


# Strike Them a Blow

BATTLE ALONG THE NORTH ANNA RIVER

MAY 21-26, 1864

by Chris Mackowski

EMERGING CIVIL WAR SERIES



## Footnotes

### Chapter One: The Campaign

“ . . . to rest against the morrow.”<sup>1</sup>

“Our loss is fearful.”<sup>2</sup>

“ . . . justly styled ‘Bloody Spotsylvania.’”<sup>3</sup>

“ . . . there you will go also.”<sup>4</sup>

“ . . . there should be nothing left to him.”<sup>5</sup>

“ . . . a new President to treat with.”<sup>6</sup>

“This, viewed as a battleground, was simply infernal. . . .”<sup>7</sup>

“ . . . a pebble tossed past them.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Morton, W.T.G. “The First Use of Ether as an Anesthetic.” *Journal of the American Medical Association*. April 23, 1904.

<sup>2</sup> Rhodes, Elisha Hunt. *All for the Union*. Pg. 149.

<sup>3</sup> Brainerd, Wesley. *Bridge Building in Wartime*. Pg. 221.

<sup>4</sup> *OR XXXIII*, 828. Ulysses S. Grant to George Gordon Meade, Apr. 9, 1864.

<sup>5</sup> *OR LVIII*, 11.

<sup>6</sup> *OR XXXII*, pt. 3, pg. 588. James Longstreet to Alexander Lawton, March 5, 1864.

<sup>7</sup> Mackowski, Chris. *The Dark, Close Wood: The Wilderness, Ellwood, and the Battle that Transformed Both*. Gettysburg, PA: Thomas Publications, 2009. Quotes come from soldier accounts included in the book, derived from archives at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park (FSNMP).

“ . . . when kept up by constant excitement.”<sup>9</sup>  
 “[I]t is hardly natural to expect men. . . .”<sup>10</sup>  
 “[U]ltimately such bloody policy must win.”<sup>11</sup>  
 “. . . kill them as fast as they come.”<sup>12</sup>  
 “Every intelligent enlisted man. . . .”<sup>13</sup>  
 “. . . that could be achieved there.”<sup>14</sup>  
 “This was no time for repining,” he said.<sup>15</sup>  
 “My chief anxiety now. . . .”<sup>16</sup>  
 “. . . unless some good opportunity were offered.”<sup>17</sup>  
 “. . . the camps north of the Rapidan.”<sup>18</sup>  
 “. . . and thus give our troops the desired opportunity.”<sup>19</sup>  
 “. . . Lee ventured to make during the entire campaign.”<sup>20</sup>  
 “. . . to march in the morning.”<sup>21</sup>

## Chapter Two: Hancock’s March

“The dead horses had dwindled away to bones. . . .”<sup>22</sup>  
 “A roaring, seething, bubbling hell of hate and murder.”<sup>23</sup>  
 “. . . during the day the heat and dust would have been almost intolerable.”<sup>24</sup>  
 “Had Grant originally started his movement. . . .”<sup>25</sup>  
 Winning the race would have “brought on a collision. . . .”<sup>26</sup>  
 “an earthly paradise.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Porter, Horace. *Campaigning with Grant*. New York: Mallard Press, 1991. Pg. 140.

<sup>9</sup> Wainwright, Charles S. *A Diary of Battle: The Personal Journals of Colonel Charles S. Wainwright, 1861-1865*. Allan Nevins, editor. New York: De Capo, 1998. Pg. 379.

<sup>10</sup> Meade, George Gordon. *The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade: Major-General United States Army*. Vol. 1. Boston: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1913. Pg. 196.

<sup>11</sup> Blackford, Charles Minor. *Letters from Lee’s Army; or, Memories of Life in and out of the Army of Northern Virginia During the War Between the States*. Charles Minor Blackford III, ed. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998. Pg. 246.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from George W. Zirkle of the Salem Flying Artillery, May 20, 1864. FSNMP.

<sup>13</sup> Wilkeson, Frank. *Recollections of a Private Soldier*. 100.

<sup>14</sup> *New York Times*, May 28, 1864. < <http://www.nytimes.com/1864/05/28/news/grant-s-army-advance-upon-richmond-lee-was-outflanked-reason-why-it-was-done.html>>. Accessed January 7, 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Grant, Ulysses S. *Ulysses S. Grant: Memoirs and Selected Letters*. New York: Library of America, 1990. Pg. 480.

<sup>16</sup> Porter, Horace. *Campaigning with Grant*. New York: Mallard Press, 1991. Pg. 131.

<sup>17</sup> Porter, 134.

<sup>18</sup> Wilkeson, 99.

<sup>19</sup> Porter, 131.

<sup>20</sup> Porter, 131.

<sup>21</sup> Wainwright, 380.

<sup>22</sup> Account from George A. Murden, 1 USSS QM. FSNMP.

<sup>23</sup> Account from John Haley, 17th Maine. FSNMP.

<sup>24</sup> King, David H, et. al. *History of the Ninety-third Regiment, New York Volunteer Infantry, 1861-1865*. Milwaukee: Swain & Tate Company, 1895. Pg. 454.

<sup>25</sup> Alexander, Porter. *Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander*. Gary Gallagher, editor. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989. Pg. 387.

<sup>26</sup> Humphreys, Andrew. *The Virginia Campaign, 1864 and 1865*. New York: De Capo Press, 1995. Pp. 126-7.

<sup>27</sup> Rhea, Gordon. *To the North Anna River: Grant and Lee, May 13-25, 1864*. Baton Rouge: LSU, 2000.

“the corn now was miles high.”<sup>28</sup>  
 The deep gloom of the Wilderness, he said, had been left behind.<sup>29</sup>  
 “. . . a feast to the eye and a joy to the soul”<sup>30</sup>  
 “. . . inspired with new hope.”<sup>31</sup>  
 “It was again ‘on to Richmond’”<sup>32</sup>  
 “. . . so little complaining, or so little straggling.”<sup>33</sup>  
 “. . . a trial of speed with our enemy.”<sup>34</sup>  
 “. . . food was stolen from the farm-houses.”<sup>35</sup>  
 “Our army, operating in hostile territory, was like a swarm of locusts”<sup>36</sup>  
 “We could look back from the hill tops. . .”<sup>37</sup>  
 “[T]he work of entrenching was continued. . . .”<sup>38</sup>  
 “[A] long, weary, dusty march. . . .”<sup>39</sup>  
 “the longest and most trying [march]. . . .”<sup>40</sup>  
 “. . . in some cases almost as seriously as wounds.”<sup>41</sup>  
 “. . . the arrangement is both clever and pretty.”<sup>42</sup>

### Chapter Three: The Fog of War

Lee glassed the earthworks across the field from him.<sup>43</sup>  
 “. . . will regulate my movements by the information [received].”<sup>44</sup>  
 “The enemy left in his trenches. . . .”<sup>45</sup>  
 “secure him from attack till he cross the Pamunkey.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Lyman, Theodore. *Meade's Army: The Private Notebooks of Lt. Col. Theodore Lyman*. David W. Lowe, editor. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2007. Pg. 167.

<sup>29</sup> Porter, 135.

<sup>30</sup> Locke, William Henry. *The Story of the Regiment (Tenth Massachusetts Infantry)*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1868. Pg. 342.

<sup>31</sup> Porter, 134-35.

<sup>32</sup> Porter, 135.

<sup>33</sup> OR XXXVI, vol. 3, 405. Report of Capt. Nelson Penfield of the 125th New York.

<sup>34</sup> Military Historical Society. *The Wilderness Campaign, May-June, 1864*. Boston: 1905. Pg. 301.

<sup>35</sup> Wilkeson, Frank. *Recollections of a Private Soldier*. 103.

<sup>36</sup> Goss, Warren Lee. *Recollections of a Private: A Story of The Army of The Potomac*. 1890. Reprinted 2002 by Digital Scanning, Inc. Pg. 302.

<sup>37</sup> Wilkeson, 105.

<sup>38</sup> *History of the Ninety-third Regiment*, 455.

<sup>39</sup> OR XXXVI, Vol. 1, 389. Report of Capt. James Fleming of the 28th Massachusetts.

<sup>40</sup> Rhea, 238.

<sup>41</sup> Simons, Ezra de Freest. *A Regimental History: The One Hundred and Twenty-fifth New York State Volunteers*. New York: E. D. Simons, 1888. Pg. 212.

<sup>42</sup> Wainwright, 380.

<sup>43</sup> This entire account: Clark, George. *A Glance Backward: or, Some Events in the Past History of My Life*. Houston: 1914. Pg. 53-54.

<sup>44</sup> Lee, Robert E. *The Wartime Papers of Robert E. Lee*. Clifford Dowdey and Louis Manarin, editors. New York: De Capo, 1961. May 21 dispatch to Seddon, pg. 744-45.

<sup>45</sup> Lee, 746. May 22 dispatch to Davis.

<sup>46</sup> Lee, 744-45. May 21 dispatch to Seddon.

## Chapter Four: Leaving Spotsylvania

“fire away occasionally at the enemy’s. . .”<sup>47</sup>

“Weather hot, roads dusty. . .”<sup>48</sup>

“This church, a plain brick building, stands at the crossing. . . .”<sup>49</sup>

“Unless we can drive these people out. . . .”<sup>50</sup>

“I’ll bet five dollars there isn’t a Yankee in those works . . .”<sup>51</sup>

“[A] reb charge upon our lives . . .”<sup>52</sup>

“. . . the dangerous duty of supplying the place of both maps and guides.”<sup>53</sup>

“I have met the enemy. . . .”<sup>54</sup>

“. . . an elderly man of a certain sour dignity; a bitter rebel, plainly.”<sup>55</sup>

Grant and his aide, Horace Porter, had not rested there long.<sup>56</sup>

“Lee now had a superb opportunity to take the initiative. . . .”<sup>57</sup>

## Chapter Five: The Night March

But the once-vaunted Second Corps. . . .<sup>58</sup>

If Ewell could not restrain his excitement, Lee said, he had better retire.<sup>59</sup>

“[I]n a wooded country like that. . . .”<sup>60</sup>

“This is rendered necessary by difficulties. . . .”<sup>61</sup>

“This command will be prepared to move at 4:00 a.m. tomorrow. . . .”<sup>62</sup>

“. . . created the impression of being on serious business.”<sup>63</sup>

“. . . the rest of the army is well up.”<sup>64</sup>

“But the chances are against this.”<sup>65</sup>

“I am afraid the rebellion cannot be crushed this summer!”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 52.

<sup>48</sup> Lyman, 167.

<sup>49</sup> Lyman, 167.

<sup>50</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 815.

<sup>51</sup> Rhea, 245.

<sup>52</sup> Holt, Daniel M. *A Surgeon’s Civil War: The Letters & Diary of Daniel M. Holt, M.D.* James M. Greiner, Janet L. Coryell, and James R. Smither, editors. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1994. Pg.192.

<sup>53</sup> Grant, 562.

<sup>54</sup> *OR LI*, pt. 1, 243.

<sup>55</sup> Lyman, 167.

<sup>56</sup> The account of Grant at the Chandler house comes from Porter, 133.

<sup>57</sup> Grant, 562-3.

<sup>58</sup> For comparison, when Jackson led the Second Corps on its flanking maneuver at Chancellorsville, they numbered some 28,000.

<sup>59</sup> Pfanz, Donald C. *Richard S. Ewell: A Soldier’s Life*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. Pg. 389. This is a tale commonly shared as part of “Bloody Angle” tour training at FSNMP, which is where I first heard it.

<sup>60</sup> Lee, 746. May 22 dispatch to Davis.

<sup>61</sup> Wainwright, 381.

<sup>62</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 59.

<sup>63</sup> Alexander, 387.

<sup>64</sup> Ewell, 276.

<sup>65</sup> Ewell, 276.

<sup>66</sup> Lyman, 169.

## Chapter Six: “Wherever Lee Goes . . .”

“I should have preferred contesting the enemy’s approach. . . .”<sup>67</sup>

“As soon as I can get more positive information. . . .”<sup>68</sup>

“. . . he was really a sick man.”<sup>69</sup>

“General Lee is much troubled and not well.”<sup>70</sup>

Grant planned to cross that army at Chesterfield Bridge. . . .<sup>71</sup>

“The map only shows two roads for the four corps to march upon. . . .”<sup>72</sup>

“. . . we should have been sure of the junction.”<sup>73</sup>

“The older was a simple and narrow person. . . .”<sup>74</sup>

“Burnside . . . presents an odd figure, the fat man!”<sup>75</sup>

“The wife burst into tears. . . .”<sup>76</sup>

“Bivouacked on a beautiful spot . . .”<sup>77</sup>

“. . . on the shortest kind of rations.”<sup>78</sup>

“. . . that may be dictated by sound military policy.”<sup>79</sup>

“[S]end me my cottons drawers & socks. . . .”<sup>80</sup>

“As I am now, I fear I will melt entirely.”<sup>81</sup>

“Burnside and his staff sat within, in the pews, after the manner of a congregation.”<sup>82</sup>

## Chapter Seven: Before the Storm

“I think I am nearer worn out. . . .”<sup>83</sup>

“. . . has been very much shaken.”<sup>84</sup>

“Still I begrudge every step he makes towards Richmond.”<sup>85</sup>

Across camp, Lee’s aide, Col. Walter Taylor, was also catching up on his correspondence.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Lee, 746. May 22 dispatch to Davis.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Booth, George. *Personal Reminiscences of a Maryland Soldier in the War Between the States*. Press of Fleet, McGinley, 1898. Pg. 110-111.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> In the original order, Grant had them reversed, calling them Chesterfield Ford and Jericho Bridge. In his memoirs, where he tried to be meticulous about such details, he quoted from the order and left the error unchanged.

<sup>72</sup> Grant, 563.

<sup>73</sup> Wainwright, 383.

<sup>74</sup> Lyman, 169.

<sup>75</sup> Lyman, 170.

<sup>76</sup> From Porter, 136-139, and Grant, 568.

<sup>77</sup> Holt, 192-3.

<sup>78</sup> Rhea, 287. Cites “Letter of Francis Solomon Johnson to Emily Hutchings.” Special Collections, MS 243. Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries. Athens, Ga.

<sup>79</sup> Lee, 748. May 23 letter to Mary Custis Lee.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ewell, 276-7.

<sup>82</sup> Lyman, 169.

<sup>83</sup> Rhea, 287. Cites “Letter of Francis Solomon Johnson to Emily Hutchings.” Special Collections, MS 243. Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries. Athens, Ga.

<sup>84</sup> Lee, 747. May 23 dispatch to Davis.

<sup>85</sup> Lee, 748. May 23 letter to Mary Custis Lee.

“I should be very glad to have the aid of General Beauregard”<sup>87</sup>

Sizes of the armies and casualty figures<sup>88</sup>

Sheridan’s ill-conceived cavalry jaunt took as many as 12,000 more men off the board.<sup>89</sup>

“It is thought that the two armies are now nearly equal than ever before.”<sup>90</sup>

A northern opponent would later describe them. . . .<sup>91</sup>

“This is nothing but a feint. . . .”<sup>92</sup>

“The enemy had followed us up more closely than we seemed to expect. . . .”<sup>93</sup>

## **Chapter Eight: The Battle for Henagan’s Redoubt**

The morning’s exertions had exhausted Lee. . . .

“. . . nothing to embarrass the grand flank movement of the Second Corps.”<sup>94</sup>

“I am extending my troops across the railroad also.”<sup>95</sup>

The country was “so wooded and unknown”. . . .<sup>96</sup>

Anderson’s unease, Alexander’s “several batteries down to the river,” and the account of the brick chimney<sup>97</sup>

“. . . men in the blue-coated line fell headlong, or backward, or sank into little heaps.”<sup>98</sup>

“[W]e had to run the gauntlet of the enemy’s sharpshooters. . . .”<sup>99</sup>

“We rushed down the slope and over the plain. . . .”<sup>100</sup>

“[I]t was but a few seconds’ work. . . .”<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>Taylor, Walter Herron. *Lee’s Adjutant: The Wartime Letters of Colonel Walter Herron Taylor, 1862-1865*. R. Lockwood Tower and John S. Belmost, eds. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1995. Pp. 161-163.

<sup>87</sup> Lee, 746, May 23 dispatch to Davis.

<sup>88</sup> The sizes of armies going into the Wilderness are statistics that come from the NPS, as are the final army sizes going into North Anna. Statistics on the various unit sizes come from Mark Miller’s *The North Anna Campaign: “Even to Hell Itself” May 21-26, 1864*. Lynchburg, VA: H.E. Howard, 1989.

<sup>89</sup> Rhea uses the figure 10,000; Miller uses 12,000. The NPS uses 12,000: Update to the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation’s Civil War Battlefields, pg. 205. <http://www.nps.gov/abpp/CWSII/VirginiaBattlefieldProfiles/Mine%20Run%20to%20North%20Anna.pdf>

<sup>90</sup> Jedediah Hotchkiss, letter to wife, 26 May 1864, Library of Congress.

[https://www.loc.gov/resource/mss26526.004\\_0573\\_0637/?sp=17&r=-0.212,0.224,1.052,0.4,0](https://www.loc.gov/resource/mss26526.004_0573_0637/?sp=17&r=-0.212,0.224,1.052,0.4,0).

<sup>91</sup> Clark, Gibson. “Reminiscences of Civil War Days.” *Annals of Wyoming*, 380.

<sup>92</sup> This and the rest of the account from Neese, George Michael. *Three Years in the Confederate Horse Artillery*. New York: Neale Publishing Co., 1911. Pg. 275.

<sup>93</sup> Alexander, 388.

<sup>94</sup> *OR XXXVI*, Vol. 1, 417. Report of Lt. Col. William Glenney of the 64th New York, referring to the entire maneuver.

<sup>95</sup> *OR XLVIII*, pt. 3,

<sup>96</sup> *OR XLVIII*, pt. 3, 120-121.

<sup>97</sup> Alexander, 388-389.

<sup>98</sup> Wilkeson, 114.

<sup>99</sup> *OR XXXVI*, Pt. 1, 478.

<sup>100</sup> Weygant, Charles H. *History of the One Hundred and Twenty-Fourth Regiment N.Y.S.V.* Newburgh, NY: Journal Printing House, 1877. Pg. 343.

<sup>101</sup> Haley, John. *The Rebel Yell and The Yankee Hurrah: The Civil War Journal of a Maine Volunteer*. Ruth L. Silliker, ed. Camden, ME: Down East Books, 1985.

A Confederate artillerist on the south bank of the river watched. . . .<sup>102</sup>  
 “This is phenomenal. . . .”<sup>103</sup>  
 Confederates “scampered out of the works. . . .”<sup>104</sup>  
 “The bridge was quickly carried. . . .”<sup>105</sup>  
 Federals “lay on the bank of the stream and blazed away till dark”. . . .<sup>106</sup>  
 “The enemy made several attempts to burn the bridge. . . .”<sup>107</sup>  
 “The river is fordable, though the banks are steep and impracticable. . . .”<sup>108</sup>  
 The capture of the redoubt and bridge. . . .<sup>109</sup>

## Chapter Nine: Jericho Mills

“every inch the soldier”<sup>110</sup>  
 “The bottom of the river was stony. . . .”<sup>111</sup>  
 “. . . Both banks are high, precipitous, and clear of trees.”<sup>112</sup>  
 “. . . a small stream which flowed down its center.”<sup>113</sup>  
 “I could have been over two hours sooner. . . .”<sup>114</sup>  
 “. . . much broken, with several orchards and clumps of trees.”<sup>115</sup>  
 “Time was when the first thing to be done after a halt. . . .”<sup>116</sup>  
 “The rebels were seen busy now hurrying off trains. . . .”<sup>117</sup>  
 “We were about camping for the night . . . .”<sup>118</sup>  
 “I experienced much difficulty owing to thick and tangled brush . . . .”<sup>119</sup>  
 “In a few moments I heard sharp musketry. . . .”<sup>120</sup>  
 “While forming in line. . . .”<sup>121</sup>  
 “I had feared this movement all the afternoon. . . .”<sup>122</sup>  
 “To rout them, would be no great work. . . .”<sup>123</sup>  
 “. . . by a sudden attack, causing some wavering.”<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Clark, 380.

<sup>103</sup> Haley, 162.

<sup>104</sup> Clark, 380.

<sup>105</sup> Grant, 564.

<sup>106</sup> Haley, 162.

<sup>107</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 341.

<sup>108</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 147-148.

<sup>109</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 1, 341.

<sup>110</sup> Goodrich, Frederick. *The Life of Winfield Scott Hancock*. Boston: B.B. Russell, 1886. Pg. 331.

<sup>111</sup> McBride, R. E. *In The Ranks: From the Wilderness to Appomattox Court-House*. Cincinnati, OH: Walden & Stowe, 1881. Pg. 63.

<sup>112</sup> Wainwright, 384.

<sup>113</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 1, 238. Report of Dr. Thomas McParlin.

<sup>114</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 125.

<sup>115</sup> Wainwright, 384.

<sup>116</sup> Locke, 342-3.

<sup>117</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 1, 563. Report of Col. William Tilton of the 22nd Massachusetts Infantry.

<sup>118</sup> Frank letter. Author’s personal collection.

<sup>119</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 1, 621. Report of Col. Rufus Dawes of the 6th Wisconsin Infantry.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 1, 617. Report of Maj. Merit C. Welsh of the 7th Indiana Infantry.

<sup>122</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 1, 563. Tilton’s report.

<sup>123</sup> Reports, 1863–1865, of Cadmus Marcellus Wilcox. Robert Edward Lee Headquarters Papers, 1850–1876. (Series 5. Folder 7. Item 26.) Virginia Historical Society.

“Our batteries in position on the North bank of the river. . . .”<sup>125</sup>  
 “Soldiers who had been through all the battles of the Potomac army. . . .”<sup>126</sup>  
 “The sharp buzz of rifle balls around us. . . .”<sup>127</sup>  
 “It was ludicrous in the extreme. . . .”<sup>128</sup>  
 “. . . very heavy firing in front. . . .”<sup>129</sup>  
 “Sock it to ’em, boys!”<sup>130</sup>  
 “The pioneers and clerks (exempt from going in battle or carrying arms). . . .”<sup>131</sup>  
 “No brigade in the whole army had a higher reputation. . . .”<sup>132</sup>  
 “The line on my left now abandoned their breast-works. . . .”<sup>133</sup>  
 “[T]he whole first brigade and a part of the second broke. . . .” and “I felt that now was the time to show what artillery could do.”<sup>134</sup>  
 “. . . his attack had gone “handsomely”. . . .”<sup>135</sup>  
 “I could not help a glow of pleasure and pride. . . .”<sup>136</sup>  
 “[A]ll three batteries opened within canister range. . . .”<sup>137</sup>  
 “. . . very much demoralized his troops.”<sup>138</sup>  
 “I have seen patent mince-meat cutters with knives. . . .”<sup>139</sup>  
 “firing case-shot into them until they were driven into the woods”<sup>140</sup>  
 “. . . I saw everybody else running the same way.”<sup>141</sup>  
 “Part of my extreme right was just going into position. . . .”<sup>142</sup>  
 “. . . “made every part of the line feel nervous” . . . .”<sup>143</sup>  
 “. . . “had evidently been a good deal scared.”<sup>144</sup>  
 “Had they pushed their main force in. . . .”<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> OR XXXVI, pt. 1, 556. Report of Maj. John Lentz of the 91st Pennsylvania Infantry.

<sup>125</sup> Sgt. Charles Thomas Bowen diary. May 23, 1864. FSNMP.

<sup>126</sup> McBride, 65.

<sup>127</sup> Bowen diary.

<sup>128</sup> McLaurin, William. “Eighteenth Regiment.” *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina, in the Great War 1861-’65*. Walter Clark, editor. Goldsboro, NC: Nash Brothers, 1901. Pg. 55.

<sup>129</sup> OR XXXVI, pt.1, 399. Report of Capt. Garrett Nowlan of the 116th PA Infantry.

<sup>130</sup> Bowen diary.

<sup>131</sup> Frank letter. Frank noted that the pioneers were exempt from service, but they did, in fact, carry arms and were sometimes used in battle.

<sup>132</sup> Wainwright, 386.

<sup>133</sup> OR XXXVI, pt. 1, 621. Dawes ‘s report.

<sup>134</sup> Wainwright, 385.

<sup>135</sup> Wilcox report.

<sup>136</sup> Wainwright, 385.

<sup>137</sup> Wainwright, 385.

<sup>138</sup> OR XXXVI, pt. 1, 582. Report of Lt. Col. William Throop of the 1st Michigan Infantry.

<sup>139</sup> Rhea, 437. Cites: Carleton to Editor, May 26, 1864, *Boston Evening Transcript*, May 31, 1864.

<sup>140</sup> OR XXXVI, pt. 1, 656. Report of Capt. Charles E. Mink of Battery H, 1st New York Light Artillery.

<sup>141</sup> Fox, John J. III. “Edward Thomas’ Georgia Brigade at the Battle of Jericho Mills on May 23, 1864.” <http://emergingcivilwar.com/2014/05/23/edward-thomas-georgia-brigade-at-the-battle-of-gericho-mills-on-may-23-1864/>. Cites: Marion Hill Fitzpatrick, *Letters to Amanda*. (Macon, Ga., 1998) p. 147. (edited by Jeffrey C. Lowe and Sam Hodges); F.S. Johnson Letter. May 23, 1864, Special Collections, MS 243, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Ga.

<sup>142</sup> OR XXXVI, pt. 1, 128. Report of Maj. Gen. G. K. Warren, commander of the V Corps.

<sup>143</sup> OR XXXVI, pt. 1, 129.

<sup>144</sup> Wainwright, 385.

<sup>145</sup> Wainwright, 385.



“I congratulate you and your gallant corps. . . .”<sup>146</sup>

“The ford at Jericho Mills. . . .”<sup>147</sup>

Lighthizer quotes from a Civil War Trust press release, reprinted at ECW:

<https://emergingcivilwar.com/2014/06/12/saving-gericho-mills/>

### **Chapter Ten: Lee’s Council of War**

“[A] regular little council . . . .”<sup>148</sup>

“If I can get one more pull at him, I will defeat him,” Lee said of Grant.<sup>149</sup>

“I seem to have acquired the confidence of General Lee. . . .”<sup>150</sup>

. . . Lee “made good his claim to the mule”. . . .<sup>151</sup>

“General Hill, why did you let those people cross here?”<sup>152</sup>

. . . he told Hill “let us say no more about it.”<sup>153</sup>

### **Chapter Eleven: At Mt. Carmel Church**

“It was evidently of the class described. . . .”<sup>154</sup>

. . . “looked precisely like a town-hall. . . .”<sup>155</sup>

“If you want a horrible hole for a halt. . . .”<sup>156</sup>

“A most hot, dry, dusty and barren corner. . . .”<sup>157</sup>

Inside the church, staffers laid boards. . . .<sup>158</sup>

Sherman’s message was “one of the florid style. . . .”<sup>159</sup>

Meade’s “grey eyes grew like a rattlesnake’s”. . . .<sup>160</sup>

“Sir!” Meade barked. . . .<sup>161</sup>

“an armed rabble.”<sup>162</sup>

“. . . and heartily congratulated upon his signal success.”<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> OR XXXVI, pt. 1, 129-130.

<sup>147</sup> Douglas Southall Freeman, *Robert E. Lee: A Biography*, vol. 3, Chapter XX, footnote 18.

<sup>148</sup> This quotes and the full account come from Alexander, 389.

<sup>149</sup> Cooke, John Esten. *A Life of Gen. Robert E. Lee*.

<http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/10692/pg10692.html>

<sup>150</sup> Rhea, 321. Cites: Martin L. Smith to Sarah, May 29, 1864, in James S. Schoff Collection, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.

<sup>151</sup> Alexander, 389-90.

<sup>152</sup> “The Maneuvers on the North Anna River,” *Confederate Military History*, vol. III, edited by Clement A. Evans (Atlanta: Confederate Publishing Company, 1899), 460.

<sup>153</sup> Taylor, Emerson. *Gouverneur Kemble Warren: Life and Letters of an American Soldier*. Pg.114.

<sup>154</sup> Spear, Ellis. *The Civil War Recollections of General Ellis Spear*. Abbott Spear, ed. Orono, ME: University of Maine Press, 1997.

<sup>155</sup> Lyman, *With Grant and Meade from the Wilderness to Appomattox*, 123.

<sup>156</sup> Lyman, 123.

<sup>157</sup> Lyman, 172.

<sup>158</sup> Lyman, 172.

<sup>159</sup> Lyman, 172.

<sup>160</sup> Lyman, 173.

<sup>161</sup> Lyman, 173.

<sup>162</sup> Lyman, 173.

<sup>163</sup> “Bandy-legged Irishman” is an expression often used by writer Shelby Foote to describe Sheridan—a description I have appropriated here because I’ve always liked it so much. Porter, 143.

“In describing a particularly hot fight. . . .”<sup>164</sup>  
“. . . absent at all from the Army of the Potomac.”<sup>165</sup>  
“. . . a horse every few rods and the air was tainted with them.”<sup>166</sup>  
“. . . the general comparative want of tone and discipline.”<sup>167</sup>  
“[T]he manner in which Burnside acquiesced. . . .”<sup>168</sup>

## Chapter Twelve: Marching Into the Trap

“[T]he sun rose like a disc of molten brass. . . .”<sup>169</sup>  
“My skirmishers are pushing out, and find no enemy so far . . . .”<sup>170</sup>  
“This morning we found that the enemy had fallen back. . . .”<sup>171</sup>  
“I have seen nothing in my front. . . .”<sup>172</sup>  
“. . . there is a skirmish line the edge of the woods behind.”<sup>173</sup>  
“. . . pools of blood, shreds of bloody clothing & so.”<sup>174</sup>  
. . . “found no enemy yet.”<sup>175</sup>  
. . . “right well thrown back.”<sup>176</sup>  
. . . Meade directed him to stretch out on a road to the South Anna River. . . .<sup>177</sup>  
“Hancock is directed to affect the crossing . . . .”<sup>178</sup>  
“The enemy’s side of the river is densely wooded along its bank. . . .”<sup>179</sup>  
“The prospects of success are not all that flattering. . . .”<sup>180</sup>  
“The ford is very rough and deep. . . .”<sup>181</sup>  
“Nothing but the inequalities of the surface. . . .”<sup>182</sup>  
“This shows that somebody is still about . . . .”<sup>183</sup>  
“. . . the projected assault was abandoned. . . .”<sup>184</sup>  
Hancock soon began to worry about his left-rear. . . .<sup>185</sup>  
“While we lay in the woods. . . .”<sup>186</sup>  
. . . “dealing and receiving heavy blows.”<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Porter, 143.

<sup>165</sup> Porter, 144.

<sup>166</sup> Lyman, 177.

<sup>167</sup> Lyman, 173.

<sup>168</sup> Porter, 145.

<sup>169</sup> *History of the Ninety-third Regiment*, 456.

<sup>170</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 157.

<sup>171</sup> Wainwright, 387.

<sup>172</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 149.

<sup>173</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 149.

<sup>174</sup> Bowen diary.

<sup>175</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 158.

<sup>176</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 149.

<sup>177</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 159, 165.

<sup>178</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 134.

<sup>179</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 166.

<sup>180</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 166.

<sup>181</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 167.

<sup>182</sup> *History of the Ninety-third Regiment*, 456.

<sup>183</sup> This and subsequent notes from Warren on this page from *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 159.

<sup>184</sup> From Hancock’s report, *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 342, and Gibbon’s report, *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 432.

<sup>185</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 153.

<sup>186</sup> Quote appears on a sign at NAR park, excerpted from *History of the 58th Massachusetts Infantry*

“As it grew dark the firing had ceased. . . .”<sup>188</sup>  
Even before the blood stopping flowing. . . .<sup>189</sup>  
“It is impossible to suppose. . . .”<sup>190</sup>

### **Chapter Thirteen: The Battle of Ox Ford**

“Have you heard anything from Crawford?”<sup>191</sup>  
“The water was so deep in places. . . .”<sup>192</sup>  
. . . “and I will charge and capture it.”<sup>193</sup>  
“[I]n first rate breastworks. . . .”<sup>194</sup>  
“[A] noise like the coming of a cyclone. . . .”<sup>195</sup>  
“Every man became his own general.”<sup>196</sup>  
“[A] tremendous volley. . . .”<sup>197</sup>  
“Bang it, boys!” . . .<sup>198</sup>  
“General Crittenden has had quite a sharp fight and met with quite a loss. . . .”<sup>199</sup>  
“Nothing whatsoever was accomplished. . . .”<sup>200</sup>

### **Chapter Fourteen: Strike Them a Blow**

Sick as a dog and “cross as an old bear. . . .”<sup>201</sup>  
“Though he still had reports of the operations in the field. . . .”<sup>202</sup>  
“Lee could attend to nothing except what was absolutely necessary. . . .”<sup>203</sup>  
“Suppose disease should disable him. . . .”<sup>204</sup>  
There was no one to strike the blow.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> *History of the Ninety-third Regiment*, 456-457.

<sup>188</sup> from History of the 58th Massachusetts Infantry, appearing on a sign at NAR park

<sup>189</sup> *History of the Ninety-third Regiment*, 456-457.

<sup>190</sup> Badeau, Adam. *Military History of Ulysses S. Grant: From April, 1861, to April, 1865*. Vol. 2, 235.

<sup>191</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 159.

<sup>192</sup> Anderson, *Fifty-Seventh Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers*, 98.

<sup>193</sup> This and the subsequent paragraphs from Anderson, 99.

<sup>194</sup> John F. Sale, 12th Virginia, from a wayside at NAR park.

<sup>195</sup> From a wayside at NAR park.

<sup>196</sup> “Sheep” comment comes from Pvt. Vincent DeLong of the 24th New York Dismounted Cavalry. It appears on a wayside sign at NAR park.

<sup>197</sup> E. A. Shiver, Co. C of the 2nd Georgia Battalion, quoted on a wayside sign at NAR park.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>199</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 168.

<sup>200</sup> Anderson, 104.

<sup>201</sup> Rhea, 326, for the “bear” comment. Cites: Jedediah Hotchkiss to Henry Alexander White, January 12, 1897, in Hotchkiss Collection, LoC.

<sup>202</sup> Venable, Charles. “Campaign from the Wilderness to Petersburg.” *Southern Historical Society Papers*, vol. 14. Pg. 535.

<sup>203</sup> Taylor, 164.

<sup>204</sup> Lee, Robert E. *Recollections and Letters of Robert E. Lee*. New York: Doubleday, 1904. Pg. 127.

<sup>205</sup> In fact, says historian Kris White, there *was* someone to strike the blow: “Operationally, command of the field should have been relinquished to Martin Luther Smith.” However, as an engineer with little experience commanding infantry—he’d been in command of a brigade early in 1862 while constructing defenses around New Orleans—Smith would not have seemed a qualified choice to Lee, who himself was an engineer, but one with experience leading men in combat.

“If General Lee had known the true condition of affairs. . . .”<sup>206</sup>

“To get from one wing to the other. . . .”<sup>207</sup>

“[I]ntrench in your present position, and hold it against the enemy. . . .”<sup>208</sup>

### **Chapter Fifteen: Stalemate**

The 28th Massachusetts had spent all day on May 24. . . .<sup>209</sup>

“[W]e fully expected to receive one of Grant’s interesting 4 a.m. calls. . . .”<sup>210</sup>

“. . . much better laid out and heavier than ours, as they always are.”<sup>211</sup>

“To make a direct attack from either wing. . . .”<sup>212</sup>

. . . “the usual skirmishing and artillery firing”. . . .<sup>213</sup>

“[I]t was expected the Rebs might strike after dark. . . .”<sup>214</sup>

“The men labored earnestly and cheerfully all day. . . .”<sup>215</sup>

“The rails and ties were torn up. . . .”<sup>216</sup>

“It is raining hard and the men in the trenches are suffering. . . .”<sup>217</sup>

In a letter written to his wife that day. . . .<sup>218</sup>

Ewell would be perhaps the most notorious casualty of the battle. . . .<sup>219</sup>

“I understand that all the forts and posts have been stripped of their garrisons. . . .”<sup>220</sup>

“We lay for three days in the trenches at North Anna. . . .”<sup>221</sup>

“[W]e could do nothing where we were. . . .”<sup>222</sup>

“Can it be that this is the sum of our lieutenant general’s abilities?”<sup>223</sup>

“[N]either of our two commanding Generals. . . .”<sup>224</sup>

“At North Anna the rank and file of the Potomac army. . . .”<sup>225</sup>

“The Yankees have lost all the boldness and dash. . . .”<sup>226</sup>

“Lee’s army is really whipped. . . .”<sup>227</sup>

“Our success over Lee’s army is already assured. . . .”<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Anderson, 107.

<sup>207</sup> This and the rest of the quote from Grant, 568.

<sup>208</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 155.

<sup>209</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 1, 389.

<sup>210</sup> Alexander, 390.

<sup>211</sup> Wainwright, 388.

<sup>212</sup> Grant, 596.

<sup>213</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 1, 412. Report of Brig. Gen. John R. Brooke.

<sup>214</sup> Haley, 163.

<sup>215</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 1, 578. Report of Capt. Benjamin Meservey of the 18th Massachusetts Infantry.

<sup>216</sup> *History of the Ninety-third Regiment*, 457.

<sup>217</sup> Blackford, 248.

<sup>218</sup> Ewell, 278.

<sup>219</sup> Miller, 138.

<sup>220</sup> Lee, 750.

<sup>221</sup> Wilkeson, 122.

<sup>222</sup> Grant, 568-9.

<sup>223</sup> Wainwright, 388.

<sup>224</sup> Washington Robeling letter, FSNMP.

<sup>225</sup> Wilkeson, 122.

<sup>226</sup> Rhea, 368. Cites: Martin L. Smith to wife, May 29, 1864, in James S. Scoff Collection, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.

<sup>227</sup> *OR XXXVI*, pt. 3, 206.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

“How we longed to get away from the North Anna. . . .”<sup>229</sup>

“It was a delicate move. . . .”<sup>230</sup>

. . . “under cover of the thick clouds that were scudding the sky.”<sup>231</sup>

“Before us, in the distance, rose the swells of Cold Harbor. . . .”<sup>232</sup>

## Visiting the Battlefield

Information on the Sidney E. King Arts Center can be found at  
<http://www.bowlinggreenartscomm.org/sidney-e.-king-arts-center.html>

. . . “the furthest point to which the train ran. . . .”<sup>233</sup>

“Portions of the landscape have been altered. . . .”<sup>234</sup>

Organized in 1773, Carmel Church. . . .<sup>235</sup>

“. . . to preach the gospel to persons of his own color.”<sup>236</sup>

. . . “who outnumbered the white members three to one at times”. . . .<sup>237</sup>

“The ford at Jericho Mills. . . .”<sup>238</sup>

“The important thing. . . .”<sup>239</sup>

. . . “the largest Civil War battlefield park not operated by the National Park Service”.  
. . . .<sup>240</sup>

Initially preserving 80 acres. . . .<sup>241</sup>

## Appendix C: The Battle of Wilson’s Wharf

by *Emmanuel Dabney*

. . . the men of Butler’s command began entrenching.<sup>242</sup>

. . . enslaved people regularly encountered: a whipping.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Wilkeson, 122.

<sup>230</sup> Grant, 570.

<sup>231</sup> Locke, 344.

<sup>232</sup> Wilkeson, 123.

<sup>233</sup> Loehr, Charles T. Address before Pickett Camp, U. C. V., August 31, 1896. Southern Historical Society Papers.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2001.05.0284%3Achapter%3D1.8>

<sup>234</sup> Update to the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation’s Civil War Battlefields. Pg. 205.

<http://www.nps.gov/abpp/CWSII/VirginiaBattlefieldProfiles/Mine%20Run%20to%20North%20Anna.pdf>.

<sup>235</sup> Wingfield, Marshall. *A History of Caroline County, Virginia: From Its Formation in 1727 to 1924*. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Com, 2009. (Originally published in 1924.) Pg. 321.

<sup>236</sup> Wingfield, Marshall. *Wingfield’s History of Caroline County, Va.* Pg. 321.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid*, 320.

<sup>238</sup> <http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/northanna/north-anna-2014/message-from-jim-lighthizer.html>

<sup>239</sup> Email to the author, March 17, 2015, from Sam Smith of the Civil War Trust, quoting CWT’s Director of Real Estate Tom Gilmore.

<sup>240</sup> <http://www.hanovercounty.gov/News/County/North-Anna-Battlefield-Park-Dedicated/>

<sup>241</sup> A trail map from the Hanover County Department of Parks and Recreation can be found here:

[http://www.hanovercounty.gov/RP/North\\_Anna\\_Battlefield\\_Park\\_Trail\\_Map\\_and\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.hanovercounty.gov/RP/North_Anna_Battlefield_Park_Trail_Map_and_Guide.pdf)

<sup>242</sup> Benjamin F. Butler, *Autobiography and Personal Reminiscences of Major-General Benj. F. Butler* (Boston, MA, 1892), 639-40.

“the blood from [Clopton’s] loins at every stroke.”<sup>244</sup>  
 “. . . Mr. W died instantly.”<sup>245</sup>  
 “. . . the United States Colored Troops in garrison at Wilson’s Wharf.”<sup>246</sup>  
 “. . . with one piece of artillery for Kennon’s place on the lower James.”<sup>247</sup>  
 “. . . the Fifth South Carolina Cavalry under Col. John Dunovant.”<sup>248</sup>  
 “. . . to offer the garrison to surrender.”<sup>249</sup>  
 “would prove disastrous.”<sup>250</sup>  
 “try and hold it.”<sup>251</sup>  
 “. . . Wild’s men ran up a black flag.”<sup>252</sup>  
 “. . . their free status and gain citizenship.”<sup>253</sup>  
 “. . . but gallantly was the compliment returned.”<sup>254</sup>  
 “. . . artillery in the fort and the gun boats.”<sup>255</sup>  
 “. . . upon the transport vessel, *Mayflower*.”<sup>256</sup>  
 “There were negro troops as well as white in the fort.”<sup>257</sup>  
 “. . . some forward, some backward.”<sup>258</sup>  
 “. . . a great many on the field for us to bury.”<sup>259</sup>  
 “. . . Colonel Dunovant had six men wounded.”<sup>260</sup>  
 “. . . I shall never see my noble, kind brother again.”<sup>261</sup>  
 “. . . sent to his master in Richmond.”<sup>262</sup>  
 “the most useless sacrifice of time and men and horses made during the war.”<sup>263</sup>  
 “. . . God grant that the evil may be speedily remedied, is all I will now say.”<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> William H. Clopton to Julia Gardiner Tyler, May 17, 1864, *Private and Official Correspondence of Gen. Benjamin Butler*, 4:244.

<sup>244</sup> George W. Hatton, “Retaliation in Camp,” *Christian Recorder*, May 28, 1864.

<sup>245</sup> “Murder by the Yankees,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, May 21, 1864, available online at <http://dlxs.richmond.edu/d/ddr/> (accessed November 16, 2014).

<sup>246</sup> Janet B. Hewett, et al., eds., *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, I, 6:796.

<sup>247</sup> Janet B. Hewett, et al., eds., *Supplement to the Official Records*, I, 6:809.

<sup>248</sup> Hewett, et al., eds., *Supplement to the Official Records*, I, 6:797.

<sup>249</sup> Hewett, et al., eds., *Supplement to the Official Records*, I, 6:797.

<sup>250</sup> John Gill, *Reminiscences of Four Years as a Private Soldier in the Confederate Army* (Baltimore, MD, 1904), 98.

<sup>251</sup> Hewett, et al., eds., *Supplement to the Official Records*, I, 6:797.

<sup>252</sup> Robert J. Driver, Jr. and H. E. Howard, *2nd Virginia Cavalry* (Lynchburg, VA, 1995), 121.

<sup>253</sup> For more about Fort Pillow see John Cimprich, *Fort Pillow: A Civil War Massacre and Public Memory* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2005) and Brian Steel Wills, *The River was Dyed with Blood: Nathan Bedford Forrest and Fort Pillow* (Norman, OK, 2014).

<sup>254</sup> Henry M. Turner, “For the Christian Recorder,” *Christian Recorder*, June 25, 1864.

<sup>255</sup> Paul B. Means, “Additional Sketch of the Sixty-Third Regiment (Fifth Cavalry.),” in Walter Clark, ed., *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War, 1861-65* (Goldsboro, NC, 1901), 606.

<sup>256</sup> *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, X (Washington, D.C., 1900), 90.

<sup>257</sup> Robert J. Driver, Jr. and H. E. Howard, *2nd Virginia Cavalry* (Lynchburg, VA, 1995), 121.

<sup>258</sup> Gill, *Reminiscences of Four Years*, 98.

<sup>259</sup> Turner,

<sup>260</sup> Hewett, et al., eds., *Supplement to the Official Records*, I, 6:797.

<sup>261</sup> Mary D. Robertson, ed., *Lucy Breckinridge of Grove Hill: The Journal of a Virginia Girl, 1862-1864* (Columbia, SC, 1994), May 28, 1864; June 2, 1864, June 5, 1864, 188-90.

<sup>262</sup> Hewett, et al., eds., *Supplement to the Official Records*, I, 6:810.

<sup>263</sup> Means, 604.

<sup>264</sup> Turner, “For the Christian Recorder,” *Christian Recorder*, June 25, 1864.



Chris Mackowski  
Foreword by Gordon C. Rhea

# Strike Them a Blow

Battle along the  
North Anna River,  
May 21-25, 1864



EMERGING CIVIL WAR SERIES

