R., II, pt. 1, 944. My italics.

[43] Actually, there were four regiments engaged at Seven Pines under Anderson's direction. Three of the regiments were from his own brigade, while the fourth was detached from the brigade of G. B. Anderson, which joined in the last phase of the attack. It has not been precisely determined what part Kemper's brigade had in this assault, but the evidence at hand seems to indicate that the confusion in the earlier part of the battle forced his brigade to retire before Anderson had become engaged. Anderson believed this himself, for, although he filed no report, he wrote after the war: "To the best of my recollection my Brigade was the only one of Longstreet's Division that was actively engaged at 'Seven Pines.' Pickett's and perhaps Kemper's brigades had some slight skirmishing and brushing next morning, but I do not believe they fired a shot on the day of the engagement. In this I may be mistaken for you know I was detached from the [Longstreet's] Division. . . ." Anderson to Hill, November 14, 1867, D. H. Hill Mss., North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh.

[44] As quoted in Coker, History, p. 66.

[45] O. R., II, pt. 1, 935.

In his appraisal of the aftermath of the battle, Freeman concludes that the general whose actions in this engagement were most open to question was the general whose favorable reputation as a soldier actually increased and is a reputation sustained to the present. "A reading of the official reports of the action," he observes, "led the Southern people to put Longstreet's name ahead of any of those distinguished on that field of confusion."[46] His summary of Anderson's part of the battle bears out the testimony of the General's colleagues, however:

> Richard H. Anderson had confirmed all that had been said of him in his battle on the right at Williamsburg. Through abatis and forest, dripping and miry at Seven Pines, he had led part of his own command forward and had directed the operation of two other Brigades. No performance on the field had been more difficult or more admirably executed.[47]

Had his fellow officers not supplied his laudations, little would have been known of the contributions of "Fighting Dick" Anderson in this remarkable Confederate victory. Anderson filed no report of the affair and spent the next day at the headquarters of General D. H. Hill. There, the two generals passed the time in conversation under the shade of some scrub oak bushes where, much to the amusement and delight of Anderson, Hill gave a captured Union chaplain "some edifying discourse and a piece of ⌜his⌝ mind." It was during this pleasant visit that Anderson was informed that General Johnston, who had been wounded at Seven Pines, would be succeeded by another Virginian, General Robert E. Lee. After receiving a mosquito net from Hill, who had secured the coveted article from one of

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[46] Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, I, 253-262.

[47] Ibid., p. 249.

his subordinates' overabundant supply, Anderson rode back to his headquarters for orders from the new commander of the army.[48]

[48] Anderson to Hill, October 26, 1867, D. H. Hill Mss., 70-3360, Virginia State Library, Richmond.

CHAPTER III

WITH LEE IN THE SEVEN DAYS

(JUNE-JULY, 1862)

Except for the unsuccessful campaign in West Virginia, unsuccessful because guerilla warfare was an anathema to him, General Robert E. Lee had been determining strategy from a desk within the confines of Richmond. But now having command in the field, and after a month of comparative inactivity, Lee decided to renew battle.

In the gray dawn of June 27, 1862, after an artillery duel on the 26th, the Confederates advanced to Mechanicsville only to find the enemy retreating. Continued pursuit provoked occasional ambuscades and finally the two armies confronted each other as the Federals positioned themselves strongly near Gaines Mill, thus commencing the Battle of First Cold Harbor. The columns of Longstreet were the first to arrive and rested there while awaiting orders.[1]

Union field commander Fitz-John Porter had his lines in a powerful semicircle with his left resting on flat ground near the Chickahominy River.[2] Behind this plateau was a deep ravine and a counterscarped stream over which the Confederates had to attack an enemy whose batteries were set up on two heights. The right lay south of Old Cold Harbor Road. Naturally strong, the line was reinforced by rifle pits, felled trees,

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[1] O. R., II, pt. 2, 756.

[2] Ibid.

rail pilings and dirt-filled haversacks.[3] The Confederates' only avenue of assault on Porter's right flank was, with soggy thrusts, across the swales and morass of a broad savanna called Boatswain Swamp.

The battle opened from behind a ridge near Powhite Creek when A. P. Hill threatened the Federal right. Again and again Hill attempted to break the Federal line, but his ranks were being decimated with each new attack. At about 5 o'clock Lee ordered assault commander James Longstreet to make a feint toward the Federal left to relieve the pressure on Hill.[4]

Under Anderson, three brigades engaged the Federals with orders not to cross the open ground. Portions of these brigades lost restraint and crossed, but they were quickly recalled. In their security, the Federals were not annoyed by this limited diversion, however, and in desperation Lee sent a message to Longstreet that "all other efforts had failed," and that, unless he was able to "do something," a victory would be lost. Longstreet immediately sent Anderson's and Pickett's brigades into action, holding Kemper's in reserve.[5]

Anderson advanced his men straight down the mouth of a wide chasm, and the first Federal line broke as his brigade started up the slope toward the batteries on one of the heights. When the brigade had positioned itself below the fire of the batteries, a second line broke, and Anderson attempted to ascend the crest. Federal cavalry delayed the brigade long enough to remove some of the reserve artillery, but, after they retreated into the swamps, Anderson took the batteries, having

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[3]Longstreet, From Manassas, p. 126.

[4]Ibid., p. 127; O. R., II, pt. 2, 757, 836.

[5]Longstreet, From Manassas, p. 128.

sliced through three successive lines of infantry fire![6] When he reached the crest of the hill, he divided his brigade. Under his personal leadership, part of it went to the aid of Whiting's brigade, of Jackson's division. Anderson's brigade "came in gallant style to his support," said "Stonewall," "and the enemy was driven to the lower part of the plateau. The shouts of triumph, which rose from our brave men as they, unaided by artillery, had stormed this citadel of their strength, were promptly carried from line to line, and the triumphant issue of this assault . . . determined the fortunes."[7]

After the battle, every major general in Lee's army claimed credit for the first break in the enemy lines except A. P. Hill. Brigadier General Anderson, however, who advanced no claims to the captures and neglected to even file a report of the action, seems to have settled the controversy when the two brigades and two regiments under his direction[8] turned in five thousand prisoners to Lee's provost-guard. Out of this total Anderson's brigade alone made the capture of at least two regiments, the Fifteenth Michigan and the Eighty-third Pennsylvania.[9]

After his defeat at First Cold Harbor, McClellan hurriedly re-assembled his troops for the march to a new base he had established at Harrison's

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[6] Ibid.; O. R. II, pt. 2, 757.

[7] O. R., II, pt. 2, 556. Longstreet stated (Longstreet, From Manassas, p. 128) that Whiting requested reinforcement from one of Jackson's brigades that had gotten lost and had reported to Longstreet, and that this brigade had turned the Federal left. But Jackson in his report (O. R., II, pt. 2, 555) states that "When it [the lost brigade that had reported to Longstreet] reached there, the enemy had already been repulsed at that point by a flank movement of Brigadier General R. H. Anderson."

[8] The troops under Anderson's supervision in the engagement were those of his own command, Pickett's brigade and two regiments of Hood's brigade.

[9] Longstreet, From Manassas, pp. 128-129; O. R., II, pt. 2, 86, 758-759.

Landing. Here he would be under the sheltering power of his gunboats on the James and safe until reinforcements could arrive from Washington. Only then would McClellan feel confident enough to resume the offensive.[10]

The Union general had not gone far before he again encountered the Confederates. Under General Magruder they attacked his rearguard at Savages Station, but were repulsed by a single Federal brigade,[11] and McClellan was allowed to continue his hurried retreat.

It was a foreworn army that marched across the fords and rivulets of White Oak Swamp on that last day of June, and no one could have been more apprehensive than its commander. Clumsily pursued by Jackson, McClellan's forces converged at a crossroads called Glendale, and congested logistics halted marchers from every direction. Here the Federal commander faced the greatest challenge of his career. He was about to be knifed from the west by seven armies. "Tactically, more than one half of McClellan's army was enclosed as within three sides of a box,"[12] and his exposed portion was momentarily paralyzed. The premonitory battles of the past few months could not have told so wretched a story. Confederates picked up Union stragglers by the thousands, and abandoned wagons complemented the bag.

McClellan's plight was somewhat mitigated when an abandoned old logging road was discovered which led eventually to his base at Harrison's Landing. Some of the wagon trains were sent on it, but the crossroads

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[10]Clifford Dowdey, The Seven Days (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1964), p. 286. Cited hereinafter as Dowdey, The Seven Days.

[11]O. R., II, pt. 2, 431.

[12]Dowdey, The Seven Days, p. 288.

still remained jammed.[13] It looked as if the fate of McClellan's army had been sealed.

The Confederate line of attack corresponded to the positions of the columns on the march. Six divisions would hit McClellan as they followed five roads, all of which led directly or indirectly to Glendale.[14] The main body of McClellan's troops had to take the Willis Church Road, leading directly to Harrison's Landing, but this was a distance of some five miles, and McClellan still had not gotten his army unraveled at Glendale. Sending his troops down a single road when others were close by and paralleling Willis Church was McClellan's greatest error of the whole campaign.[15] But, even if McClellan should escape, Holmes' division was to be set up and waiting by way of River Road to hit his exposed flank.[16]

The battle plan was for General Benjamin Huger, coming up the Charles River Road, to hit first as he was first in the line of march. The attack would signal Longstreet as his division came up the Long Bridge Road, and so on down the chain of command, thus facilitating the main assault.[17] The Confederates would then be ready to converge upon Glendale and annihilate, or force the surrender of, McClellan's tired and confused divisions. There would even be opportunity for shock tactics, the instrument of which was the cavalry. The heavy infantry rifle had done its work here, too, and except for reconnaissance missions, the "eyes

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[13] Ibid., p. 285.

[14] Ibid., pp. 284-285.

[15] Russell F. Weigley, History of the United States Army (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), pp. 241-242.

[16] O. R., II, pt. 2, 906.

[17] Ibid., p. 495.

and ears of the infantry" was becoming a thing of the past. The light arms carried by cavalry could not compete with the new and heavier breach-load infantry rifle.

As Huger approached a position between Fisher's and Bruckett's Fords, he encountered obstacles. Here, Charles City Road was obstructed with piles of logs, and the aristocratic old Huguenot from South Carolina was persuaded to condone a curious thing; he allowed Brigadier General William Mahone, ante-bellum construction engineer, to continue what he had started when Huger arrived--constructing a new pass through the woods to circumvent the road block. As time was a major factor, and his part in the assault being most significant, the practical solution would have been to deploy a work detail under the protection of guns to clear the way. But with a zeal that would have inspired the toughest "bull o' the woods" began the battle of the axes. As Confederates "stumped" trees and dragged them aside, Federal axemen felled them to be dragged upon the Charles River Road. Little was accomplished except to give McClellan more time to move away more of his troops. In a familiar old woods metaphor, says Freeman, "while the hunter fumbled, the quarry was escaping."[18]

About 2 o'clock in the afternoon Mahone's crew emerged into an open field. As it did, a Federal picket fired and Huger sent up a battery. About 2:30 it opened fire, and Longstreet, who had his troops in position since 11 o'clock, and taking this as the expected signal, ordered that one of his batteries "return salutation." As he heard only artillery and no "crackling" sound of rifle fire, Longstreet decided to wait for the volume to increase before beginning the main assault.[19] At his headquarters

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[18] Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, I, 567-578.

[19] Longstreet, From Manassas, p. 134.

at this time were the distinguished personages of General Lee and President Davis, perhaps expecting the issue of one hundred years to be shortly decided, when shells suddenly screamed through the forest and fell in their midst, killing some horses and wounding two men.

Again, as in every action of the campaign, Anderson was the active commander in the field whenever a portion of, or all of, Longstreet's command became engaged. His own brigade was entrusted to the competent Micah Jenskins.[20] Instead of ordering a counter battery to silence the Federal guns, Jenkins was ordered to make shorter work of it with his battalion of sharp shooters, but not to charge.[21] In an earlier war, this would have been unthinkable, but now infantry fire had rendered mobile artillery tactics about as useless as the bayonet, for when close enough to do any good, rifles could pick off the artillery men.

So Jenkins, with his long-range rifles, became engaged. But repression was too demanding and his impulsive South Carolinians charged this hot artillery unit and brought on the general fight, the Battle of Glendale. Capturing the battery, Anderson's brigade under Jenkins moved ahead. Over ravine, through abatis, underbrush and thick timber, the brigade continued straight into the crackling musket fire. Followed by Kemper's and four other brigades, the whole division under Anderson now headed toward the high ground occupied by the Federal division of General George McCall.[22]

After a hard fought contest, McCall's line was broken and his

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[20] Ibid.

[21] B. & L., II, 401.

[22] Ibid., pp. 400-401.

position taken along with another Federal battery.[23] Captured in Anderson's first attack was the Federal general himself.[24] No rout ensued, however, for no sooner had the Confederates gained ground than a Federal division under General Sedgewick came up and pressed Anderson's right, while Kearney's and Slocum's divisions checked his left. Then a portion of Hooker's division reinforced Sedgewick's.[25]

Under the pretext of waiting for Jackson to hit the Federal rear, and for Huger to attack, Longstreet continued to hold A. P. Hill's division in reserve, while Anderson, commanding the field, battled against five Federal divisions! "Old Pete" apparently wanted his troops to occupy the entire field unassisted. Finally, seeing Anderson hard-pressed and falling back, he sent in Hill, who assisted Anderson in regaining the position he had won earlier. "When he [Hill] came into the fight," said Longstreet somewhat exaggeratedly, "the Federal line had been broken at every point except one."[26]

Sometimes referred to as Frayser's Farm, the Battle of Glendale was notable for the almost total disintegration of McClellan's command. Equally noteworthy, however, was the failure of the Confederates to take advantage of this disintegration. In the years to come, the strategy devised by General Lee at the Battle of Glendale would seldom be more superb, but the tactics of his subordinates would never be poorer. Had the execution of the plan been commensurate with its conception, it may not be unrealistic to believe that the capture of McClellan's entire

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[23] Longstreet, From Manassas, p. 135.

[24] Walker, R. H. Anderson, p. 92.

[25] Longstreet, From Manassas, p. 135.

[26] B. & L., II. 401.

army would have resulted.

Although not a major general in Lee's army escaped censure, the actions of Huger and Longstreet seem to stand out among all others. Huger's actions were manifestly questionable, but by holding A. P. Hill's division in reserve while Anderson was battling against five Federal divisions, Longstreet may have been equally culpable for the outcome of the battle. When Hill's division finally was deployed on Anderson's left, however, there was no other single instance from the beginning to the end of the entire campaign where two divisions fought together as a cohesive and orderly unit.[27] It was a credit to both Anderson and Hill. The services rendered by General Anderson at the Battle of Glendale are especially praiseworthy.

Anderson quietly took over a command much higher than his grade, and, although it has not been determined at how many points, it was Longstreet's division under his command that first broke through the Federal lines. Against a consolidated effort of five divisions, Anderson held the field with only five brigades, and, had reinforcement arrived earlier from Longstreet, it may have been all that was needed to force the surrender of McClellan. Although his name headed the list of those who distinguished themselves at Glendale, Anderson filed no report of the engagement and the credit seems to have gone to Longstreet, who made no attempt to correct the error.

After the battle McClellan's army was allowed to slip away under the cover of darkness to an impregnable eminence called Malvern Hill. In this position McClellan could have sat out the balance of the war, and his gunboats on the James River were less than a mile away. The Confederates

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[27] Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, I, 670.

made repeated attempts to take the heights, but were driven back with heavy losses in all of them. It was the last engagement of the Peninsula campaign. Longstreet's division, after the previous day's hard fighting, was held in reserve, and Anderson did not take part in the assaults on Malvern Hill.

CHAPTER IV

FROM SECOND BULL RUN TO FREDERICKSBURG

(AUGUST-DECEMBER, 1862)

After the Peninsula Campaign Lee reorganized his army into a more coordinated and efficient body. Throughout the campaign each individual division had acted, in essence, as a small and independent command. After ridding his army of an unprecedented number of generals, Lee merged his divisions into two separate wings under Jackson and Longstreet. Anderson was soon given the old division of Benjamin Huger after Huger had been discreetly awarded the sinecure of Inspector of Artillery and Ordnance.[1]

Anderson's handling of troops during the entire campaign denoted a definite ability for field command. Indeed, his actions were so commendable that the modest soldier was the only Confederate general throughout the war to receive recommendations for promotion by two full generals --both for action in a single campaign.

The promotion was belated, however. General "Joe" Johnston thought that Anderson deserved a division immediately following Seven Pines and he so informed the Confederate Congress.[2] General Robert E. Lee felt the same confidence and wrote to President Davis that Anderson definitely should be elevated to divisional command, but prudently suggested that "Unless Huger had other duty, I do not know where to get a

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[1] O. R., XI, pt. 3, 640.

[2] Ibid.

division for Genl. A.--yet awhile."[3] After Davis failed to act, however, Lee became more explicit. He wrote the President that Huger could be sent to South Carolina, and, after Huger was given his new position instead, he relinquished his division to Anderson, who was commissioned Major General on July 14, 1862. "So manifestly was the promotion deserved," noted one student, "that it created little comment."[4]

Composed of the brigades of Mahone, Armistead and Wright, Anderson's division was a sizable unit at the outset, and it was enlarged by the brigades of Wilcox, Featherstone and Pryor shortly afterwards. Until the two wings of Longstreet and Jackson were organized into three corps, Anderson acted mostly in cooperation with Longstreet, but prior to being specifically assigned to A. P. Hill's corps in June, 1863, his division "constituted a separate body and was subject only to General Lee's orders."[5]

After the Peninsula Campaign, Anderson was assigned for a brief period to command at Drewry's Bluff, near Petersburg, in cooperation with Major General Gustavus W. Smith,[6] where he spent most of his time setting up batteries near Bermuda Hundred.[7] In the meantime, not far down the James River from Anderson's position, McClellan awaited possible reinforcement from Pope's army in the Shenandoah Valley. To prevent such a union, Lee sent Jackson to keep Pope occupied. When Jackson effected a surprise attack on Pope's base at Manassas Junction, Pope wheeled around and faced

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[3] Freeman, Lee's Dispatches, pp. 10-11.

[4] Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, I, 613, 673.

[5] Letter from Anderson to D. H. Hill, November 14, 1867, D. H. Hill Mss., North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh.

[6] O. R., XII, pt. 3, 930-31.

[7] Letter from Anderson to D. H. Hill, August 5, 1862, D. H. Hill Mss., Virginia State Library, Richmond.

him head on. Against Pope's superior force, Jackson could only delay him until reinforcement arrived from Lee. On August 28, Anderson received orders to join Confederate forces at Bull Run.

Jackson's forces at Bull Run were strung along an unfinished railroad and held off a concentrated effort to dislodge him on the 29th. Longstreet, after pushing back the Federals at Groton on the 29th, arrived the next day and was positioned on Jackson's left. Late in the evening the Federals launched a determined assault on Jackson's center with such vigor that even the "Mighty Stonewall" had to call for assistance. Longstreet was placed by Lee in a position diagonal to Jackson's line and on high ground that overlooked it. Evidently unobserved by the busy Federal assailants, the line formed what amounted to a gigantic pincer, and Union General John Pope rushed right into it as Longstreet's artillery poured forth a devastating fire on his defenseless flank. When the Federals attempted to defend themselves against the enfilade on their right, Hood's division of Longstreet's corps, led a general assault, pushing the Federals some distance back before they rallied and temporarily halted his and the division of General N. G. Evans.

It was at this time that Anderson arrived with his division and placed his troops into action. The stubborn resistance of the Federals was short-lived as his division moved up and "drove everything before it."[8] By the end of the day Anderson's men held the most advanced position on the field.[9]

Anderson must have presented a striking contrast that afternoon mounted upon Cuffy, the coal-black charger that carried him throughout

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[8]The Charleston Courier, September 1, 1862, Sec. A, p. 1.

[9]O. R., XII, pt. 2, 557, 629.

the war, and he was dressed in a white waist coat with gloves "as if going to a ball," wrote one observer. After sweeping across the broad plains of Manassas and gaining the promontory of Chinn Ridge, he was about to regroup his forces for further pursuit when Lee's Assistant Adjutant-General, Colonel Walter Taylor, rode up and informed him that Jackson's position was no longer threatened. General Anderson smiled and turned to his men: "Gentlemen," he said, "General Jackson says that by the blessings of God his necessities have been relieved. So we will go to the right and help Longstreet."[10]

The effective Federal rear-guard action at Henry Hill, along with approaching darkness, allowed Pope's army to escape destruction. Anderson played no part in this attack but his command constituted the advance guard of Lee's counter-attack. ". . . If, as Moltke avers, the junction of two armies on the field of battle is the highest achievement of military genius, the campaign against Pope has seldom been surpassed; and the great counter-stroke at Manassas is sufficient in itself to make Lee's reputation as a tactician."[11] Indeed, it was a remarkable victory and the commanding general could now assure himself that he had competent subordinates. "It was not Lee's nature to be hasty in his judgement of men," says one of his biographers, "but after Second Manassas he reasonably could feel that in the dread test of unequal battle he could count

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[10]Governor W. E. Cameron quoting Anderson in Walker, R. H. Anderson, p. 101. Cameron was present at the battle as the Adjutant of the Twelfth Virginia.

[11]The quotation is from Colonel G. F. R. Henderson in Francis F. Wilshin, Manassas (Bull Run) (Washington, D. C.: National Park Service Historical Handbook, Series No. 15, 1953), p. 37.

on such men as 'Dick' Anderson, and John Hood and 'Jeb' Stuart."[12]

Lee's success at Second Manassas undoubtedly figured into his decision to launch the invasion of Maryland, which immediately followed Second Bull Run. His reasons, and they are innumerable, are unjustifiable only because the result was a supposedly drawn battle.

Before he could achieve a successful campaign in Maryland, it was decided that the Federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry had to be captured. The plan was for Jackson to attack from the south of the arsenal while Anderson, with six brigades working with four of McLaws, approached it from the north side of the James River.

On September 1, 1862, the day before Anderson was detached with McLaws, he was camped around Frederick near Lee. The Commanding General sent for him and expressed an early confidence in Anderson by verbally instructing him in the overall plan to take Harper's Ferry. But, since McLaws was the senior officer and would direct the operations against Harper's Ferry, Anderson thought that it was somewhat strange that he should send for him instead of McLaws. He reported to McLaws the next day and informed him of Lee's opinions and that Lee had repeatedly stated that "Harper's Ferry must be taken against Thursday evening."[13]

After some hard fighting and tactical maneuvering on the 12th and 13th, Harper's Ferry lay wide open to Confederate attack, and, instead of to Jackson, the distinction of capturing the arsenal seemed destined to belong to Anderson and McLaws. But word from "Jeb" Stuart on the 14th

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[12]Quoting Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, II, 139.

[13]Anderson to Hill, November 14, 1867, D. H. Hill Mss., North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh. The conference with Lee provided the only instructions that Anderson received concerning the attack on Harper's Ferry. He received no written orders.

indicated that there might be trouble at Crampton's Gap, a pass which McLaws had failed to garrison sufficiently. The judgment of Stuart was justified, for late in the afternoon the Federals poured through the gap in long blue columns.[14]

Barely did Anderson have time to form his six brigades before he was attacked. At the foot of Mayre's Heights in Pleasant Valley the Federals sent forward a strong skirmish line, which alone more than equaled Anderson's force. After a sharp but brief encounter the action came to an abrupt halt, and fortune smiled upon the uneasy Confederates as darkness approached and stopped the fighting.[15] As the forces of Jackson came up the next morning, the Federals made no issue and quickly disappeared from the vicinity.

Anderson filed no official report of his part in the battle, but he was sincerely grateful for Jackson's timely approach. He did not exaggerate when he wrote a friend that he "had the most uncomfortable time of it. . . until Jackson cleared away the road for us."[16] McLaws acknowledged in his report, however, that he was especially indebted to Anderson "for his advice and assistance."[17]

The deathly struggles at Antietam Creek, which followed these

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[14] O. R., XIX, pt. 1, 818.

[15] Ibid., pp. 870-876. Precisely why the Federals did not deliver a full attack against Anderson has not been determined, but it has been suggested (Walker, R. H. Anderson, p. 108) that while the Federals were preparing for the attack the firing ceased at Harper's Ferry, and their commanders believed that Anderson would be shortly re-inforced by the Confederates who had just taken the arsenal.

[16] D. H. Hill Mss., North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh.

[17] O. R., XVIII, pt. 1, 855.

preliminaries, made September 17, 1862, the bloodiest day of the entire war. In a series of sanquinary frontal assaults on the "Sunken Road," more commonly styled the "Bloody Lane," Union General Ambrose E. Burnside brought the action to its highest pitch. Here, D. H. Hill's battered division held off repeated Federal advances until 11 o'clock, when Lee sent Anderson to take position on his right.

After Anderson formed his line, Union batteries were then set up to assist in another Federal attack. Concentrating the fire on Hill's division, which had been weakened by the previous attacks, the Federals launched a furious assault along the entire Confederate line. It was in this attack that Anderson received a wound in the thigh,[18] and it was possibly this occurrence that forced the two divisions to fall back to a place called Piper Farm; for, when Anderson fell fainting from his horse, his division "ceased to act as a unit." But Anderson's wound was not entirely unfortunate, says Freeman, "because it demonstrates how much of the efficiency of his Division is due to his personal influence and leadership."[19]

The wound forced Anderson into a brief convalescence and he did not take part in the subsequent Battle of Fredericksburg. Instead, his division was used in the strengthening of the works around Drewry's Bluff, where, along with three brigades of D. H. Hill, it worked in the intense heat of the summer of 1863, sometimes as long as ten hours a day. Although the works were of little use in 1863, their value became apparent when

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[18] Ibid., XIX, pt. 1, 1036-1037.

[19] Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, II, xxx, 211-212.

Anderson defended Petersburg in 1864, and, according to one account, they "gave one year of life to the Confederacy."[20]

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[20]Hill, To Sharpsburg, II, 199.

CHAPTER V

CHANCELLORSVILLE

(APRIL-MAY, 1863)

April's forepart brought General Joseph Hooker, Anderson's old foe at Williamsburg, to the banks of the Rappahannock at Fredericksburg, Virginia, with designs to force Lee to fight him in the open field. On April 30th, having earlier crossed the river, part of Hooker's army united at Chancellorsville, eleven miles west of Fredericksburg. This union brought the total to four corps, two divisions and a cavalry brigade. Except for a single brigade, Hooker had sent his entire cavalry force, under General George Stoneman, to Lee's rear to cut off his communications with Richmond. This was, perhaps, singularly, his most costly error--for the brigade failed to keep him informed as to important movements, although supplemented by signal stations, field telegraphs, and balloons.[1] The cavalry brigade was placed on roads leading back to Fredericksburg and the infantry concentrated on Lee's left. The two Confederate brigades here were Mahone's and Posey's of Anderson's division, which fell back until Anderson reinforced them with Wright's brigade.[2] There was little friction, however, for Anderson's close vigilance had presaged a gathering of heavy Union columns, and he withdrew his troops back to the east, where a more tenable position was afforded by trenches.

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[1] Alexander, Military Memoirs, pp. 320-324. For dispatches from the aeronauts, see O. R., XXV, pt. 2, 336-344.

[2] O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 849.

During the earlier campaigns, except for Jomini's law of concentration, Anderson did not extemporize and seemed to stay fairly close to the established rules of warfare. But as rail and rifle had made entrenchment necessary, so had they made obeisance to the principles of Jomini questionable. At Chancellorsville, and before Lee ordered it, Anderson built the most extensive system of entrenchments, on a single line of battle, up to that time seen in the world.[3] The work was sustained throughout the afternoon of the 30th, the entire night following, and until early the next morning.[4] "To bury an army in entrenchment . . . is manifest folly," wrote Jomini. Now it would be folly to do otherwise.

Perhaps, Anderson also saw the psychological advantages of entrenchment. Nothing prevents panic more than having men do something and Hooker had the largest army he had faced. Panic was further allayed by the fact that men huddled closely together would less likely be fearstruck, and the chance of confusion would be greatly mitigated. Except for Gettysburg and the Wilderness, Lee's last general offensives, Anderson's men would live in these cold ditches until reduced to a mere picket line.

Informed of the large Federal force at Chancellorsville, Lee sent three brigades under Lafayette McLaws to take position on Anderson's

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[3] Simply a paraphrase from John Selby, Stonewall Jackson: As Military Commander (London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd.; Princeton, N. J.: D. Van Nostrand Do., Inc., 1968), p. 189. Cited hereinafter as Selby, Jackson. In R. E. Lee, Vol. II, p. 514, Freeman states that Lee, for the first time in open field operations, ordered fortifications to be constructed. These orders, dating April 30, 1863, were not dispatched until 2:30 p. m. (O. R., XXV, pt. 2, 761). In his official report dated almost four months later, Lee acknowledged that Anderson had anticipated him by stating that Anderson "retired early on the morning of the 30th . . . and began to intrench himself." O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 796. Thus Lee, indeed, ordered the construction, but only after Anderson had begun to entrench.

[4] O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 850.

right.[5] On the morning of May 1, Jackson with his corps, exclusive of Early's division and Barksdale's brigade, which had been left to hold the line around Fredericksburg against a rear attack by Sickles,[6] came up and suspended work on the entrenchments.[7]

To some writers Jackson's action implied that Anderson lacked initiative.[8] It must be remembered, however, that with only four brigades, Anderson could have hardly launched an offensive. With Jackson's arrival Confederate forces increased four times, and the prospect of a successful advance was manifestly a bright one. Had "Old Jack" been at Tabernacle Church on April 30, however, he, too, would have been forced to await reinforcement. At any rate, with the forces allied, the assault was ordered by Jackson and led by Anderson, beginning one of the great battles in the records of man, and one which signalled Robert E. Lee's most brilliant military achievement.

The time was 11 o'clock when Anderson filed Mahone's men down the Old Turnpike,[9] the very same moment that Hooker ordered Slocum's 1st Corps on his right to advance up the Plank road.[10] Anderson's troops on the Plank road were Wright's and Posey's brigades, with portions of Alexander's reserve artillery, and they advanced only two miles before the firing

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[5] Ibid., p. 824.

[6] O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 797.

[7] Ibid., p. 850.

[8] Selby, Jackson, p. 189; G. F. R. Henderson, Stonewall Jackson and the American Civil War (London, New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1913), pp. 656-657. Cited hereinafter as Henderson, Stonewall Jackson.

[9] O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 850.

[10] Alexander, Military Memoirs, p. 325.

commenced. Anderson then ordered Wright to follow the line of the Fredericksburg and Gordonsville Railroad, unfinished at the time, and to march unopposed until he reached the Catherine Furnace, where he would be beyond the Federal flank.[11] Fortunately for Wright, visibility was low and the fog concealed his movement against detection from the observation balloons.[12] The maneuver was as brilliant in practice as it was in consequence. It allowed for a speedy march, no opposition, and most importantly, an unexpected attack on the enemy's rear right flank. Duly accomplished, the movement precipitated the near rout, and with its flank turned and the Confederates pressing its front, the large Federal force continued to wilt until night called a halt to the action.

Anderson had effected this turning movement successfully with only three slim brigades, followed by McLaws' division and Jackson's corps. Wilcox's and Perry's brigades of Anderson's division, coming up from Fredericksburg, had arrived too late to join the vanguard, and had assisted McLaws' division on the Old Turnpike.[13]

In Anderson's official account of this phase of the campaign, he stated simply that Wright "was directed" to side slip to the left. By whom he modestly omitted to say.[14] Wright himself noted that he received the order from Anderson,[15] and as the wording in Lee's report is: "General Wright, by direction of General Anderson, diverging to the left," it is

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[11] O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 850.

[12] Freeman, R. E. Lee, II, 516.

[13] O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 797.

[14] Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, II, 534.

[15] O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 866.

reasonably certain that Anderson gave the order with no reference to Jackson. Thus Anderson alone was responsible for the turning movement.[16]

The night of May 1st was spent devising some plan to assail the Federals. When Hooker met the unexpectedly forceful attack which turned his right, he had ordered a countermarch.[17] With dense forest on all sides and tangled underbrush, in the midst of which they had constructed a nearly impenetrable abatis, Union forces had taken a strong position which nature had provided them. Against this awesome defense Lee endeavored to again turn the enemy's flank, leaving Anderson and McLaws to demonstrate in front and conceal the movement.[18] What happened after Jackson's famous march has been a subject exhausted by students throughout the world. One of the most respected of these works is Henderson's classic account. The famous English biographer so exaggerates Jackson's contributions in the Battle of Chancellorsville that one is amazed how the Federals could have held out for the two years that followed such a rout. Indeed, Jackson established himself by the successful execution of the movement in the front rank of heroic soldiers, but what he accomplished he did not do alone.

On the morning of May 2nd Jackson's columns proceeded rapidly down the Furnace and Brock roads. As Henderson records it, Jackson marched his men steadily and not once did he turn around,[19] while entire regiments

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[16]Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, II, 534.

[17]Alexander, Military Memoirs, p. 326.

[18]O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 797-798.

[19]Henderson, Stonewall Jackson, p. 667.

succumbed to the hot May sun,[20] falling face downward in the dry dust of the appropriately styled "Furnace" road. So forceful and stealthy was the march on Union General Howard's startled "foreigners,"[21] that their curious vernacular was only heard in the choked and terrified shrieks of "Zhackson! Zhackson!"[22]

Jackson's march did not go entirely unobserved, however, for no sooner had the rear of the train passed the Furnace road than it was attacked by a large force of the enemy.[23] In his haste, Jackson had left only a single regiment to guard a whole convoy of Confederate artillery and ambulances. This small force somehow kept the enemy back until the train had passed, but it was soon enveloped and the greater part of it captured.[24] Jackson's movement certainly would not have been so successful, if, indeed, successful at all, had these trains not been on hand for his assault. But, before it could be pursued, Anderson sent Posey's brigade to assist the remnants of the little rear guard, which unluckily chanced to be the twenty-third Georgia. At about 10 a. m. Posey moved his brigade down the Furnace road and formed three of his regiments in line of battle.[25] The enemy's superior force made it necessary for

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[20] Chesnut, Diary, pp. 330, 331.

[21] Howard's 11th Corps, comprised mostly of German troops, is broken down in O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 182-183.

[22] Henderson, Stonewall Jackson, p. 675.

[23] The Union force was, indeed, large, composed of Whipple's division of Sickle's corps, Birney's and Williams' divisions of Slocum's corps, Barlow's brigade of Howard's corps, and three regiments of Pleasonton's cavalry, O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 386-387.

[24] Ibid., p. 798.

[25] Ibid., p. 871.

Anderson to move Wright's brigade to the support of Posey's, correspondingly placing Mahone's on the left of the Plank road, the position formerly occupied by Wright.[26] After briefly consulting Posey, Wright formed his brigade on that officer's right,[27] and with Posey bearing the brunt of the enemy assault, the two brigades checked any further advance on the train,[28] thus allowing Jackson his famous assault on Hooker's flank.

At daylight on Sunday morning Lee ordered Anderson's whole force in the direction of Chancellorsville, Mahone's brigade filing off to the right, Wright's and Posey's successively forming a line nearly perpendicular to the left of Mahone's brigade.[29] In order to scour the proposed line of assault, Anderson directed Perry's brigade to move down the Catharpin and then to the Furnace road.[30]

Anderson was later criticized for sending an entire brigade on reconnaissance,[31] but Mahan called for as much as one-third of a whole force for such a mission. For only a strong force could, after seeking and finding position, hold it until support came.[32]

Finding the country clear, Perry moved his brigade up by the

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[26] O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 851.

[27] Ibid., p. 867.

[28] Ibid., p. 851.

[29] Ibid., p. 871.

[30] Ibid., p. 875.

[31] D. Augustus Dickert, History of Kershaw's Brigade (Newberry, S. C.: Elbert H. Aull Company, 1889), p. 381.

[32] Russell F. Weigley, Towards an American Army (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), p. 50.

Furnace to the left of Posey's.[33] Anderson ordered Wright to advance his brigade through the woods, connecting his right with Mahone's left flank, while his left would meet Posey's right flank. But, having decided to affect independent command, Wright took a short cut. Having done so, he moved to such a distance from the advancing line that a courier he had sent to find Mahone could not find that officer or his brigade,[34] and Wright encountered the most terrible fire he had witnessed, temporarily checking his advance.[35]

Shortly afterwards, Posey's timely arrival relieved the pressure on Wright. He was ordered to advance on the enemy's right flank, which was formidably perched upon a hill. Advancing in columns of regiments, Posey pushed forward his skirmishers and attained the position on the hill.[36] Followed by Perry on his left, who soon found himself inside the enemy's breastworks,[37] they were joined by Wright,[38] and the division fell in line with the old Turnpike[39] as the enemy steadily gave up their positions to the advancing Confederates. The retreating Federals elected to make a stand at the Chancellorsville house, where no breastworks protected

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[33] O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 875.

[34] Mahone's excuse for not keeping up with Wright was determined by Wright himself by his taking the short cut, which put him ahead of the other columns. Mahone saw limited action at Chancellorsville, however, because he was detached to McLaws a little after noon. O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 851.

[35] Ibid., p. 868.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid., p. 875.

[38] Ibid., p. 868.

[39] Ibid., p. 851.

their position, and which was so contracted that Alexander's guns poured fire upon it from three directions.[40]

Just before reaching the Chancellorsville house, Anderson's right was being incessantly bothered by a battery and sharp skirmish fire. Anderson then ordered Wright to move up the Third Georgia to dislodge them. Led by Major John F. Jones until he was wounded and succeeded by Captain C. H. Andrews, the regiment moved along a line of rifle pits and charged the confused enemy about 200 yards from the Chancellorsville house.[41] Observing his forces while leaning on one of the pillars of the house was none other than "Fighting Joe" Hooker, the Union General himself. For several hours thereafter, his army was without a commander, for the Federal Commander was incapacitated when a fragment was ripped from one of the pillars by a field piece and knocked him unconscious.[42] About this time Stuart, who had taken command of the 2nd Army Corps after the wounding of Jackson, and McLaws, with Lee directing his division, converged at the clearing behind Anderson. It was Lee's supreme moment as a soldier, as he was greeted with "One long, unbroken cheer, in which the feeble cry of those who lay helpless on the earth, blended with the strong voices of those who still fought, rose high above the roar of battle, and hailed the presence of the victorious chief."[43]

But before Lee could reorganize his offensive and pursue his crippled opponent, fate decided on a different course. Disastrous news came that Early had lost Fredericksburg and that his left had been turned by

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[40] Alexander, Military Memoirs, p. 348.

[41] O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 868.

[42] Alexander, Military Memoirs, p. 348.

[43] Freeman, R. E. Lee, II, 541-542.

Sedgwick. With his rear threatened, Lee had to abandon his plan to follow up the great victory. Withal his fearless spirit, he could not now attack Hooker's five corps entrenched in his front,[44] and summarily detached McLaws who had seen limited action that day and whose front was not in danger.[45] With the exception of Mahone, who was detached with McLaws, Anderson's tired division proceeded to watch the River road below United States Ford, and with Wright's, Perry's and Posey's brigades, threaten Hooker's communications and line of retreat from Chancellorsville. But, after completing a reconnaissance of enemy positions on the River road, Anderson believed that it was too late to effect any damage to Hooker.[46]

About daybreak on the 4th, however, after Captain S. R. Johnston of the Engineer Corps had brought news of large parks of wagons in the camps of enemy troops on the opposite side of the river,[47] Anderson ordered Major R. A. Hardaway, of the First Virginia Artillery, to fire in its midst. Hardaway found the view fair and the range easy, as he poured forthy fifteen rounds to the gun,[48] which Anderson believed was "with good effect."[49]

Before Anderson could discover the enemy's strength and position at the River Road, he was sent to Salem Church. He reached this position with three of his brigades about noon and was ordered to gain Sedgwick's

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[44] Alexander, Military Memoirs, p. 349.

[45] Freeman, R. E. Lee, II, 545.

[46] O. R., XXV, pt. 1, 851-852.

[47] Ibid., p. 852.

[48] Ibid., p. 880.

[49] Ibid., p. 852.

left and then form a junction with Early. McLaws was disposed to hold the front and, as soon as Anderson advanced, was to push ahead and connect with his line. McLaws did not get into this fight until it was almost dark and by that time the enemy was already beginning to recross the river.[50]

The signal being given, Anderson and Early speedily advanced their divisions upon the enemy and encountered little resistance.[51] Anderson ordered Wright to side-slip to the right of the Turnpike road, pass the left of Union General Sedgwick, and to get into position on a slope behind Downman's farm, forming a link with the left of Hoke's brigade, of Early's division.[52] He ordered Posey to form on Wright's left in front of a place called Downman's house near Hazel Run.[53] Perry he ordered to the extreme left, to remain there and guard a gap of about three-fourths of a mile between his and McLaws' line, unless opportunity to strike presented itself.

Opportunity soon came, and as Perry was about to advance upon a battery and much infantry in front, which he felt confident he could capture, Wright came "swinging across the line of battle" and annulled all prospect of striking a blow.[54] Wright, as he subsequently reported, "charged across the field, swept by the house," and drove the enemy before him "like chaff." Obliquing so extremely to the left as to fear encountering

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[50] Ibid., pp. 802, 1002.

[51] Ibid., p. 852.

[52] Ibid., p. 869.

[53] Ibid., p. 872.

[54] Ibid., p. 876.

Wofford's brigade of McLaws' division, even though he had been informed that Wofford would move in that direction, Wright halted and informed Anderson of his position. Undoubtably discomposed, Anderson instructed his subaltern to remain where he was and to await further orders. It was at this time that Wright was subjected to what he called "murderous fire," and suggested that he was hamstrung by the orders he had received and could only remain thus disposed. However, he never thought to inform his commander of this unpropitious circumstance.[55] Wright had brought upon himself this same holocaust when he flatly disobeyed orders the day before and took the short cut through the woods, arriving at Chancellorsville before the other brigades. Now, his feathers fluffed since the turning movement on the 1st, Wright again assumed independent command and a comparable conclusion awaited him. The Brigadier simply possessed an inordinate propensity to remonstrate.

Union General Sedgwick's left was not turned because Wright obliqued to the left instead of moving to the right as he was ordered. Nevertheless, the two divisions launched such a furious assault with such compelling vigor that the Federal corps was forced from its entrenched position and the retreat was so swift that Kershaw and Wofford, of McLaws' division, coming up through the woods, "could only join in the pursuit."[56] Although Sedgwick escaped across the river, it was not with impunity. The battle was almost as A. P. Hill reported, Sedgwick had been "demolished,"[57] and the following night Hooker abandoned his defensive-offensive and

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[55] Ibid., p. 869.

[56] Ibid., p. 802.

[57] Ibid., p. 886.

recrossed the Rappahanock, without having achieved even a pyrrhic victory.

CHAPTER VI

GETTYSBURG AND THE WILDERNESS

(JUNE, 1863-MAY, 1864)

After Chancellorsville and prior to the invasion of Pennsylvania, General Lee reorganized his army into three corps. Ewell succeeded Jackson in command of the Second, Longstreet retained command of the First, and the new Third Corps was assigned to Ambrose Powell Hill. Believing that Longstreet's command had become too large, Lee had Anderson detached and assigned to Hill's corps.[1] He and John B. Hood had been considered for the promotion given to Hill, but as the Virginian was their senior, they were both passed over. But Anderson and Hood were both "capital officers," Lee noted, and would make "good corps commanders."[2]

On the afternoon of June 14, 1863, Anderson moved his division from the battle line around Chancellorsville and followed in the march behind the First and Second Corps. After crossing the Shenandoah Valley, his division forded the Potomac on the 24th. On the 27th it moved through Chambersburg to Fayetteville, where it bivouacked until the next morning.

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[1] Freeman, Lee's Dispatches, p. 91.

[2] O. R., XV, pt. 2, 811. More than one general expressed surprise that D. H. Hill was not given a corps in the reorganization. Both he and Lafayette McLaws outranked "Little Powell" and few considered the Virginian superior to the North Carolina Hill. Longstreet noted sarcastically (B. & L., III, 245) that Hill was not a Virginian and that this factor had determined Lee's choice. Porter Alexander also advanced D. H. Hill's superior claims to the command. See Alexander, Military Memoirs, p. 367 note. Apparently, neither Hill nor McLaws were considered by Lee.

Soon after sunrise on July 1st, A. P. Hill ordered the division toward Cashtown, where Anderson was to halt and await orders.[3] Anderson reached Cashtown at a little before twelve o'clock, noon, and he was shortly afterward summoned by Lee, who believed that the Major General could answer a troublesome question. "I cannot think what has become of Stuart," Lee told Anderson, "I ought to have heard from him long before now."[4]

After a century of research, analyses, charges and countercharges, perhaps no better explanation can be given for the Confederate failure in probably the most memorable and controversial battle in American military history than these two brief statements by Lee to Anderson. For without the cavalry, Lee came very near repeating the failure of Hooker the previous month at Chancellorsville.

"In the absence of reports from him," Lee continued as Anderson listened, "I am in ignorance as to what we have in front. . . . It may be the whole Federal force, or it may be only a detachment. If it is the whole Federal force, we must fight a battle here. If we do not gain a victory, those defiles and gorges which we passed this morning will shelter us from disaster."[5] His worst thoughts were soon confirmed, for, in his front, were seven Federal corps and the disaster that he feared would soon confront him.

After Lee rode off, Anderson could hear the distant rumble of artillery, and, before the next hour, Hill ordered him in that direction. As he approached Gettysburg the firing suddenly stopped, and Anderson was

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[3] O. R., XXVI, pt. 2, 613.

[4] Anderson quoting Lee in an undated letter in Longstreet, From Manassas, p. 357.

[5] Ibid.

directed by Hill to bivouac in the rear of the battleground. Believing that the Federals were beaten, Hill decided not to pursue with his two exhausted divisions over ground that he knew nothing about and which was probably full of fresh Federal infantry.[6]

General Lee was now in the precarious position of having to attack when he was not fully prepared. This had not been his intention, but with seven Federal corps directly in his front, he doubted that he could conduct a safe retreat through the mountains with his extensive convoy of wagon trains, and, on July 2, he gave the order to attack.[7]

The battle plan was for the principal attack to be made on the Federal left, where it was thought that Confederate artillery could be best utilized. Longstreet was ordered to lead the attack while Ewell demonstrated on the right. Hill was ordered to threaten the Federal center to prevent any re-enforcements from being detached from either Federal wing. Lee ordered Anderson to "cooperate" with Hill and Longstreet.[8] "This order was the vaguest he ever gave,"[9] said one student, and it may help to explain Anderson's seemingly poor showing in the first assault on Federal positions at Gettysburg. Not only was the order vague but liaison would be hard to effect between two corps commanders, who had almost come to blows only a short time before. There was little affinity between James Longstreet and Powell Hill and probably even less at Gettysburg

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[6] O. R., XXVI, pt. 2, 607, 613.

[7] Ibid., p. 318.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Clifford Dowdey, Death of a Nation (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), p. 193.

when Longstreet disagreed with Lee's entire plan of attack.[10]

Anderson's advance would be regulated by the movement of the division on his right, which chanced to be that of Lafayette McLaws. Anderson had his troops ready by two o'clock, but it was four o'clock before the first brigade of McLaws began to move.[11] McLaws formed in line at right angles to Anderson's extreme right, across a road parallel to Wilcox's front and into the Emmitsburg road leading to Gettysburg.[12]

It was not long after McLaws filed his men into position when two Federal batteries opened fire across an open field that stretched in his front for more than a mile. The Confederates advanced into the fire.[13] As ordered, Anderson advanced his brigades en echelon formation, with Wilcox, Perry, Wright, and Posey moving in rapid progression. Wilcox made a brilliant advance that took him to the foot of Cemetery Hill, and was soon followed by Perry's brigade commanded by Brigadier General David Lang. "These two charges," observed Porter Alexander, "followed with the least delay of any during the affair."[14]

When Wilcox reached the foot of Cemetery Ridge, he was met by two lines of Federal infantry. After driving them across a ravine, he was left a battery of six pieces. From the top of the ridge, however, other Federal batteries poured grape and canister upon his ranks and

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[10] Although in retrospect and not in prospect, for Longstreet's alleged proposals to Lee before the attack on Cemetery Hill on July 3, 1863, see Longstreet, From Manassas, pp. 362-369.

[11] O. R., XXVII, pt. 2, 614.

[12] Ibid., p. 617.

[13] Ibid., p. 615.

[14] Alexander, Military Memoirs, p. 400.

prevented him from hauling it away. After a sharp contest with another force supported by the batteries from the ridge, a fresh line of infantry descended upon him and forced a halt. Seeing his advance checked, Wilcox detached his adjutant general to Anderson for re-enforcement. None came to the beleaguered brigadier, however, and after repulsing three successive charges all within the space of thirty minutes, Wilcox withdrew back to the original line on the Emmitsburg road.[15]

Advancing behind the left of Wilcox, Lang threw forward a strong skirmish line. Coming upon the crest of a hill he drove back the first Federal line he encountered until they rallied on a second hill. A furious volley broke up the rally and they were dislodged a second time. Confident, the Confederates charged with a rebel yell, and Lang halted to regroup his scattered columns before his final assault.

While reforming, Lang received word that Wilcox was being driven back from the foot of Cemetery Ridge. With Wilcox falling back and the enemy in rear of his right flank, he, too, fell back toward the original line on the Emmitsburg Road, reforming and fighting the entire way.[16]

To the left of Perry's brigade was the brigade of A. R. Wright, whose advance was the most successful of the day. He immediately followed Perry's brigade, swept across the open field and attacked the Federal position within rifle range of the Emmitsburg turnpike. Here Wright observed that Posey's brigade on his left did not advance, and, with his left flank exposed, he sent for re-enforcement. Anderson assured him that Posey had been ordered to advance and that he would repeat the order.

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[15] O. R., XXVII, pt. 2, 618.

[16] Ibid., pp. 631-632.

After he drove the Federals upon a second line behind a stone fence a short distance from the pike, Wright pressed on and captured several pieces of artillery. Then, with an impetuous thrust, Wright found himself less than one hundred yards from what would become the objective of the fateful assault the following day, the crest of Cemetery Hill. The hill was lined with Federal batteries and surrounded by the obstruction of another stone fence. With a furious charge and a hail of musketry Wright's men leaped the stone fence, ascended the heights and drove the Federals into the dark and stony gorge below. "We were now complete masters of the field," he boasted, "having gained the key . . . of the enemy's whole line." For a brief, ecstatic moment Wright proudly viewed his regimental banners flying high over the rolling hills beneath him. As the smoke from the Federal batteries moved above the ridge, however, he could see the scattered gray columns of Perry's brigade falling rapidly to the rear. With no support forthcoming, and his left flank thus exposed, he prepared to fight his way through the Federals closing in on his rear. This he did with heavy losses and fell back until he reached a depression, where he halted to redress his ranks. But the Federals did not attack, and, at dark, he moved back to the line he had occupied before the advance.[17]

The foregoing individual accounts constituted the action of Anderson's division on July 2, 1863. Each brigade advanced separately in a single line with its flanks exposed, and each was defeated in a detached and independent action. Alexander thought that better results would have been achieved had the brigades moved simultaneously. This would have simplified the positioning of troops and would have lessened the delay

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[17]Quotation is from Wright's report, ibid., pp. 623-624.

that followed a progressive attack.[18] But a simultaneous advance may not have insured success against the Federal mass artillery barrages, and Longstreet was probably correct in asserting that the rough ground on the field of Gettysburg made concentration "at any point" virtually impossible.[19] Although Lee ordered the progressive attack and Longstreet and Hill simply advanced as prescribed, he left the details of formation to each corps commander. But it was A. P. Hill who made the biggest tactical blunder in ordering Anderson to attack "by brigades" and to move in a single line. Hill also advanced Hood in the same formation, and, had not Longstreet recalled McLaws whose movement was to signal Hood's attack, Hood would have repeated the mistake made by Anderson.[20] Therefore the error was Hill's. For some reason, however, Anderson received most of the criticism. "Always," says D. S. Freeman, "it was Anderson's nature to take the largest blame and the least praise."[21]

During the week that followed the battle several Georgia and Virginia newspapers accused Anderson of negligence for not supporting Wright and Wilcox. Although he could have easily shifted the blame upon three other generals besides himself, Anderson admitted the accusation. In reference to the support for Wilcox, he answered only that when he received Wilcox's dispatch he could not locate his corps commander to refer it to him.[22] He made no mention of sending his aide-de-camp, S. D. Shannon,

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[18] Alexander, Military Memoirs, p. 400.

[19] Longstreet, From Manassas, p. 364.

[20] Alexander, Military Memoirs, p. 400.

[21] Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, II, 655.

[22] Alexander, Military Memoirs, p. 401.

to Mahone, nor of the interview that followed.

Anderson had been ordered by Hill to hold Mahone in reserve, but, when Wilcox sent word for help, he immediately sent Captain Shannon to hurry Mahone to his support. It was probably then that he rode to look for Hill. When Shannon gave the order, Mahone refused to move, saying that Anderson had told him to stay where he was.

"I am just from General Anderson," retorted the distressed aide, "and he orders you to advance."

"No," said Mahone, "I have my orders from General Anderson himself to remain here."[23]

Realizing that Mahone could not be persuaded, Shannon rode back to headquarters. Precisely why Anderson did not take action against, or at least reprimand, Mahone for his peculiar stubbornness is impossible to say. Perhaps because Mahone's support could probably not have been utilized so late in the attack, Shannon may not have reported the incident to Anderson. In deference to Shannon, however, it would have been his word against Mahone's, and a brigadier general could have made it plenty uncomfortable for a lowly aide-de-camp, especially if the brigadier happened to be one with the stature of "Little Billy" Mahone.

Anderson did send aid to Wright, however, and detached Posey's brigade, which was advanced in columns of regiments. But, when within range of the batteries on Cemetery Hill, they quickly fell back, as Wright

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[23] Wilcox to Lee, n. d., in Freeman, R. E. Lee, III, 555. Posey confirmed Shannon's claim that Mahone had been ordered to advance (O. R., XXVII, pt. 2, 634), but he did not elaborate, saying only that he himself called on Mahone for support. But Mahone "being at this time ordered to the right, could not comply."

recorded disgustedly.[24]

Anderson's division at Gettysburg was no less successful than any of Lee's other divisions on July 2, and having observed Wright's sweep up Cemetery Hill, Lee may have at this time made his decision to take it the next day. When Longstreet advanced his columns forward on the 3rd, Anderson had orders to hold his division back until it should be needed. Anderson quickly perceived this need and immediately positioned Wilcox and Perry's brigades for an advance. As the two brigades were about to move forward, however, Longstreet directed their halt, adding that Pickett had been repulsed and that another assault would be useless.[25] Union General Meade did not pursue and thus ended unsuccessfully Lee's second invasion of the North. On the 14th, Lee crossed the Potomac to the safety of Virginia.

Anderson had high praise for the commendable behavior of his troops on the march back from Gettysburg. "In a land of plenty," he pointed out, "they often suffered hunger and want." While his ragged and barefooted soldiers marched through the towns of Pennsylvania and Maryland, they knew that concealed behind the barred doors of many a merchant shop were abundant supplies of clothing and equipment; yet looting was reported nowhere. He noted their usual courage in battle, "and, if complete success did not attend their efforts," he believed, "their failure cannot be laid upon their shortcoming, but must be recognized and accepted as the will and decree of the Almighty disposer of human affairs."[26]

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[24] O. R., XXVII, pt. 2, 624, 634.

[25] Ibid., pp. 359, 614-615.

[26] Ibid., p. 616.

Except for a brief action on October 14, 1863, in which General Posey was killed attempting to protect General Heth's flank,[27] Anderson's division saw no action until Lee confronted Grant in the Battle of the Wilderness on May 6, 1864. It has been said of this Union General, when he left the west for Virginia, that he left the minor league for the major. The analogy may be justified, but, from the events that ensued, it was manifest that Grant was one minor leaguer who made it. If the Confederacy's death knell had been sounded at Gettysburg, Grant now made it distinctly more audible.

Grant's objective after crossing the Rapidan was to turn Lee's right and force him back upon Richmond--high-minded strategum that failed to note the knotty tangles and broad forests of the Wilderness. Realizing this, Lee hit Grant before he could bring to bear his superior force and artillery. On May 5, he sent the divisions of Heth and Wilcox to meet Grant on the Orange plankroad, where the two divisions of A. P. Hill almost met disaster after they failed to construct any ground forces.[28] With the arrival of Longstreet, however, Kershaw's and Field's divisions filled in the gaps of the broken lines. Although still assigned to Hill's corps, Anderson was at this time the rear column of Longstreet's corps, and, after Longstreet cleared the plankroad in his front, he joined his old chief at about 8 p. m. the next day.[29]

About the time of Anderson's arrival, Major General M. L. Smith, chief engineer of the army, who had been sent to reconnoiter the enemy

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[27] For the action of two of Anderson's brigades in the insignificant Battle of Bristoe Station, see Walker, R. H. Anderson, pp. 154-155.

[28] Sorrel, Recollections, pp. 229-230.

[29] Longstreet, From Manassas, p. 561.

position, reported that Grant's left extended only a short distance beyond the plankroad. A movement was then suggested by General William T. Wofford to attack Grant's flank with his own brigade of Kershaw's division, G. T. Anderson's of Field's division, supported by Mahone's of Anderson's division, while the remainder of these divisions demonstrated in front.[30] The soldiers of the Army of Northern Virginia could not have had memories so dull nor hearts so ungrateful as to forget what had happened in this very same wilderness precisely one year earlier. Anderson had ordered Wright to march down the unfinished railroad, side-slip to the left, and attack Hooker's flank. Now, May 6, 1864, what followed is instructive to all who question the value of following precedent.

Longstreet ordered his chief of staff, Moxley Sorrel, to form a good line on the unfinished railroad,[31] with his "right pushed forward and turning [or side-slipping] as much as possible to the left."[32] The movement was completely successful, and, in Union General Hancock's own laconic description, the brigades rolled him up "like a wet blanket."[33] It was Longstreet's supreme military achievement, and he could thank Anderson for the instruction given the previous year at Chancellorsville.

The repetition of Chancellorsville was not complete, however, until, like Jackson, Longstreet had been shot down by his own men. But that Grant would have been annihilated by Lee had not Longstreet been wounded was not likely, and Lee may not have been able to deliver a blow

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[30] O. R., XXXV, pt. 1, 1060-1062.

[31] The still unfinished Fredericksburg to Gordonsville Railroad was the very same cut from which Wright turned Hooker's flank.

[32] Sorrel, Recollections, pp. 231, 288.

[33] Ibid., p. 237.

severe enough to send him reeling back across the Rapidan as he had done Hooker at Chancellorsville. The truth was that the Confederates were just about as disorganized as Grant, and Lee had to halt his last general offensive of the war. When he regrouped his forces, Lee went back to his headquarters to consider the question that was foremost in his mind--a replacement for Longstreet. The three men considered were Edward Johnson, Jubal Early and Richard Anderson.

Interestingly enough, Anderson had written his old friend and West Point classmate, General D. H. Hill, less than two weeks before the Battle of the Wilderness and rank was the subject of his letter. Hill, like Anderson at Pensacola, had the misfortune to serve under and incur the wrath of the irascible General Braxton Bragg. After the Battle of Chickamauga, several generals were relieved of command for having signed a round-robin demanding Bragg's replacement and among them was D. H. Hill, one of the most outspoken of Bragg's antagonists and the petition's chief architect.[34] Hill had recently been promoted to Lieutenant General on a provisional footing to command a corps in Bragg's army vacated by Lieutenant General William A. Hardee, and his temporary commission became inactive when he was relieved.[35] He was once again a major general and an extremely embittered one. The following thoughtful letter to Hill is Anderson's expression of what were probably the views of nearly every general in the Confederate Army:

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[34]For Lee's opinion of Bragg's generalship see letter in Longstreet, From Manassas, p. 469.

[35]For Hill's correspondence with the War Department see O. R., XXXV, pt. 2, 370; ibid., XL, pt. 2, 650; ibid., XLII, pt. 3, 1165-1170; ibid., LIII, 312-314, 324, 327.

Camp near Orange Court House, Va.
April 25, 1864

My dear friend,

I read your correspondence with the War office with all the interest which our long and uninterrupted friendship would naturally inspire. That you have been harshly and unjustly dealth with, is plain, and I regret beyond measure that your zeal and ability, and your devotion to our cause, should have been so easily forgotten--your future usefulness impaired and your feelings wounded merely to gratify the spite of a disappointed and unsuccessful military superior. I assure you your word is clear beyond all question with me and I believe with all who know you well in this Army. Whilst I agree with you that the treatment which you have received is calculated to diminish the confidence of troops over whom you might be placed, I think that you would soon dispel that cloud and your courage--ability and fidelity would afterwards shine all the brighter. Therefore I would say work on--make the bricks although they have taken away the straw and your triumphant deliverance from your persecutors will be given in due time.

I appreciate and value your kind allusion to me in your letter to the Adjutant General. I pray God to bless and preserve you in whatever course you may decide upon adopting in this matter.

Believe me ever your friend,
R. H. Anderson

Lt. General D. H. Hill[36]

Anderson was only being considerate when he addressed his comrade as Lieutenant General, and perhaps it never occurred to him, especially after being discredited at Gettysburg, that before two weeks were to pass, his own rank would be superior to that of his friend Harvey Hill.

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[36] D. H. Hill Mss., 70-3360, Virginia State Library, Richmond. Anderson, referring to Hill's "kind allusion" to him in his letter to Adjutant General Cooper probably refers to Hill's statement to the effect that had officers of the ability of Anderson, "Maryland" Steuart or Early replaced him, there would have been no issue. See O. R., LII, 312-313.

CHAPTER VII

SPOTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE AND SECOND COLD HARBOR

(MAY-JUNE, 1864)

The choice of a successor to Longstreet was a selection that could not be long delayed and on the morning of May 7, 1864, Colonel Moxley Sorrel, Longstreet's chief of staff who had led the turning movement on Grant's left the previous day, was called to Lee's headquarters and invited to express his sentiments on the subject.[1] His opinion of Anderson was set down in his book, which Freeman thought "One of the most charming of all books on the War between the States,"[2] Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer. Says Sorrel of Anderson: "His courage was of the highest order, but he was indolent. His capacity and intelligence excellent, but it was hard to get him to use them. Withal, of a nature so true and so lovable that it goes against me to criticize him." Concerning the alleged indolence, Sorrel went on to say that perhaps Longstreet alone knew how to elicit Anderson's dormant capabilities.[3] Then, with singular incongruity, he related to Lee nothing that was uncomplimentary to the South Carolinian.[4] Like Ambrose R. Wright, Sorrel was simply an individual

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[1]Sorrel, Recollections, p. 238.

[2]Freeman, R. E. Lee, IV, 567.

[3]Sorrel, Recollections, p. 128. Freeman dispels the assertion that Anderson was lazy and inert except in the presence of Longstreet as a "persistent yarn," Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, II, 528-529.

[4]Sorrel, Recollections, p. 238.

who was critical by nature.[5] This is all the more evident when one considers the fact that Anderson's very soubriquet denoted aggressiveness on the battlefield and that his two greatest contributions to the Confederate Army, Chancellorsville and Spotsylvania Court House, both occurred during the absence of Longstreet.

If Lee himself thought that Anderson had any shortcomings, however, one of them may have been that Anderson was not quick enough on the march. When his division was the lead column of Hill's corps in the retreat from Gettysburg, there was a suggestion of this belief in Lee's words to Sorrel when he asked that officer what was Hill's front division.

"General Anderson, sir," answered Sorrel.

"I am sorry, Colonel," Lee told Sorrel, "my friend Dick is quick enough pursuing, but in retreat I fear he will not be as sharp as I should like."[6]

At any rate, Sorrel heard later that day of the order "assigning chivalrous, deliberate 'Dick' Anderson to the command of the First Army Corps and it was not long before he was made lieutenant general."[7]

Anderson could take pride in knowing that he was the only non-Virginian ever to be given the coveted commission by General Robert E.

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[5]Another member of Longstreet's staff was Francis W. Dawson, who described Sorrel as remonstrative and "over-bearing," Francis W. Dawson, Reminiscences of Confederate Service (The Charleston News & Courier Press, 1882), p. 136. Cited hereinafter as Dawson, Confederate Service.

[6]Ibid., pp. 171-172.

[7]Ibid., p. 239; O. R., XXXVI, pt. 2, 967. One of the South Carolina newspapers contains the assertion that Anderson was given command of the First Corps at the special request of the wounded Longstreet. The writer has found no confirmation of this in any of the writings of Longstreet, however. See The Charleston News & Courier, Charleston, South Carolina, October 8, 1891, Second Edition, p. 3.

Lee.[8] Out of the six lieutenant generals in the Army of Northern Virginia, only two were not natives of the state of Virginia, Longstreet and Anderson.[9] Anderson was also aware of the fact that he was not the senior major general in Lee's army,[10] and that, except on this occasion, Lee never before exercised the irregularity of transferring an officer from one corps to take command of another. It was a distinct and unusual honor.

The men of the First Corps could not have been more delighted when they heard that Anderson was to command them. It had been over a year since he had been with the corps, but that "he was remembered and beloved" had been demonstrated on May 6, the day before he received his commission.

> His old Brigade of South Carolina troops had passed long previously to the command of Micah Jenkins, and had not seen him for months until he came upon the men as they were sitting on the ground, in the Wilderness, after the fall of Jenkins. As soon as the men observed Anderson riding up the line, past the left of the Brigade, they rose with a yell to welcome him. They had to be silenced because the enemy was close at hand, and they silently resumed their places without grumbling; but as Anderson passed, they took off their hats and threw them into the air. Close to the centre of the Brigade Anderson drew rein, turned to the troops, removed his hat and said simply: "My friends, your silent expression makes me grateful for your kind remembrance, I thank you sincerely." He could say no more because of tears. The men wept, too, without abashment. They rejoiced the next day to know that he and not another officer temporarily would succeed the wounded Longstreet.[11]

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[8] In effect, Longstreet received his promotion to Lieutenant General from General Joe Johnston. For details, see Longstreet, From Manassas, p. 332.

[9] Wade Hampton and D. H. Hill attained the rank of Lieutenant General after they had left Lee's army. It may be of interest to note that Hampton, Hill, Anderson and Longstreet were all born in South Carolina. Anderson was promoted after Longstreet and D. H. Hill.

[10] This grade belonged to Lafayette McLaws of Longstreet's corps.

[11] Freeman noted (Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, III, 375) that the General must have cherished the memory of this reunion because the above account

On May 7, Anderson received his first orders as a corps commander. He was given the message from Lee by General W. N. Pendleton, the army's Chief of Artillery, instructing him to follow a guide along a new road that had been cut out that day with Kershaw's and Field's divisions. His orders from Lee were to start by 3:00 the next morning.[12] Grant was then moving toward Spotsylvania Court House. This simple fact should have demanded no mysterious perspective, for it was the nearest location that was large enough for him to regroup his scattered columns.[13] But reports indicated to Lee that the enemy would go to Fredericksburg, for the War Department received from him on May 8, at 4:29, the dispatch that "the enemy has abandoned his position and is moving toward Fredericksburg. This army is in motion on his right flank, and our advance is now at Spotsylvania Court House."[14] But even if Lee had anticipated Grant's intention, he certainly misjudged his resolve, for Grant, encumbered by an immense convoy of wagon trains, started the famous race at 9:00,[15] and, if so acutely aware of this fact, Lee hardly would have ordered Anderson to march six hours later. At any rate, Anderson did not march at the designated hour, but began making preparations to move by 11 p. m. Anecdote has it that Anderson reached the Court House early simply because he found the woods on fire. It seemed to make a good story and has persisted for that reason. How else could the lazy Anderson be galvanized

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is from an undated newspaper clipping which is one of the very few that Anderson kept concerning himself.

[12] O. R., XXXV, pt. 1, 104.

[13] Grant, Memoirs, II, 306.

[14] O. R., XXXV, pt. 2, 974.

[15] Ibid., pt. 1, 3.

into action? The fire seemed an appropriate stimulant.

This self-effacing corps commander had told General Pendleton that he would begin his march four hours earlier than had been ordered, before he was even aware of any conflagration. "General Anderson," wrote Pendleton, "stated that his orders were to march by 3:00 next morning. He was preparing to start at 11:00 that night."[16] Anderson withdrew his troops from line of battle precisely as he had told Pendleton, at 11 p. m. As he began his march, he then found the woods on fire, and, as his guide had informed him that the road he followed "was narrow and frequently obstructed," he continued the march so that he "should be within easy reach of that place."[17] Thus Anderson continued the march solely to reach his destination early, not because he found the woods aflame. But regardless of any preliminaries to the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House, the significant fact is that Anderson fought a great battle there and saved the Confederate capital.

As Anderson approached the open fields near the Court House at dawn on the 8th, he issued the much delayed order to bivouac. But the rest was brief, and, before the hour was spent, a message came from Fitz Lee urging artillery support.[18] What followed would dazzle the mind of any seasoned soldier. The incessant massed attacks of Grant's heavy columns would demand of the new corps commander such a shifting and counter-shifting of troops seldom seen on any battle field. The threat

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[16] Ibid., p. 1041.

[17] Quotation from letter to Captain E. B. Robins, May 14, 1879, Anderson Mss., Military Society of Massachusetts, Boston. The letter is reproduced in Walker, R. H. Anderson, pp. 162-163. Anderson also wrote a similar letter immediately after the battle, Anderson to Longstreet, May 10, 1864, Anderson Mss., Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

[18] Ibid.

to the Confederate Army had never been more crucial.

General Field's tired men were quickly moved towards the Court House, but, before falling in line, Union infantry from Warren's Corps poured toward Anderson's left. He did not forget the peril of Fitzhugh's cavalry unit, however, and, after detaching Kershaw's, Humphrey's and Law's brigades to the Court House,[19] he turned Field's division off to meet the threat to his left. Although Fitzhugh Lee was forced to retire at the Court House, luckily the enemy there was not in strong force, and "Kershaw's Brigade" came up in time to retake it.[20] The immediate danger confronted Field, and, as the remaining columns of the First Corps came up, Anderson swiftly pushed them to his support. As the last of these took position, the Federals fell on them, advancing in four successive lines.[21]

As if Anderson needed another diversion, word came from one of Hampton's brigades of cavalry that it had arrived at Spotsylvania and was desperate for help. It was no more desperate than Anderson, himself, but he did not hesitate. Anderson could spare no more than two brigades, but, if he could send Wofford's and Bryan's of Kershaw's division, and gain the enemy's rear, that might be all that was needed. This could be done by a detour through the woods, which would also preclude a hazardous move across the fields that lay west of the Court House. Anderson issued these orders immediately, but before Wofford and Bryan arrived, Union

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[19] B. & L., IV, 128.

[20] The Union force here was Wickham's brigade of General J. H. Wilson's division of cavalry, which Wilson reported was "struck in the flank by a gallant charge and scattered in all directions," O. R., XXXV, pt. 1, 878.

[21] Alexander, Military Memoirs, p. 511.

Cavalry leader J. H. Wilson became aware of the intention and withdrew his command from the Court House.[22]

Between attacks Anderson's men lay down their guns and picked up the spade. The shallow trenches at Spotsylvania Court House, coupled with a courage rivaled only in a myth, was about all that saved the Confederates from Warren's four fresh divisions. Anderson also had his men hoard ammunition, a practice in which he had always been diligent.[23] One of his brigades held its fire until the Federals came within fifty yards.[24]

The lead column of Ewell's corps arrived at five o'clock in the afternoon. Sedgwick's corps had already re-enforced Warren's, however, and, after being shifted to the left behind Warren, they delivered a four-columned assault on Anderson's right.[25] Anderson's men stood firm, however, but the timely arrival of Ewell's corps proved to be an invaluable addition. Anderson immediately ordered Rodes' division of Ewell's corps into the action on his right. This move flanked the Federal columns and they immediately fell back, thus ending the first day's battle at Spotsylvania Court House and the threat to the Confederate capital.[26]

General Lee expressed his gratitude to Anderson and his men with a personally autographed letter, expressing his admiration for the way in

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[22] O. R., XXXV, pt. 1, 878. General J. B. McIntosh, commanding one of Wilson's brigades that was about to be attacked in the rear, mistook Rosser's brigade of Hampton's cavalry division as infantry from the First Corps. The Union officer erred again in reporting Bryan's and Wofford's route as that one from the Block House leading to the Court House, ibid., p. 887.

[23] Dawson, Reminiscences, p. 123.

[24] Bratton's brigade of Field's division, O. R., XXXVI, pt. 1, 1066.

[25] Ibid., pp. 666, 1071; B. & L., IV, 128.

[26] O. R., XXXVI, pt. 1, 1056-1057, 1081.

which the new corps commander had handled his troops. Publishing only what related to his men, Anderson "suppressed the just encomium General Lee had paid to him personally."[27]

Colonel Sorrel gives us a valuable appraisal of Anderson the man and soldier and seconds the above example of Anderson's unassertive and modest nature:

> General Anderson, as already stated, was well known to us, and fell easily into position as corps commander. During the events just sketched, he had shown commendable prudence and an intelligent comprehension of the work at hand. He was a very brave man . . . and by no means pushing or aggressive. My relations with him were uniformly pleasant. He seemed to leave the corps much to his staff, while his own meditative disposition was constantly soothed by whiffs from a noble, cherished meershaum pipe in process of rich coloring.
>
> I sometimes found myself sleeping in the same tent with him. He had a way on waking of sitting on his bed and proceeding to mend and patch his belongings out of a well-filled tailor's "necessaire" he always carried--clothing, hats, boots, bridles, saddles, everything came handy to him. He caught me once watching this work, and said, smiling: "you are wondering, I see; so did my wife when first married. She thought she should do the mending, but I told her I ought to have a little recreation occasionally."[28]

On May 14, 1864, Grant began to withdraw his forces from the area of Spotsylvania Court House. Anderson, immediately realizing what a good opportunity was presented to capture the picket lines of Warren's and Wright's corps, quickly advanced his troops, flanked the pickets, and captured the greater part of them, and Warren's field hospital. He then marched his corps to join the rest of Lee's army.[29]

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[27]Quotation from Walker, R. H. Anderson, p. 169. During the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House, General J. E. B. Stuart was killed at Yellow Tavern. Without citing his authority, Walker asserts (ibid., p. 173) that when General Lee was informed of Stuart's death, he offered the cavalry command to General Anderson, but that Anderson declined and suggested that the position be given to General Wade Hampton, a fellow South Carolinian. The claim has not been substantiated. See Freeman, R. E. Lee, III, 330.

[28]Sorrel, Recollections, pp. 242-243.

[29]Robert M. Stribling, Gettysburg Campaign and Campaigns of 1864 and

Anderson's next action came ten days later when Grant again sought to interpose his army between Lee's and Richmond. He began his movement on the night of the 20th by marching for the North Anna River. Lee ordered Anderson to form the apex of a superbly drawn line, an "inverted V," which Grant said was stronger than any position Lee had yet taken.[30] Moving his army ahead, Grant was met by Anderson, who drove the wedge straight through and split Grant's army into two wings. Anderson's attack had put Grant's army on each side of the North Anna, and, before he could re-enforce either position, Grant would be forced to march around Anderson and cross the river twice.[31] The situation offered Lee the best opportunity since he had met Grant to deliver the crippling blow that he had hoped. But the commanding general was stricken with an intestinal malady, confined to his tent, and did not order the attack. The chance then slipped away as the Union Army entrenched itself.[32]

At one of the North Anna tributaries, Anderson's corps was situated directly across from the Federals. Grant was sharpening the accuracy of his artillery fire with the First Corps as target. As he poured mortar upon the uncomfortable Confederates, Anderson frugally preserved his and made no reply. His headquarters were temporarily set up in an attractive grove which surrounded a large frame residence. Attached to this large structure were two quite steep chimneys of brick which stretched high into the grove. The staff officers and orderlies huddled under the

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1865 in Virginia (Petersburg, Virginia: The Franklin Press, 1905), p. 132. Cited hereinafter as Stribling, Gettysburg and Virginia.

[30] Ibid., p. 139.

[31] Ibid., p. 136.

[32] Freeman, R. E. Lee, III, 358-359.

shelter of a lee of one of the gables to protect themselves against flying debris from the mortar shells. General Anderson was among the groves walking "coolly" about, whiffing away at his big pipe, and warned them that there would be trouble if one of the chimneys was struck.

Their Commander was right. Within seconds, the roaring mortar came crashing into the chimney, pelting those who were not quick enough to get away with bricks and fragments. Two of the couriers received minor bone fractures, but what increased their agony and embarrassment was that they had not been wounded by "honorable bullets." "The laugh," Sorrel was to say, "was decidedly on us."[33]

After realizing the strength of Lee's line around the North Anna, Grant withdrew his troops on the 26th and retired toward White House Landing, once again attempting to get between Lee's army and Richmond. Once again Lee marched along with him and, again, it was Anderson who stopped the Federal drive to Richmond.

General Lee had projected an attack on Grant's flank as it moved, and deputized Anderson to effect it. The strategic point to which both armies moved was Cold Harbor. Precisely two years earlier to the month, Anderson's flank movement, in the words of "Stonewall" Jackson,[34] had "determined the fortunes" at the battle of First Cold Harbor, and the attack precipitated McClellan's retreat to Harrison's Landing. Would Anderson repeat his performance at Second Cold Harbor?

The story was different. Grant discerned the importance of Cold Harbor Road, which secured his lines to his base at White House Landing,

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[33]Sorrel, Recollections, pp. 247-248.

[34]Jackson's report, O. R., II, pt. 2, 555.

and he ordered Sheridan to hold that point at all costs. Sheridan entrenched himself on the afternoon of May 31, and, equipped with the new Spencer repeating magazine carbine, he presented an awesome obstruction. Anticipating the Confederate attack on the morning of June 1, Grant tried to assure himself of the occupation of Cold Harbor by sending Wright's Sixth Corps to the support of Sheridan, and he ordered Wright to be there by daylight.[35]

Leading the Confederate van were the veterans of Kershaw's division, and, as they approached the enemy, Kershaw decided to determine what lay ahead, sending forward his old brigade to reconnoiter. This brigade was led by the inexperienced Colonel Lawrence M. Keitt of South Carolina. His regiment, the Twentieth South Carolina, was the newest in the army, and "behaved badly" when confronted by Sheridan's rapid firing rifles. The skirmishers broke, and, after one more attempt, Kershaw drew them back and threw up breast works. This ended the projected assault, for Wright's Corps came up to reinforce Sheridan.[36]

Anderson had appointed Keitt to command the brigade because that officer was its senior Colonel. It was a matter of military propriety, and, if a mistake, then Richmond was culpable, not Anderson. At any rate, Kershaw could have been more discriminating and held the new regiment as a reserve unit, while the rest of that brigade comprised the skirmish line. The results of the attack at Cold Harbor may have been the same, however, for Anderson's infantry was the first to ever encounter the

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[35] Ibid., XXXVI, pt. 1, 794.

[36] The quotation is taken from Chesnut, Diary, pp. 68, 258; O. R., XXXVI, pt. 2, 850, 1012; Robert Stiles, Four Years Under Marsh Robert (New York & Washington: The Neale Publishing Company, 1904), p. 274. Cited hereinafter as Stiles, Under Marsh Robert.

Spencer magazine rifle, and Anderson was certain that at least two corps were entrenched in his front.[37]

In any event, the claim that the behavior of Keitt's regiment had demoralized the rest of Anderson's corps[38] seems to have little foundation. If the assertion were true, then against the superior force that confronted him, Anderson could hardly have been able to maintain his possession of the strategic point that Grant ordered to be taken "at all hazards." In fact, said artillery officer Robert Stiles, "our other troops stood firm, and we lost no ground."[39]

Perhaps the most important factor in determining the outcome of Anderson's attack was the failure of Robert Hoke's division to support it. Because he commanded the largest division, Hoke's cooperation was essential. More important, however, was the fact that his division was positioned on the right and would, therefore, be required not only to support it, but would be demanded to actually lead the attack; for, if Anderson was to move against Grant's flank at all, the attack would have to be delivered from his right, because the Federal army was in motion by its own left flank.[40]

In the afternoon of the 31st, Anderson was informed by General Ramseur that the Federal Sixth Corps was entrenching on the Old Cold

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[37]Fletcher Pratt, A Short History of the Civil War (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1953), p. 329.

[38]Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, III, 506. Curiously enough, Freeman himself made the assertion and cited Stiles as his source. It is obvious from the above quotation, however, that Stiles' statement was precisely to the contrary.

[39]Stiles, Under Marsh Robert, p. 274.

[40]Stribling, Gettysburg and Virginia, p. 141.

Harbor Road. Aware that more troops would be needed, Anderson informed Lee of this intelligence and asked specifically: "Will General Hoke be under my command, or is his a separate and cooperating force?"[41] General Lee replied affirmatively: "General Hoke will, whilst occupying his present position relative to you, be under your control. He was directed to see you and to arrange for cooperation tomorrow. . . ."[42] This was short notice because the attack was scheduled to begin at daybreak on June 1; yet Lee directed Hoke on the 31st to see Anderson and "to arrange for cooperation tomorrow!" Was he suggesting that the attack be postponed? Anderson did not think so and attacked as projected. While Kershaw was delivering his attack, he reported to Anderson that he had lost all contact with Hoke's division.[43] As there is no record of Hoke's getting the order from Lee and his subsequent failure to move, one must surmise that he simply did not receive the dispatch.[44]

Realizing that no support from Hoke was forthcoming, however, Anderson did drive the Federals back far enough to enable the First Corps to secure the heights around New Cold Harbor, and he immediately began to fortify them. "The importance and value of this success," said one veteran officer, "can only be realized when it is understood that had Grant's order to seize the heights at New Cold Harbor been carried out, the Federals would have occupied the ridge, and the Confederates, instead of defending, would have been compelled to assail them, inasmuch as it

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[41] O. R., LI, pt. 2, 974.

[42] Ibid., XXXVI, pt. 3, 858.

[43] Ibid., LI, pt. 2, 796. My italics.

[44] Alexander, Military Memoirs, pp. 537-538.

was the key to the Confederate Capital."[45]

"Sometime," before 10 p. m., during Kershaw's attack on Sheridan, Anderson had become worried and sent his chief of staff, Moxley Sorrel, to ascertain "how matters had gone with Hoke." By noon, Sorrel still had not returned, and by this time, the Federal Sixth and parts of the Eighteenth Corps were already well into the fight.[46]

Anderson was correct in assuming that Hoke was in trouble. As liaison had still not been effected between Anderson and that general, Hoke had allowed a gap to be created between his and Kershaw's division. The gap amounted to about fifty yards, with a patch of woods and a stream separating the two divisions. Grant was now determined to break through Anderson's thin and disjointed line. His position was such that he could not move further by his left flank unless he moved in the direction opposite Richmond. Therefore, he would have to break through Anderson's line before Lee could send re-enforcement, or else abandon his entire plan of taking Richmond on the north side of the James River. By 6 p. m. Grant had the full strength of Wright's and Smith's corps and threw the two commands forward four ranks deep. Portions of this force slipped through the cover of the woods that ran through the gap between Hoke and Kershaw and went unobserved until they came upon the Confederate rear.[47] Moving to the left and right, they captured over two hundred prisoners from the exposed flanks of the two Confederate divisions.[48]

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[45] Walter Clark, ed., History of Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina (Goldsboro, N. C.: Nash Brothers, Book and Job Printers, 1901), II, 5.

[46] Ibid.; O. R., LI, p5. 2, 796.

[47] Stribling, Gettysburg and Virginia, p. 141.

[48] Alexander, Military Memoirs, pp. 537-538.

Anderson, without reserves or re-enforcements,[49] anticipated Hoke's dilemma, and had detached one brigade from Field, one from Pickett,[50] and one battery of guns[51] before the break had occurred.[52] The Federals were checked with this aid and the exposed flanks of Kershaw and Hoke were connected with a re-fused line in the shape of a horseshoe. At dark Grant halted the assault. He had lost three thousand men. Anderson's losses were less than three hundred.[53] "Narrowly," said Freeman, "Lee's lieutenants had saved their flank, and, probably their capital."[54] Again, as at Spotsylvania Court House, the responsibility was Anderson's.

That night Anderson informed the Commanding General that he expected a renewal of the attack at daylight on June 2[55] and requested re-enforcement. Luckily for the Confederacy, however, Grant spent the entire day positioning the additional troops that were coming in.[56] Had he been able to attack as scheduled, Grant would have almost certainly dislodged Anderson's three divisions, because Anderson's support did not arrive until after twelve o'clock. Apparently Lee did not stress the gravity of Anderson's situation, for Breckinridge, who did not even begin to march until after 10 p. m., had rested his men every half-hour, and Mahone

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[49] Ibid.

[50] O. R., LI, pt. 2, 976.

[51] Stiles, Under Marsh Robert, p. 274.

[52] O. R., LI, pt. 2, 976.

[53] Alexander, Military Memoirs, p. 538.

[54] Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, III, 507.

[55] O. R., LI, pt. 2, 976.

[56] Stiles, Under Marsh Robert, p. 276.

and Wilcox did not arrive until afternoon.[57]

At daylight on the 3rd[58] Grant was ready, however, and launched the bloody assault that he thereafter regretted.[59] Perhaps a brief hour transpired before it was all over. With clumsy butchery, Grant massed men twenty-eight deep into such an inferno of murderous case-shot and cannister that even historian of the Army of the Potomac, Hugh Swinton, recorded the sanguinary death toll at over thirteen thousand![60]

With three corps Grant concentrated his assault on Kershaw's salient, where he had broken through on June 1, and, when the firing ceased just before eight o'clock, Anderson had counted fourteen frontal assaults against that sector. Except for a final one at dark, Grant delivered no more assaults at Cold Harbor.[61] "The sight in our front," said Sorrel, "was sickening, heart rending to the stoutest soldier. Nothing like it was seen during the war, and that awful mortality was inflicted in but little more than an hour!" After the battle Grant issued general orders stating that such assaults should never again be made on entrenched positions.[62] Less than one month later, however, in an attempt to dislodge Anderson from the trenches at Petersburg, he would try it again.

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[57] Freeman, R. E. Lee, III, 381-383.

[58] Stiles, Under Marsh Robert, p. 286; Stribling, Gettysburg and Virginia, p. 142.

[59] Grant, Memoirs, II, 276.

[60] Stiles, Under Marsh Robert, p. 287.

[61] O. R., XXXV, pt. 2, 1059.

[62] Sorrel, Recollections, p. 246.

CHAPTER XIII

FROM DREWRY'S BLUFF TO FORT HARRISON

(JUNE-SEPTEMBER, 1864)

Early in the month of June, 1864, Lee, short of a large enough cavalry force in the immediate area, was eluded by the Federals as Grant slipped past his forces, crossed the James, and threatened the defenses of Petersburg. Confederate forces that were holding this line were under the direction of General P. T. G. Beauregard, whose forces at this time consisted of only Wise's brigade of infantry just up from the defenses in Charleston, Dearing's cavalry brigade, and the Petersburg Home Guard. Beauregard had just abandoned his works at Drewry's Bluff in the Bermuda Hundred sector and had rushed to defend Petersburg. Lee sent Robert Hoke's and Bushrod Johnson's divisions across the James to assist.[1]

General Anderson moved to Drewry's Bluff on the 17th to regain the works left by Beauregard, which Union General Benjamin Butler's Tenth Corps now occupied. Upon arrival, Anderson ordered Pickett to take a hill on the Clay Farm, the results of which were little reminiscent of Pickett's immortalized charge up another hill in 1863. Field was ordered to support him. In two assaults the First Corps took the entire works, sweeping away the enemy from two entrenched lines. By the end of the day Anderson occupied the entire front.[2]

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[1] O. R., XL, pt. 1, 655-660, 667, 720.

[2] Ibid., pt. 2, 665.

Anderson's fine success is all the more admirable when it is noted that two full-generals expressed doubt that his force was a sufficient one to take such a strongly entrenched position. Beauregard wired Lee with a warning that Anderson would need to be re-enforced.[3] When hearing from Anderson that "It is to be presumed that he [Butler] has possession of our breastworks opposite Bermuda Hundred," Lee became as apprehensive as Beauregard and warned Jefferson Davis that, lacking full-strength with the absence of Kershaw's division, the First Corps might not be able to carry out its assignment.[4] When informed that Anderson had gained complete possession of Drewry's Bluff, however, Lee expressed his confidence and admiration in another congratulatory dispatch to the general, adding that his belief now was "that they will carry anything they are put against."[5]

After his victory over Butler's troops, Anderson was ordered by Lee to leave Pickett at Bermuda Hundred and to take Field's division to the Petersburg line to join Kershaw. Beauregard had been attacked by a determined Union force on the 17th that had broken his lines and captured six hundred prisoners and five guns. But the Federals did not gain any works until late in the afternoon when they drove Beauregard's forces back a half-mile from the original lines. The action ended with the day, but the capture of Petersburg seemed almost a certainty. For some reason, however, the Federals were satisfied with the ground gained on the 17th

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[3] Ibid., LI, pt. 2, 1078-1079.

[4] Ibid.; Freeman, Lee's Dispatches, pp. 244-245.

[5] Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, III, 532.

and did not assail the new lines of the Confederates until late in the afternoon of the 18th.[6]

Followed by Field's division shortly afterwards, Kershaw moved toward Petersburg at about three o'clock. Both divisions arrived in time on the 18th to relieve Beauregard's forces against a new attack by two fresh corps. Barely had Kershaw adjusted his lines when Warren's Union corps delivered its assault. Just before Field arrived at five o'clock, Union General Meade began advancing toward the works with his fresh, strong columns. "General Anderson and his whole Corps were in a position to meet this furious onslaught," said General Kershaw's biographer, "and he delivered the Federals a total repulse at every point!"[7]

"If Anderson had not been there on the 18th of June," said a Confederate general, "Petersburg would surely have been captured by the strong force with which the Enemy attacked, and Grant's program would have been carried out. . . . General Anderson thus saved Petersburg, saved Richmond and saved the Confederacy!"[8]

After the assault on the First Corps had been checked, A. P. Hill's corps came up. The lines were strengthened and the long siege had begun. With one exception, however, there were no more coordinated assaults as at Spotsylvania Court House and Second Cold Harbor. For about three months, the only fighting on the Petersburg front was the sniping from the trenches. Once in a while a separate unit would show itself and throw its weight upon what it thought to be a weak point in the Confederate line, but the

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[6] O. R., XL, pt. 2, 202.

[7] Dickert, Kershaw's Brigade, pp. 380-381; O. R., XL, pt. 1, 760-761.

[8] Walker, R. H. Anderson, p. 177. Statement of Anderson's biographer, Brigadier General C. Irving Walker, C. S. A.

first real concentrated effort by Grant to outmaneuver Lee since the Union Commander crossed the James River, came with the detachment of Hancock, who was ordered to head straight for Richmond. Doubtlessly, Grant thought that any force Lee could send against Hancock would improve his chances of a successful assault against Lee's line at Petersburg. But Richmond had to be protected at all costs, and Lee sent Anderson to meet the threat of Hancock.

On July 27, with Heth's and Kershaw's divisions, Anderson crossed the James to check the Federal advance to Richmond. Fitz Lee's cavalry joined him on the 28th, and Anderson drew his line the next day at the junction of the Darbytown and Long Bridge roads. Field's division came up and joined him shortly afterwards. Federal skirmishes felt Anderson's lines on the 29th, but the action did not advance beyond this stage. After Anderson had captured some prisoners and a Federal field piece, Hancock withdrew his forces and marched back to Petersburg during the night.[9]

The following week General Lee was informed by the Washington Chronicle that General Philip Sheridan had assumed command of Union forces in the Shenandoah Valley. Since the Eighteenth and portions of the Nineteenth Federal Corps had left his front, Lee had reason to believe that they would join Sheridan's Army, and, if true, the Confederate forces in the Valley under "Old Jubilee" Early would need help.[10]

Anderson was summarily ordered to ship out by rail to Culpeper. By sending a corps commander Lee thought that the Federals would expect a corps to accompany him. With a sizable force such as this operating in

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[9] Dawson, Confederate Service, p. 119.

[10] O. R., XLIII, pt. 1, 995.

the Valley, Grant might send more troops to Sheridan and thus relieve the ever-tightening pressure on the Petersburg front.

Major General Wade Hampton was ordered to report to Anderson at Culpeper where Anderson would give him specific instructions. Hampton was to command a unified cavalry corps consisting of M. C. Butler's and Fitz Lee's divisions. This force, however, along with Kershaw's infantry division, was to be under the general direction of Anderson. Anderson's command in the Valley was thus to be completely independent, and, to illustrate Lee's confidence in him, he was ordered by the Commanding General to use "enterprise" and "to be governed by circumstances." Before Hampton could join Fitz Lee, however, he was recalled and returned to Richmond with Butler's division.[11] So with Kershaw's division and a battalion of artillery, Anderson reached Culpeper around noon on the 12th of August, and was joined by Fitz Lee's cavalry division four hours later.[12]

On the 14th, Anderson arrived at Front Royal and pickets were posted on the Berryville and Winchester roads. At about noon on the 16th, he sent forward artillery, Wofford's infantry brigade and Wicham's brigade of cavalry to dislodge Union cavalry attempting to obstruct his passage across the Shenandoah River. The Union position at Guard Hill and the passage were easily taken, but the success emboldened Wofford to such a degree that he decided to swing his right and attack a larger force of cavalry that had just come up as re-enforcement. The cavalry quickly retired, however, but not before its lightning attack had driven Wofford

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[11] Ibid., pp. 996-999.

[12] Ibid., pp. 862-873. Anderson did not receive a detailed map of the Valley until August 24. The receipt of the map is in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, signed by Anderson on August 24, 1864. For a duplicate of this map by Captain Jed Hotchkiss, see O. R. Atlas, Plate XLIII-3.

back to Guard Hill and inflicted a loss of over three hundred men. Wofford was made cognizant of his mistake at headquarters, where the joke was that "he swung his right and made a water-haul."[13]

The next day Anderson moved his force across the river and advanced toward the Federals on the Winchester Pike, who retired without a fight, however. Anderson followed in pursuit. During this march an interesting incident occurred.

Anderson usually required his staff and couriers to accompany him as he rode well ahead of the main body of troops. If there were any trouble, he wanted to be there when it started. Suddenly firing began, and to Anderson's ineffable disgust, the cavalry squadron that he had sent up as an advance guard came racing back as if they had seen spirits from the depths of darkness. General Anderson's indignation "was painful to see," said one of his staff officers, and, for once, his inimitable self-control simply deserted him. Unconsciously, he reached for his sword. "Oh, if I had my sabre!" His usually gentle eyes blazed as he glared at his staff. "Charge those people in front," he told them as he pointed to his assailants who were no less appalled at the encounter than he, and whose force was no more than a cavalry squadron itself. In an instant, not knowing what lay before them, in one mingled mass of equestrian bewilderment, the likeness of which resembled anything but a battle line, staff, courier and cavalry squadron went tearing down the turnpike in "a glorious race" that did not end until reaching the suburbs of Winchester itself! The chase had carried them five miles from their aroused chieftain.[14]

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[13] O. R., XLIII, pt. 1, 862-873; Dawson, Confederate Service, pp. 120-121.

[14] Dawson, Confederate Service, pp. 121-122.

On the 21st, the combined forces in the Valley launched a unified three-pronged attack against the Federals. Early advanced by Smithfield, Fitz Lee's cavalry by Berryville and Anderson from Summit Point. In this move Anderson encountered the advance of Wilson's cavalry division and drove it before him. The other columns met like success and the Federals failed to make a stand, continuing to fall back toward Charlestown.[15]

General Lee had told Anderson to utilize whatever enterprise available "to injure the enemy,"[16] and on September 2, Anderson proposed to surprise the Federal cavalry at Berryville. He coordinated his force of Fitz Lee's cavalry and Kershaw's division, but, before his plan could be executed, the Federal cavalry dropped back again toward Charlestown.[17]

In the morning of September 3, Anderson sent Fitz Lee's cavalry on a reconnaissance mission, and, about noon, he started Kershaw's division for Berryville. Within four miles of his destination Anderson received a challenge that few imaginations could have matched. He ran squarely into an entrenched force of such proportions that he should have been enveloped! What amount of enterprise could save a single Confederate division from the entire Army of Western Virginia?[18]

Anderson may have been known for his deliberate nature, but his actions on the 3rd belied that reputation. Instantly, he was ordering

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[15] O. R., XLII, pt. 1. 874.

[16] Ibid., XLIII, pt. 1, 995.

[17] Ibid., XLII, pt. 1, 875.

[18] Mistakenly referred to in the diary of the First Corps as the Eighth Corps, O. R., XLII, pt. 1, 875. This Union force on whose muster roll belonged such names as Rutherford B. Hayes and George Armstrong Custer, was commanded by General George Crook, who had superceded Major General David T. Hunter on August 8, 1864, ibid., XLIII, pt. 1, 110, 726. For Federal reports of the engagement, see ibid., pp. 367, 386, 396, 401, 405, 409.

attacks on both flanks of the Federals. One of his units immediately took cover from nearby woods and a cornfield, and, from nowhere thought the bewildered Federals, the Confederates were on their flanks, rolling them up scarcely before they could fire a single volley.[19] Dispositions were even made by one commander to guard the Federal wagon train in the prospect of an attack from the rear![20]

Confusion was so great in the Federal ranks that Union Commander George Crook went to the front himself in an attempt to rally his men. Another Federal division came up, but to no avail. The Federals gave way. Anderson had defeated and put to flight an army that should have made short work of capturing his entire command and which had the advantage of occupying an entrenched position! When Crook's Second Division charged within a few yards of Anderson's line, its commander thought that such an advance against so "strong" a force denoted a "discipline and bravery that has not been surpassed in this war."[21] His counterpart of the First Division was more realistic, however. "It is with mortification," he dolefully admitted, "that I report the giving way of the command on the left. I can assure you that the men and officers feel their disgrace, and also believe themselves capable of doing better things."[22]

Early was not expected to reach Berryville until the next morning, so Anderson kept up cannonading throughout the night and continued to

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[19] O. R., XLIII, pt. 1, 367, 1026.

[20] Ibid., p. 409.

[21] Ibid., p. 401.

[22] Ibid., p. 367.

advance small units from the works that he now occupied.[23] By intermittently delivering these threatening assaults, he deluded the Federals into believing that he had a superior force, and they failed to take advantage of their opportunity to envelope him.

Staff-officer Francis W. Dawson gives this account of the engagement:

> Then we marched and counter-marched and danced about in every direction . . . until September 3rd, when we moved out from Winchester, and attacked the enemy near Berryville, and drove him away. It was at this time that the whole command could have been gobbled up. We had only Kershaw's Division with us, the cavalry having been sent off on a reconnaissance. The enemy, in overwhelming force, came upon us, and General Anderson reached the conclusion that nothing but audacity would save us. Presenting as bold a front as if the whole of the Army of Northern Virginia were with us, and bringing our wagon trains right up to the line of battle, he opened on the enemy with our artillery. To our great surprise and relief the game was successful, and the enemy drew off. General Early arrived the next morning, and his first salutation was: "General Anderson, those Yankees came mighty near getting you yesterday." General Anderson's only reply was: "Yes, General, and it is not your fault that they did not." It was a strange business anyway. General Anderson ranked General Early, but did not wish to take command of his [Early's] troops, as he would necessarily have done had the two commands operated together. The result was that the two commands swung corners and chasseed in every direction to no good purpose, that any of us could see. It was a delightful sort of military pic-nic, and in that sense everybody enjoyed it.[24]

But it was a far more dangerous situation than any of them realized at the time. General Lee did not know it, nor did Anderson and Early, but the Federal force in the Valley since the 9th of August, just before Anderson's arrival, had grown from Hunter's Army of Western Virginia to a tremendous force of four corps! Anderson was lucky that he encountered no more than one of them.[25]

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[23] Ibid., p. 386.

[24] Dawson, Confederate Service, pp. 122, 123.

[25] O. R., XLIII, pt. 1, 125-129.

The works Anderson gained at Berryville remained uncontested until September 13, when two brigades of Federal cavalry captured one hundred and fifty of his pickets.[26] This minor affair was the last encounter that Anderson had with the Federals in the Valley. He was ordered back to Richmond and pursued the route through Thornton's Gap to Gordonsville, during which time Early had suffered a series of reversals. Kershaw's division was sent to aid him, but Anderson and his staff and couriers continued to Richmond, where they arrived on the 26th.[27] On the 28th, Anderson received orders to take command on the north side of the James.[28] On the morning of the 29th, he started out for Chaffin's Bluff, and it was during this ride that a courier came up and informed him that Battery Harrison had been taken and that the Federals, at this moment, were probably moving toward Richmond. After sending the courier to General Lee, Anderson and his staff rode on toward the river.

Battery Harrison had been manned by only a small force of one hundred and fifty men and "Nothing but want of dash," said one of General Lee's critics, "prevented them from taking Richmond." Fortunately, when Anderson arrived the Federals believed his force to be a superior one

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[26]For an interesting account of this minor affair see the report of Brigadier General James Connor, C. S. A., O. R., XLIII, pt. 1, 592-593. Connor received his information on this affair from one of the brigade surgeons and a Private Moore, who by hastily clawing their way up the nearest tree, escaped notice.

[27]The detachment of Kershaw's division back to join Early accounts for the claim advanced by numerous Federal generals that they defeated Anderson in the Valley. In actuality they were fighting Kershaw's division under the direction of Early. The only general battle in which Anderson confronted the Federals was at Berryville on September 3. He did not witness Early being routed at Fisher's Hill, Winchester and Cedar Creek.

[28]O. R., XLII, pt. 1, 875.

and waited for re-enforcements to arrive.[29]

In the afternoon the Federals made a vigorous attack on Fort Gilmer, which was successfully defended by Anderson. The Fort was situated on the same defensive line as Battery Harrison and Grant's Tenth Corps attempted its capture. General Field arrived shortly before the attack with Law's brigade, and, together with Gregg's and Benning's brigades, their resolute defense limited the action to one assault. Some of the retreating Federals sought refuge in a nearby ditch. Shells from Fort Gilmer were directed toward them with the fuse cut to a half-second, and the only factor that kept Anderson from repeating his success at Fort McGruder in 1862 was the fact that somewhere outside the fort lurked an additional Union Corps.[30]

When General Lee rode up the next morning he made preparations to re-take Battery Harrison. After the arrival of Hoke's division and the remaining two brigades of Field's, Lee ordered the charge. The first attack failed because Hoke did not support Bratton. Soon, Lee rode up to the lines and ordered another assault, which was no more successful than the first, and the Confederates withdrew to a new line. Lee's failure to re-take Fort Harrison, General Bratton believed, "was because the difficulties from beginning to end of the attack were too much for human valor."[31]

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[29]Quotation is from Dawson, Confederate Service, pp. 125-126; see also O. R., XLII, pt. 1, 875-876, 935.

[30]Dawson, Confederate Service, p. 126; O. R., XLII, pt. 1, 935.

[31]Quotation is from Bratton's report, O. R., XLII, pt. 1, 880. The foregoing account of the Fort Stedman assault is based upon the sources that have been accessible to the writer. With the exception of but one, all bear the stamp of official documents, which makes the writer wonder what prompted Freeman's statement (Freeman, R. E. Lee, IV, note, 20) that

For the next week all remained quiet around Petersburg until the relative calm was broken on October 7, 1864. The morning was brisk and chilling and the campfire seemed especially alluring to the thinly-clad gray-coats who huddled about its warmth.[32] They had been aroused in the early dawn because Grant had extended his right to where it covered the Darbytown Road. The right of Kautz' Union cavalry division reached the Williamsburg Road.[33] It was a serious threat to Lee's left and Anderson was sent to check it.

With Field's and Hoke's divisions, a battalion of artillery and Mart Gary's cavalry brigade, Anderson began his attack.[34] Moving his brigades as orderly "as if they were on the parade ground," Anderson excited the acclaim from several officers "that they had never seen a more regular and beautiful advance."[35] Just before 8 a. m. Bratton's brigade

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"Anderson's handling of the assaults on fixed positions during the fighting around Fort Harrison had not been of the sort to indicate that he would make a success of the attack on Fort Stedman." For evidence that Anderson was only an observer at Fort Harrison while Lee, himself, conducted the assaults, see O. R., XLII, pt. 1, 859, 876, 880, 935, 938, 941; ibid., pt. 2, 1293, 1306; Dawson, Confederate Service, p. 126. Lee had planned the strategy and the disposition of troops the day before Anderson's arrival at Fort Harrison, ibid., pp. 1301-1303. It is not easily understood how Anderson, arriving on the scene, could be expected to take complete charge of so unfamiliar a situation.

[32]From the journal of Captain Jeb. Hotchkiss, O. R., XLIII, pt. 1, 578. Hotchkiss, topographical engineer and amateur meteorologist, was particularly diligent in noting weather conditions. For the evening of the day following Anderson's attack on the Williamsburg Road he recorded a curious combination of hail and snow.

[33]Stribling, Gettysburg and Virginia, pp. 273-274.

[34]O. R., XLII, pt. 1, 876.

[35]Corbin, Richard W., Letters of a Confederate to His Family in Europe During the Last Year of the War of Secession (New York: Reprinted, William Abbatt), p. 79. Cited hereinafter as Corbin, Letters.

filed to the right of the road connecting his left with the brigade of George T. Anderson. Gary and Law were to Bratton's right on the Charles City Road.[36]

Anderson's attack was quick, furious and well-aimed. In short order it became a rout. As Kautz' dismounted troops began to break, Anderson, as a shock tactic, ordered Gary's cavalry swiftly to the rear, where Gary found an entire Federal battery left him for the effort. Kautz was pursued for about a mile[37] and his division did not rally until safely behind the main works on the New Market Road.[38]

Anderson advanced in the direction of the retreating cavalry. He threw Hoke's division to the inside of the exterior line, flanking it with Field's on the outside. After crossing a thick swamp, Field established contact with Union General Birney's Army of the James.[39]

With a quick grasp of the situation, Birney made no attempt to help Kautz, but threw his infantry behind the interior line before Field reached it.[40] Anderson pressed the entrenched position, sending Bratton to within seventy-five yards of the work. As the contest sharpened, Bratton thought for a time that the Federals were going to fall back. As

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[36]The writer has not been able to determine the position of Brigadier General John Gregg's brigade. General Gregg was killed in the attack on the main works of the Federals and his death was one of the most lamented in the army. None of his officers filed a report. Positions of the brigades are approximated from the diary of the First Corps, O. R., XLII, pt. 1, 876; Bratton's report, ibid., p. 881.

[37]O. R., XLII, pt. 1, 881.

[38]Stribling, Gettysburg and Virginia, p. 274.

[39]O. R., XLII, pt. 1, 876. The Confederates under General R. S. Ewell had tried to flank this army on the 1st and 2nd, but its position had been too strong. See ibid., p. 680.

[40]Stribling, Gettysburg and Virginia, p. 274.

their fire slackened he confidently moved ahead. Hoke's division was up and was to take position on Bratton's right. For some reason, however, Hoke did not move, leaving Bratton's advancing line exposed to flank fire. Although wounded, the courageous brigadier rode down his line to determine the trouble. Seeing that he was "abandoned," he ordered his men to fall back behind a crest, and Anderson called off the attack shortly afterwards.[41]

Although the second attack did fail, Anderson accomplished his design; he prevented Grant from extending his line to the right. Anderson had also gained a decided advantage by his capture of 9 guns, 10 caissons, 2 regimental banners and 100 mounts, besides prisoners and a large supply of entrenchment tools and much-needed forage. His losses in the first attack were negligible, and, as his second attack never fully materialized, his losses in this attack were commensurately small.[42] If a mistake can be attributed to him, however, it would have to be that of not relieving Hoke of his command. The North Carolinian had repeatedly failed him; first at Cold Harbor and again at Fort Harrison. Now, on October 7, Hoke made no attempt to redeem himself. The attack would have been successful "had Hoke supported us," wrote Field's candid aide de camp, "but as usual he was slow or showed the white feather."[43]

Evidently, Anderson anticipated an attempt by Grant to renew the extension of his lines, which had been interrupted on the 7th, because

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[41]Three sources charged that Hoke gave no support in this attack. See O. R., XLII, pt. 1, 876, 881; Corbin, Letters, pp. 78-79.

[42]O. R., XLII, pt. 1, 852, 881; Stribling, Gettysburg and Virginia, p. 274.

[43]Corbin, Letters, pp. 78-79.

he constructed a line of rifle pits on the 10th, and spent the next two days strengthening his works. Hoke's and Field's divisions were placed in front of Cornelius Creek, with two regiments of Gary's cavalry to the left of Field's division.

Early on the morning of October 13, the expected assault came when Gary's pickets were driven in near the Charles River road. Again Anderson foresaw his opponent's move by realizing that the attack to his right was only a feint. This is evident from the fact that he sent only two regiments of cavalry to the relief of Gary's pickets. The attack would be to the left, Anderson surmised, and he threw Gregg's and Law's brigades farther in that direction. The remaining brigades of Field's division contracted their lines toward Gregg's and Law's, while Hoke's division was rapidly moved beside them. The Federals made repeated attempts to break Anderson's re-fused line and occupied the entire day before realizing its futility.[44] Anderson's defense was "a brilliant success," wrote an aide de camp to his family in Europe, and by nightfall Birney's army had disappeared from Anderson's front.[45] The men of the First Corps were proud of the way in which their temporary chief had led them, and they did not know that they had fought their last battle under the leadership of their "brave old commander." In less than a week, the modest soldier whom they affectionately spoke of as "Fighting Dick" Anderson would lead another "corps."

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[44] O. R., XLII, pt. 1, 682, 878, 938. The assailing Federal force was comprised of the First and Third Divisions of the Tenth Corps, along with Kautz' division of cavalry. The commander of this force, Brevet Major General Alfred H. Terry, was completely bewildered by the position of Anderson's troops. For his report, see ibid., p. 682.

[45] Corbin, Letters, p. 78.

CHAPTER IX

ANDERSON'S "CORPS"

(OCTOBER, 1864-APRIL, 1865)

On October 19, 1864, General Longstreet returned to the Army of Northern Virginia and re-assumed command of the First Corps, and General Anderson was never again in a position to lead a force of any consequence. He was given the command of the newly organized Fourth Corps, thereafter referred to as simply "Anderson's Corps." Supposedly, it was a force commensurate with his rank of Lieutenant General, but it was hardly a corps in reality. Composed of Robert Hoke's and Bushrod Johnson's divisions at the outset, it became only a few small brigades when the end of the war came for Anderson at Sailor's Creek. Before it could be utilized, Hoke's division was detached to Beauregard in North Carolina.[1]

From the time that he assumed command of his new "corps" to the disastrous action at Sailor's Creek two days before Lee's surrender at Appomatox Court House, only on two occasions did Anderson encounter the Federals. The first engagement occurred on the 29th of March, and the second action took place two days later.

The attack on the 29th was delivered by Wise's and Wallace's brigades to ascertain the strength of the enemy on the Quaker and Plank roads. Convinced that he was in sufficient numbers and could not be

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[1] O. R., LXII, pt. 3, 1280-1286, 1348-1349. Lee asked Longstreet to choose the force to send Beauregard and, although he had three divisions in his own corps, Longstreet chose Hoke's, which left Anderson the single division of Bushrod Johnson. Anderson made no protest.

driven from his present position, the two brigades retired to the trenches to await a better opportunity.[2] It soon came when a Federal corps commanded by General Samuel Crawford advanced in the direction of Five Forks.

A violent storm began early in the morning of the 31st and did not abate. The Nottoway River rose by the minute and before noon its gushing red water was already impassable. The Fifth Corps had started for Five Forks shortly after dawn, but their progress was so retarded by the slushing mud that by noon they had not even reached the half-way point. The pelting rain made reconnaissance difficult, and, if an attack by Anderson was to be made, his chance would not be improved by waiting. Although he had a force of only four brigades, Anderson could not allow Crawford's corps to reach Five Forks, where it could form a link with Sheridan and overrun Pickett's and Fitz Lee's forces that had just positioned themselves at this point.[3]

Anderson had never failed to drive away an un-entrenched force and, as always when a superior one confronted him, he hit its flank to avert a costly frontal assault.

During the worst part of the fierce storm, contact was established with the Second Division of Crawford's corps, and, before it could move into formation, Confederate artillery bellowed forth as if to challenge the rolling thunder of Neptune's fury itself. Crashing forward into the first line, the Confederates threw it back upon the second. Only one brigade of the first line, after retreating back behind the Third Division, felt secure enough to rally beside it. The others continued in a hopeless

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[2] O. R., LXVI, pt. 1, 1263.

[3] Ibid., p. 892.

stampede. Anderson's two brigades of Hunton and Moody were now up and advanced to the Federal center. McGowan flanked the left of this line while artillery fire was directed at the Federal right. This attack was also too much for the Federals and an almost general rout ensued that took the pursuing Confederate brigades to more than a mile from their original position![4]

General Lee observed the action and in the excitement lost restraint and rode up to the front to join McGowan. Together they rode to Gravelly Run and examined the ground. Lee thought that a stand could be made here if artillery could be moved up.[5] He then sent Major J. F. J. Caldwell of McGowan's staff to Anderson to request a battery to be brought up since a counter-attack led by Crawford's First Division[6] had gotten between McGowan and the Confederate breastworks while he and McGowan had been observing the terrain at Gravelly Run. By this time the Confederates were falling rapidly back to their breastworks.

Sensing the danger to his brigade, McGowan's staff officer struck out straight across the open field rather than take a safer, more circuitous route. He found Anderson "in front of the works" and asked to be introduced to him. Anderson did not wait for amenities, protesting that the major could have been killed by exposing himself so recklessly. Caldwell then reported from Lee. Anderson answered that artillery at such a point would certainly have been helpful but that it would be useless and too dangerous to attempt to put it there now. He requested that the major

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[4] Ibid., pp. 827, 843-846, 863, 868, 873-876, 879, 884, 892, 899.

[5] Freeman, R. E. Lee, IV, 34.

[6] This attack was ably led by Colonel Joshua L. Chamberlain, the gentleman who accepted Gordon's surrender at Appomatox.

remain with him. Anderson repeated the solicitation, but, seeing the major's concern, he allowed his departure, after ordering him back through the safety of the woods.

Riding back to his post, Caldwell could not erase the incident from his mind. Here was the Confederacy's Sir Philip Sidney, he thought, "an officer of the next to the highest rank in our army, who, in the midst of battle . . . is seriously concerned for the safety of an officer of low rank, who, until now, was utterly unknown to him, and had not the least claim to his consideration." He was the model exemplar, thought Caldwell, of all the sentiment expressed in Bayard Taylor's immortal line: "The bravest are the tenderest--The loving are the daring."[7]

A few weeks before the battle on the 31st, Anderson received word that Federal Negro troops had made a raid in Stateburg. His father had died just after his son's great victory at Spotsylvania Court House in the summer of 1864, and Mrs. Anderson, at the time, was left alone at the Borough House. Most of the village had been evacuated when informed of the coming calamity. When told that the invaders burned the homes that had been left vacant, however, to save the beloved old mansion the courageous lady, although old and paralyzed, determined to stay and face them.

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[7]Walker, R. H. Anderson, pp. 206-207. Anderson's losses in the Battle of White Oak Road did not exceed eight hundred men, but they could not be replaced. General Crawford did not report this action but, General G. L. Warren, who was relieved by Crawford just before the battle, reported the Federal losses at two thousand. This list included the casualties inflicted on the 29th, but as this action was a minor affair against two brigades, it is reasonably certain that Federal losses on this date were negligible, O. R., XLVI, pt. 1, 827. The report of Warren's Medical Inspector (ibid., p. 843), of the action of the 31st, would seem to support this conclusion. "On March 31, the entire corps was engaged upon the White Oak road, and one-half the number of ambulances present were constantly occupied in transporting wounded . . . from the hospital at Quaker Church to the railroad station at Humphrey's."

Her presence was respected, and, except for a few marks on the doors and the loss of some valuable heirlooms, surprisingly little damage was done.[8] By this time General Anderson knew that it would not be long before he, too, would join his family at Borough House.

After Pickett's and Fitz Lee's defeat at Five Forks, Anderson joined the rest of Lee's army in a general retreat from Petersburg. On the 3rd of April he skirmished all day to protect his wagon trains at Bevil's Bridge. On the 6th his broken columns of less than five hundred rifles formed a line of battle between two little watercourses known as Sandy and Sailor's Creeks to prevent one of Ewell's divisions from being cut off. "General Anderson seemed to be anxious to push on," said Custis Lee, "to support General Pickett, who was engaged with the enemy farther toward Rice's Station. . . . " As he approached Sailor's Creek Anderson was informed that the Federals had the road blocked ahead of him. General Ewell came up and requested that Anderson unite with him and drive them away. After telling Ewell that he would be needed to protect the rear, Anderson attacked the Federals ahead of him.[9] It amounted to nothing, however, and "the troops seemed to be wholly broken down and disheartened. After a feeble effort to advance they gave way in confusion. . . ." With the exception of a few hundred men, Anderson's and Ewell's entire commands were captured.[10]

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[8] This Mrs. Anderson was the second wife of Dr. Anderson, whom he married after the death of Mary Hooper Anderson. She was the daughter of Chancellor Waties of a nearby plantation. Parler, "Living at Borough House," p. 81.

[9] O. R., XLVI, pt. 1, 1298; The Charleston News & Courier, October 9, 1891, p. 1.

[10] Anderson to Lee in Walker, R. H. Anderson, p. 211.

Both Anderson and Ewell could have escaped by marching toward the right to the command at Rice's Station, "but they were true soldiers and decided to fight," said Longstreet, "to break or delay the pursuit until the trains and rear guard could find safety beyond the High Bridge. Barely known in the retreat, the decision by Anderson and Ewell to stay and fight constituted one of the most noble deeds of the war."[11]

Ewell himself had been taken prisoners, but Anderson managed to escape, spending the next two days trying to get together his scattered and defeated corps. On the 8th, as he now had no command, Anderson was relieved of his duty and ordered by Lee to return to his home and then to report to the Secretary of War. "Part of these orders Providence has permitted me to execute," wrote Anderson, "and part has been suspended indefinitely."[12]

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[11] Longstreet, From Manassas, p. 614.

[12] Anderson to Lee, Walker, R. H. Anderson, p. 211.

CHAPTER X

AFTER THE WAR

(APRIL, 1865-JUNE, 1879)

For General Anderson, the return to the little village of his birth was a homecoming that had been long overdue. As far back as the Valley Campaign, he had seen the hopelessness of his country's cause, and, while riding back to the army in Petersburg, he told his friend Dawson, as he viewed the peaceful blue ridges that rose around him, that it would be the height of his happiness to be able to climb to the top of one of those lonesome peaks, to lie down alone among its clouds and simply roll little rocks down for the rest of his life.[1]

After the War General Lee thought of writing a book of the events of those dreadful four years and requested that Anderson send him a report of the operations of the Fourth Corps in the last months before Appomatox. Anderson responded in a letter which revealed much of what his feelings probably were during the closing months of the struggle. He discussed

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[1] Dawson, Confederate Service, p. 123. After the war Dawson, an Oxford educated Englishman, became the celebrated editor of The Charleston News & Courier, the South's oldest daily newspaper. He rivaled Henry Grady as the spokesman for the New South, but his contributions were cut short by an old nemesis that plagued his hazardous profession in the South--he was shot down in Charleston by an assassin's bullet. For a biographical sketch of Dawson see the D. A. B., V, 151-152. The circumstances of the death of this journalist are discussed by S. Frank Logan, "Francis W. Dawson, 1840-1889: South Carolina Editor" (unpublished master's thesis, Duke University, Durham, N. C., 1947). For Anderson's recommendation of Dawson for survivors benefit see Dawson, Confederate Service, p. 281. The original letter was written to the "Committee on Applications," April 16, 1869, Dawson Mss., Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina.

the insuperable conditions that combined to make victory impossible and conceded that desertion proved to be a more serious problem than most of his comrades wished to admit.[2] "The depressed and destitute condition of the soldiers' families," Anderson believed, "was one of the prime causes of desertion, but the chief and prevailing cause was a conviction amongst them that our cause was hopeless and that further sacrifices were useless."

When Anderson took command of the First Corps just before the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House, Lee's Army had been reduced to about half its original size, and no conscripts arrived to fill the gap. Yet the Federal Army had increased in power, and its size, equipment and supplies exhibited to the hungry and ill-clad Confederate something that could not fail to shake the stoutest veteran. "It was within the capabilities of the meanest soldier and most unreflecting," wrote Anderson, "to calculate the chances of a further prosecution of the war and to perceive how immensely the odds were against us." With mounting difficulties and daily drain of strength, understandably, it was with little of their old spirit that the soldiers of the Army of Northern Virginia entered upon their last campaign.[3]

General Anderson came home with his wife and daughter to a family that had been sadly ravaged during his long absence as a soldier. His mother had long since passed away and his father had died the year before. Although it had been a close family of seven brothers and sisters, only his brother and stepmother remained to join the General. The brother was Dr. W. W. Anderson, Jr., Surgeon Major in the Confederate States Army.

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[2]The Bureau of Conscription set the number of desertions in the Confederate Armies at over one hundred thousand, O. R., LI, pt. 2, 1064-1066.

[3]Letter in Walker, R. H. Anderson, pp. 199-202.

The General may have doubted even his survival when a curious vehicle came up the lane one day. It was a Confederate ambulance, a conveyance he had seen all too often and it was, to him, anything but a good omen. He was greatly relieved, however, to see his brother at its direction. Major Anderson had been allotted the ambulance when General Lee surrendered and, during all the hard years that followed, it acted as the family carriage.

Major Anderson, like his father, was an able surgeon, whose official title by October, 1863, was "Medical Inspector with Superintendence of Vaccination of the Armies, Hospitals, and Camps of Instruction of the Confederate States." The Doctor shared his brother's poverty during the harsh Reconstruction years. He never deserted his professional standards, however, and called on the sick with all the dedication of better days, accepting whatever offered in return. "Strange forms these payments took--a pig, a chicken, eggs, corn, cowpeas, sweet potatoes, or anything with which the patient could part. More often than not, the promises to pay . . . were soon forgotten and the bill was eventually marked off the books."[4]

In addition to the common bond of brotherhood, the General and the Major had markedly similar interests. They had both chosen a career in the United States Army and the wives of the two men were both from the

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[4]Parler, "Living at Borough House," pp. 80, 82. Major Anderson was captivated by all scientific endeavors and, while on a tour of duty in the West before the Civil War, he collected rare and valuable specimens of plants and birds. One of his collections of birds, which included an unclassified specie of warbler, he gave to the Smithsonian Institution. The specimen is still displayed at the Smithsonian and is named Vermi-Vora-Virginiae or "Virginia's Warbler," not for the "Old Dominion," however, but for his wife, Virginia Anderson. See Spencer T. Baird, Birds of North America (Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 1881), II, 7.

North.[5] The brothers also shared the bold sentiment that each held on the subject of manumission, a belief that their father could never accept.

As they had kindly been for over a century before him, the senior Dr. Anderson was determined to have his slaves well taken care of. He was convinced that no good would ever come from liberation as long as the Negro had no suitable place to go nor any means of livelihood. Unlike his brother John Wallace, Dr. Anderson had little faith in the American Colonization Society, except to help those slaves who had already been freed, and he devised a way of keeping "his people" on the Borough Plantation. When Dr. Anderson wrote his will in 1863, the year before his death, he stated plainly therein that should any of his heirs from "Scruples of Conscience" refuse to own his slaves, then he or she would "forfeit all right to any portion of them, or his or her share of the lands, and said place go to the rest of my Heirs. . . ." To inherit the land, therefore, the slaves would have to remain intact.[6]

As the eldest son of the family, General Anderson inherited the Borough House and Plantation upon the death of Dr. Anderson's second wife Elizabeth. He never had to make the hard decision his father had presented him, but after the war he maintained his convictions. The decision that confronted him at the moment, however, was the selection of an occupation, and it was one that presented few alternatives.

Although a welcomed relief to the weary General, to turn away from the attachment and devotion of a lifetime was no easy task. He could

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[5]The junior Dr. Anderson married Virginia Childs of Massachusetts, the daughter of General Thomas Childs of Mexican War fame.

[6]"Will of Dr. W. W. Anderson," Sumter County Court House, Sumter, South Carolina, July 7, 1863.

have had comfort and power had he accepted the command that the Khedive had offered him in the Egyptian Army, but he preferred the sanctity of peace even at the expense of poverty. To seek other employment, for which he was little prepared, however, would have been a painful disappointment. The only available prospect left to him was to seek out political preferment, but such a recourse would have been alien to his every impulse. He would ask only for what was his. And so, with a total absence of experience, funds and labor, and with a market at least as uncertain as his own future, he set out for what would become a dismal four years of farming.[7]

In 1867 General Anderson wrote of his first year's failure as a gentleman farmer in a letter to his friend General D. Harvey Hill, who was now a professor of mathematics at Davidson College. Wrote Anderson: "I began with the opinion that the negro would work if sufficient inducement were offered him--so I borrowed money to repair damages and make a start. I made liberal advances to the laborers but I made no cotton, no corn, no peas, no potatoes. Well! We had an unprecedented drought and as it prevailed generally through the South I stuck to my opinion. No labor could have availed against a dispensation of Providence."

The next year, 1867, he had to borrow again. Although it rained excessively, his yield would have been at least average had his laborers not failed him at a time when they were most needed. But an over-extended Fourth of July took them far away from the cotton fields. When they returned, however, they gave little reason to be welcomed. "At last," explained the General, "when corn and cotton began to ripen a system of bare faced, indiscriminate plundering of the field commenced and much of

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[7]Walker, R. H. Anderson, pp. 240, 265.

the little which we were going to make has been stolen already. We are about finished I suspect in a financial point of view. . . ."[8]

Until the early part of 1868, General Anderson had lived at Borough House with his wife, daughter and step-mother. Hopeful that his presence "might do something towards restraining the stealing and plundering and securing more diligent attention on the part of the negroes," he moved with his wife and daughter to his smaller plantation on the Wateree River, where most of the destruction to the crops had occurred.[9]

Although no more encouraging than the first, General Anderson's next letter to D. H. Hill manifests a philosophical nature and contains an interesting and revealing analogy.

> I would assuredly give me the greatest happiness to see you my dear, good friend, but unless you can come here, I see not any prospect of our meeting. I am unable to move any further from home than my old black horse ⟨Cuffy⟩ can carry me and he grows so dejected and hangs his lower lip to so melancholy a length when I make him go more than three or four miles from his stable that I fear if I undertook to travel much farther upon him he would insist on my doing so on my own legs and not upon his.
>
> Why he should have any attachment to his stable is somewhat a mystery to me for I should say that he has had small comfort and very short rations since I hoped two years and a half ago that <u>he at least</u> might have peace and plenty for the rest of his days.
>
> We have our instincts and our infatuations too, so I will cease to wonder at the Old Black. You propose to me to leave this afflicted land and find some other home. Most gladly would I do so if I could --but I can not move--I can not get away! You have often without doubt seen at your camp fire, a beetle, or an ant come running from its snug quarters in the old dry log and, viewing the conflagration,

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[8]Letter from Anderson to D. H. Hill, October 26, 1867, <u>D. H. Hill Mss.</u>, 70-3360, Virginia State Library, Richmond.

[9]Letter from Anderson to D. H. Hill, January 11, 1869, <u>D. H. Hill Mss.</u>, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh. An only child, the daughter of General Anderson was Miss Sara Gibson Anderson who married Mr. William D. Blanding of Columbia, South Carolina. It is interesting to note that a daughter and namesake is Miss Sara Gibson Blanding, who had the distinction of serving as the only lady president of Vassar College. She and her sister Ellen now reside in Lexington, Kentucky. General Anderson was the grandfather of these two ladies.

> run back again to its hole vainly trying to re-enter in spite of heat and smoke, and thus in hopeless, unavailing struggles lingering about its house until overcome at last it fell into the flames and perished. And you have wondered that the poor infatuated, stupid beast did not run off by the end of the log and fly from certain destruction into the broad forest where there were plenty of old logs and good homes. Perhaps in the goodness of your heart you have sometimes helped it to get away, but my dear old friend in snatching it from one danger you do not know into what other perils you may not have thrown it. You see I have all the infatuation of one of those poor insects. Ruin and destruction stare me in the face and yet I can not fly.
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> Since peace came I have been living at the house of my step mother, but I am going to live on my plantation some four or five miles distant. I shall give up almost every comfort in doing so, for there is but a poor and incommodious house on the place, yet circumstances seem to point so forcibly to my taking this step that I must try it for the next year at any rate.
>
> It will be my last effort however. If I fail next year, then I must truly cease to be like an infatuated bug, and must act like a rational creature--fly from the burning home and seek a new one in the "wide wide world."[10]

As if some horrible blight had settled upon him forever, the next year brought no improvement and the good General had to sullenly record another failure. "Utter exhaustion of resources and the discouragement attending repeated failures--with the dismal prospect and foreboding that under the present system, or anything like it we cannot look for better results all compel me to give up planting cotton and to seek for some other mode of making my bread." His intention now was to wind up his remaining business, and unlike the "infatuated bug," seek other and better circumstances. "California runs in my head in various enticing views," he admitted, and, if fortunate enough to somehow acquire the necessary funds, he thought it not unlikely to be found "somewhere on the western slopes of the Rocky Mountains."[11]

He either found nothing better or the situation at home would not

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[10]From Anderson to D. H. Hill, November 14, 1867, D. H. Hill Mss., North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh.

[11]Anderson to Hill, January 11, 1869, ibid.

allow his removal, because the General made one last effort to make a crop. It, too, was entirely unsuccessful, and not only did he fail to secure the means that would carry him and his family to California, he lost forever one of his most dear and cherished possessions.

Slave and successor to "Dick" the butler was faithful Joe Keene who, by quickly gathering and burying it, salvaged the family's precious silver just before the arrival of possibly marauding Federal forces. He had a dream to one day be the owner of the house he had so long served, and, when hard times came to the General, nothing could be done to feed his family except to give up the Borough House. The General could not pay the taxes on the house, and, after his fourth and final year as a planter, it was offered for sale and Joe Keene was in a position to buy it. The "Radical Regime" had allowed the freedman to become one of the wealthiest men in the area and only by a consolidated effort of all the Andersons was he denied his goal. But, thereafter, when the General returned to the Borough House, he came only as a visitor. Doubtlessly, the family offered to permit the General to maintain its possession, only to have the kind gesture graciously declined. By mutual assent, ownership of the house then passed on to his brother, Major Anderson.[12]

Even had he wished to do so, the General could not have remained in Stateburg. Certainly, he could not attempt another year of farming. But what other employment was there available to him? He would find out. So the gentleman whom General Robert E. Lee reserved to pronounce "a most noble soldier,"[13] who had lost all because he became that great soldier,

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[12] Parler, "Living at Borough House," pp. 81-82.

[13] The Orangeburg Democrat, Orangeburg, South Carolina, July 14, 1879, p. 1; The Daily Register, Columbia, South Carolina, June 29, 1879, p. 1.

and who had done as much as any South Carolinian to defend the honor of his State when she seceded from the Union, was completely ignored by that State he had so loyally supported. But he took whatever was offered him and was employed as a common laborer in the yards of a Charleston railroad company.

In 1872 the wife of General Anderson died, just when things seemed to improve. The General had been promoted to the position of "clerk" for the South Carolina Railroad in Charleston. Two years later a happy union resulted in his marriage to Miss Martha Mellette. Finally, only a few months before his death, the General was given a position by the State as its phosphate agent in the little coastal town of Beaufort, where he died on June 15, 1879, and was lowered into a grave that went unmarked until the year 1887.[14]

If the busy politicans did not lament the death of the quiet General, his fellow officers certainly did. There was something about the good man, they thought, that had to be as much admired as any great victory he had won on the battlefield. The high-mindedness of his character may not have always been understood, but it was always respected. "No filthy word ever polluted his lips," said General Thomas Munford.[15] It would be impossible to give a resumé of his life and services, said General T. A. Huguenin, "for with a modesty which was almost morbid," he had made the facts unattainable. To his biographer, General C. Irvine Walker, who knew and understood him, not even his greatest victory surpassed the

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[14] Walker, R. H. Anderson, pp. 241-242.

[15] The State, Columbia, South Carolina, September 17, 1922, Section C, p. 2; The Columbia Daily Record, Columbia, South Carolina, June 29, 1879, Section A, p. 1.

Camden So. Ca.
April 19th 1874

Mr. A. Moffett
Charleston So. Ca.
Dear Sir

You will find below, the autographs which you asked to have.

I have not been in correspondence with, any of my former comrades, for some years past, and am unable to give you, the address of any one of them. Neither am I able to send you, any of their autographs; as I either lost in the retreat from Petersburg, or since I returned home, all my official correspondence

Respectfully Yours
R. H. Anderson

most simple virtue of his character. "He was as truly unselfish as he was absolutely devoid of any other narrowness. He was broad, nothing small or illiberal ever touched his heart. He was too big to hold petty grievances."[16] In demeanor, impulse, intellect and conscience the moral excellence of Richard Heron Anderson asserted itself, and all combined to make him the gentleman and Christian that he truly was.

In 1891, to replace the simple headboard that for the last four years had distinguished his from the hundreds of other graves in St. Helena Church Yard, a committee was appointed to erect a more suitable marker. Here at the unveiling ceremonies the last salute to the General was the firing of the guns. As the loud roar echoed and then slowly faded, perhaps it signified all that his career had been. At the zenith of his reputation his name had echoed loudly throughout the breadth of his country, the Confederacy. Yet with the dying roar of the cannon now fired in his honor, the memory of "Fighting Dick" Anderson faded with it.[17]

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[16] Walker, R. H. Anderson, pp. 260, 264; The South Carolina Gazette, Columbia, South Carolina, April 27, 1927, p. 4.

[17] It is interesting to note that so far as the writer has been able to determine, the only visible memorials to General Anderson today are the monument at Beaufort, for which the Englishman F. W. Dawson was greatly responsible, the wrought iron fence that surrounds it, given by a northern officer, and a memorial plaque in the Church of the Holy Cross, donated by the General's family. For articles relating to the monument and ceremonies, see The Charleston News & Courier, Charleston, South Carolina, October 7, 1891, p. 8; ibid., October 8, 1891, Second Edition, p. 1; ibid., October 9, 1891, p. 3.

CHAPTER XI

"THE FINAL REVIEW"

Probably no American general has endured the sustained and determined action against him in so brief a period than General Anderson was forced to suffer in that first of the world's modern wars, the death toll of which has, to the present, surpassed the combined totals of American casualties in every other war in American history.

In 1881 General John Bratton stood on the grounds of the battlefield of Seven Pines among the stout old veterans of Anderson's brigade during that engagement to pay tribute to their "brave old commander" and to recount the action on that memorable and hot May day in 1862. "He has seen and done so much hard fighting," lamented the Brigadier, "that there was no higher authority on that subject than the modest, genial gentleman, but bold and intrepid soldier, who, in an army unsurpassed in chivalric courage, and in the dash and skill of its officers, won for himself the soubriquet of 'Fighting Dick Anderson.'"[1]

As a tactician and field commander "Fighting Dick" Anderson had few peers and seemed to be equal to every challenge. If the Federals were ungrouped in the open field, he would charge in a bold phalanx. If his adversary were entrenched, instead of risking a dangerous frontal assault, he would divide his force and effect a flank movement. If the situation were a hopeless one, as it seemed to be at Berryville and the action on the Darbytown road, he would charge with a wild and reckless daring. In

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[1] S. H. S. P., XIII, 419.

most cases, however, the problem was simply the usual one of a superior force, and called for a sliding movement, a tactic of the highest order.[2] Side-slipping is about the most difficult and dangerous maneuver on the battlefield, and Anderson utilized it to a rare perfection. Against a superior force, the movement is designed to keep the assailant occupied. Face-to-face with a large aggressor in the open field, a defensive force is allowed to fall back and yet to present an aggressive front while doing it. It also presents to the defender a position to determine the enemy's weak point and an opportunity to strike it. At Chancellorsville, Anderson's division kept busy a force of three Federal corps while the Second Corps rolled up Howard's Union corps and precipitated the general rout that lionized the names of "Stonewall" Jackson and Robert E. Lee. From Williamsburg in 1862, to the action on the Williamsburg road in 1865, Anderson was deciding the outcome of almost every battle in which he fought.

The Battle of Williamsburg in 1862 was the first Confederate victory of the Peninsula Campaign. It was Anderson's first general encounter with the Federals--yet he led half of Johnston's army in it and defeated a superior force. The action allowed Johnston to continue his retreat. The turning point of the campaign was at Seven Pines, where Anderson's victory has few parallels. With one brigade, he defeated an entire Federal corps and is responsible for turning what had been a Confederate retreat into what became a Confederate pursuit. In every subsequent battle of the campaign, McClellan was on the defensive because Anderson had turned the tide at Seven Pines. In both of these actions the troops commanded by Anderson won the only Confederate victories on the field.

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[2]Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, II, 655.

The next series of battles were called the Seven Days, and the unit that most distinguished itself in them was the division of James Longstreet. But in every engagement of the campaign, it was Anderson who had led it, and it was Longstreet who received the plaudits of his countrymen. But the fault may not have been the Georgian's, for Anderson failed to file a report on any one of them.

At Second Bull Run Anderson advanced upon the unfamiliar Plains of Manassas after a forced march, checked the retreat of Hood's division,[3] and by the end of the day he was occupying the front position on the battlefield.

At Chancellorsville, his tactics were dazzling. In the first battle of the campaign Anderson directed the flank movement that turned the Federal right, and "Stonewall" Jackson simply joined him in the pursuit. While holding the front along with McLaws' division against three Federal corps, Anderson detached two brigades of his own division to save Jackson's trains, which, had the trains been captured, would have foiled Jackson's turning movement on the Federal flank. The final blow to Hooker was the advance of all the Confederate forces to the Chancellor House, and it was executed by Anderson.[4] The lead unit of this advance led by Anderson was his own division, and it was his artillery that first opened fire on the Chancellor House.

At Gettysburg, the success of Anderson's division on July 2, 1863, probably determined Lee's decision to attempt the capture of Cemetery

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[3] O. R., XII, 557, 629. Anderson "came gallantly," said the Commanding General. Although a somewhat over-used word during the Civil War, the term "gallant" was not applied lightly by General Robert E. Lee.

[4] Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, II, 652.

Ridge the following day. Two of his brigades took the strategic point of the entire campaign, a feat that the two divisions of Pickett and Field failed to equal the next day.[5]

The subsequent Battle of the Wilderness, Longstreet's greatest military achievement, was simply a reenactment of Anderson's tactics at Chancellorsville the previous year. Following this battle, Anderson was placed in command of the Confederate First Corps. The promotion came later, however. Never had a Confederate commander faced such odds, and at a time when the offensive power of every army in the Confederacy had been virtually destroyed. But the spirit seemed to remain with them. In his first battle as a corps commander Anderson, disregarding Lee's direction to march at 3 o'clock, filed his men toward the Court House four hours earlier and interceded between Grant and Richmond, thus saving the Confederacy from a decisive, and perhaps a final, defeat. At Cold Harbor he did the same. At Petersburg, after Beauregard had been up-rooted by a single Federal corps from the trenches Anderson had helped to construct in 1863, Anderson arrived in time to check "at every point" a furious assault by two fresh Federal corps. As usual, however, he did not get the credit, and the "Great Creole" was hailed as the savior of his country. But what Confederate general could honestly claim the distinction of having saved the Confederacy even once? The last commander in the armies who would have ever advanced such a claim would have been General Anderson--yet not once, but three times he had checked the Federal drive to Richmond when nothing else had stood in the way.

After Anderson had fought off the attacks on Petersburg, Grant did not renew his effort to take that city. Soon afterwards, Anderson

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[5] D. A. B., I, 273.

was detached with Kershaw's division to the Shenandoah Valley, and he did much to assist Early in eluding the Federal force there under Sheridan. At Berryville, there are few instances of such audacity. Confronted by the entire Army of the James,[6] Anderson attacked it head-on with one small division and drove it from its entrenchments.

When Anderson returned to Petersburg, he was given a division a short time later, and he did not contend the demotion. In the action on the Darbytown road, only a few short weeks before his last battle at Sailor's Creek, Anderson attacked a Federal corps with such fury that it was driven back in confusion. Constituting Anderson's "corps" at this time were four brigades that, by the relentless assaults made upon them by Grant's army, had been reduced to mere regiments. Surely, deservedly, he had won the accolade that styled him "Fighting Dick" Anderson.

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[6] Exclusive of its cavalry, which arrived later on in the day.

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