

"Sacrificed to the bad management...of others.":

Richard H. Anderson's Division at the Battle of Gettysburg



Eric A. Campbell

As for Gettysburg...victory w[oul]d have been won if he could have gotten one decided simultaneous attack on the whole line. This he tried his utmost to effect for three days, and failed. ...Longstreet & Hill &c. could not be gotten to act in concert. Thus the Federal troops were enabled to be opposed to each of our corps, or even divisions in succession. ...the imperfect, halting way in which his corps commanders...fought the battle, gave victory...finally to the foe.¹

Robert E. Lee expressed the above opinions in 1868 as possible reasons for his defeat five years before at that historic and epic struggle. These and numerous other causes have been offered throughout the years to explain how the seemingly invincible Army of Northern Virginia could have lost that crucial engagement. In the third volume of his masterful study *Lee's Lieutenants*, Douglas Southall Freeman, that army's most distinguished historian, listed among the most significant factors:

...the non-success of the invasion sprang from the reorganization [of the army] necessitated by the death of [Lt. Gen. Jonathan J.] Jackson...the awkward leadership of men in new and more responsible positions, the state of mind of ...[Lt. Gen. James] Longstreet...the overconfidence of Lee...and the lack of co-ordination in attack.²

While examples of these factors can be found throughout the entire army, they are no more clearly evident than by studying Major General Richard H. Anderson's Division and its role in the battle. While admittedly not as famous as other Confederate units or areas of fighting at Gettysburg, the operations of Anderson's command were crucial to the Southern cause on all three days of the battle and provide a perfect example, in microcosm, of the factors which caused the Confederate defeat at Gettysburg.

Before the role of Anderson and his men in the battle can be discussed, an examination of the division itself is in order. Who were the officers and men of this unit that played such a central, yet largely forgotten, role at Gettysburg? Anderson's Division was large in both numbers and experience. It consisted of five brigades, one of only two such divisions in the army, and belonged to Lieutenant General A. P. Hill's newly created Third Corps. Numerically, the division was the second largest division in the army, marching onto the field with an approximate strength of 7,100 officers and men.³ The majority of these soldiers were battle hardened veterans seasoned by at least two years of active campaigning. They hailed from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi and Virginia, providing a good cross-sectional representation of the South. Being capably led by experienced officers at the company, regimental, and brigade level, these soldiers certainly lived up to the high standards of the Army of Northern Virginia.⁴

Their commander, Maj. Gen. Richard H. Anderson, also seemingly meet this standard. Colonel E. P. Alexander, one of the South's best artillerymen and an articulate observer, considered Anderson to be "a pleasant... commander" and "a sturdy & reliable fighter." Born in 1821 in Sumter County, South Carolina, Anderson graduated from West Point in 1842. He spent his entire pre-war career in the U.S. Army, earning a brevet to 1st lieutenant for service in the Mexican War, and the permanent rank of captain by 1855. He resigned his commission on March 3, 1861 to join the newly formed Confederacy.⁵

After brief stints of service at Charleston and Pensacola, Anderson was promoted to brigadier general in July 1861. He and his "splendid brigade of South Carolinians" joined Major General James Longstreet's division in Virginia in early 1862. Anderson led this brigade, and at times the division, through numerous actions during the Peninsula Campaign and the Seven Days battles. His excellent leadership and "gallant" behavior on the battlefield soon earned him promotion to major general and command of a division in July 1862.⁶

Anderson led his new division with distinction through the campaigns that followed, including Second Manassas, Antietam (where he was severely wounded), Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. In the latter battle Anderson, operating directly under General Robert E. Lee's orders seemed to be everywhere on the battlefield. He assisted in checking Major General Joseph Hooker's turning movement, acted as a holding force during Jackson's famous flank march, cooperated in driving in the main Union line and was then detached to assist in checking the advance of Major General John Sedgwick's force near Salem Church. Lee himself reported that Anderson's conduct was "distinguished for the promptness, courage, and skill which he and his division executed every order...." He had impressed his superiors to such an extent that during the reorganization of the army following Jackson's death, Lee considered Anderson a "capital" officer who "will make [a] good corps commander...if necessary."⁷ Though he did not receive this promotion, Anderson was highly regarded by his fellow officers and was one of the most experienced divisional commanders within the Army of Northern Virginia, having nearly a year's experience at that level by the time the Gettysburg Campaign began.⁸

Despite these impressive credentials, Richard Anderson was not beyond criticism. Indeed, he was never considered among the Confederacy's elite commanders. Major Moxley Sorrel, one of Longstreet's staff officers and a man who worked closely with Anderson for over a year, provided a possible explanation for this phenomenon. His description of Anderson just before the Battle of Fredericksburg, pointed to problems that would lead to trouble at Gettysburg:

Major General Richard H. Anderson...was rather an interesting character. 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.... He had served well as a brigadier general, and now with Longstreet, commanding a division, had more to do. Longstreet knew him well and could get a good deal out of him, more than any one else.⁹

The bulk of the division, despite numerous reorganizations of the army between the summer and fall of 1862, had been together since the Second Manassas Campaign in August 1862. Shortly thereafter, all five of the brigades were organized within the same division for the first time. Thus these soldiers had served together for nearly ten months, and had fought side-by-side through the 1862 Maryland Campaign, Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville.¹⁰ This familiarity should have bred a mutual respect and trust that would carry them through the upcoming summer campaign of 1863.

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Representing five of the 13 Confederate States, the majority of the division came from the Deep South. What follows is a brief summary of Anderson's brigade commanders and their brigades in order of seniority. Brigadier General Cadmus Wilcox commanded five Alabama regiments (8th, 9th, 10th, 11th and 14th). They were veteran units, having been organized in the spring and summer of 1861, and were seasoned by over two years of war. Wilcox, 39, was also highly experienced and respected. After graduating from West Point in 1846 he was brevetted for gallantly during the Mexican War. His *Rifles and Rifle Practice*, published in 1859, became a standard work on the subject before the war. Resigning his commission in June 1861, Wilcox became colonel of the 9th Alabama, which he led into battle at First Manassas. Promoted to brigadier general on October 21, 1861 he commanded a brigade through all of the major engagements of 1862 and early 1863. His brigade numbered approximately 1,700 officers and men as it marched north that early summer.¹¹



*Brig. Gen. William Mahone
(CWLM)*

Brigadier General William "Billy" Mahone's Brigade consisted of five Virginia regiments (6th, 12th, 16th, 41st, and 61st) whose combined strength totaled approximately 1,540. Mahone, 36, graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 1847. Involved heavily in the railroad industry before the war, he became colonel of the 6th Virginia in 1861. Assigned to the Army of Northern Virginia he was promoted to brigadier general on November 16, 1861 and led his brigade in nearly every action thereafter. Though severely wounded at Second Manassas, Mahone returned to duty for the Fredericksburg campaign that winter. His regiments, with the exception of the 61st, had been organized in the spring and summer of 1861 and had served with the Army of Northern Virginia from the Seven Days Battles onward. Yet even the 61st Virginia was an experienced unit. Organized in October 1862, the regiment had seen action during the Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville campaigns and many of its members had served in other units since 1861.¹²

Brigadier General Ambrose "Rans" Wright commanded a brigade of approximately 1,400 Georgia soldiers. The brigade consisted of the 3rd, 22nd, and 48th Georgia regiments, along with the 2nd Georgia Battalion. Unlike the previous commanders, Wright, 37, had no prior military training. Instead he had practiced law and dabbled in politics before the war. Commissioned colonel of the 3rd Georgia in May, 1861 Wright had served in Georgia and North Carolina until the summer of 1862 when he was promoted to brigadier general and sent to the Virginia theater. He and his brigade saw active service throughout 1862, from the Seven Days onward. At Sharpsburg Wright was badly wounded but recovered in time for the Chancellorsville campaign.¹³

Four Mississippi regiments (12th, 16th, 19th, 48th), totaling slightly over 1,300 officers and men, made up Brigadier General Carnot Posey's brigade. Though he had no formal military training Posey, a lawyer and planter by trade, had served in the 1st Mississippi Rifles during the Mexican War. Acting as the United States district attorney for the southern district of Mississippi when the war began, Posey helped to organize the 16th Mississippi and was soon after elected its colonel. He then led his regiment through the campaigns of 1861 and 1862 before being promoted to brigadier general on November 1 of that year. The men had nearly all joined in 1861 and were veterans, having participated in numerous campaigns, from Jackson's Valley Campaign to Chancellorsville.¹⁴

The smallest brigade in the division was from Florida and was known as "Perry's Brigade." Consisting of the 2nd, 5th and 8th Florida, the brigade numbered approximately 740 officers and men. Its commander, Brigadier General Edward Perry, had come down with typhoid fever shortly after Chancellorsville. Therefore, the brigade marched north under the command of its senior colonel, Col. David Lang of the 8th Florida. Lang, 25, was a surveyor before he joined the 1st Florida as a private. Earning steady promotions he had become



colonel of the 8th Florida in October 1862. Just two months later, on December 11 at Fredericksburg, Lang was badly wounded in the head. The brigade, itself, had been assigned to the Virginia Theater in the summer of 1862 and attached to the Army of Northern Virginia shortly thereafter. Though small, the brigade was a veteran outfit, having seen active service for over a year.¹⁵

Following Chancellorsville the Army of Northern Virginia underwent its most controversial re-organization. Lee had always felt that the army's two corps were too large for any one officer to handle effectively and with Jackson's death saw an opportunity to reorganize the army into three smaller corps. Each would consist of three divisions and number approximately 20,000 men. This necessitated the creation of a third corps and selection of two new corps commanders. Though Anderson was briefly considered for corps command, Lee instead decided to promote his two senior divisional commanders; Richard Ewell to the Second Corps, while A. P. Hill was assigned to the newly created Third Corps.¹⁶

The latter corps was created by assigning one division each from the First and Second Corps and creating a new third division. As two of the three divisions would have officers new to that level of command,¹⁷ Lee must have felt the need to have an experienced divisional commander in the Third Corps. Anderson, therefore, was moved from Longstreet's First Corps to A. P. Hill's new command.¹⁸ Why Lee did not choose to reassign another of Longstreet's divisions (Maj. Gen. Lafayette McLaws, Maj. Gen. John B. Hood or Maj. Gen. George Pickett), or if Longstreet was given a choice in the matter, is unknown. The entire decision might have simply been a matter of numbers. By reassigning Anderson with his five brigades, instead of McLaws or Hood, who had four brigades each, all three corps numbered thirteen brigades when the campaign began.¹⁹ Whatever the reason, this reassignment apparently effected Anderson's leadership, especially during the early evening of July 2, 1863.

Lt. Gen. Ambrose P. Hill (B&L)

Such was the situation for Anderson's men when, in early June, the Army of Northern Virginia broke its camps around Fredericksburg, Virginia and began its most controversial campaign of the war. On June 14, Anderson was ordered to take up his line of march, which was for the most part, uneventful. The division, "moving by regular stages," reached Culpepper Court House two days later. Though they had no idea of their ultimate destination, the men in ranks realized the movement was of major importance. James Kirkpatrick, 16th Mississippi, concisely summed up this attitude in his diary, writing, "...the summer campaign promises activity." The men's morale, like the rest of the army, was extremely high. Capt. John S. Lewis, also of the 16th Mississippi, wrote:

...let me remark, all were perfectly certain of a great victory whenever we should meet the enemy, as no army that we ever had, nor would any which we may be able to get, have been able to stand up before us....²⁰

By June 26, having moved down the Shenandoah Valley and forded the Potomac River, the division entered Pennsylvania. In leaving war-ravaged Virginia, the men were struck by the bountiful northern countryside. John Funk, of the 6th Virginia, described it as "one of the finest country's I have ever witnessed...everything is plentiful, and abundant crops...." After passing through Chambersburg on June 27 the division encamped at Fayetteville, where it remained the next three days. Westwood Todd, a member of the 12th Virginia later described this as "the most delightful camp which I remember during the war."²¹

This blissful reprieve from marching and fighting ended on July 1. Reacting to the unexpected news of the close proximity of the Union army, General Lee ordered the concentration of his forces east of South Mountain near Cashtown. "At day-light the morning of the 1st of July" the men broke camp and began their eastward march "up the Mountain Gap, on the Turnpike leading to Gettysburg." The two other divisions of the Third Corps, Major General Henry Heth's and Major General Dorsey Pender's, were already on the opposite side of the mountain, leading the advance toward Gettysburg. The march to the mountain's summit proved to a difficult one, as a "steady gentle rain" made the road muddy. "While at a momentary halt, on top of the Mountain," recalled a member of the 3rd Georgia, "the boom of a Cannon to the front was heard; then another, then rapidly others." Another member of the 3rd Georgia later wrote, "Each soldier looked anxiously in the face of his comrade, grasped his musket, and resumed his place in ranks."²²

As the march continued tension mounted, for the men plainly "heard the booming cannon, and saw the dense smoke of the hotly contested battle...." Shortly thereafter "Gen'l Lee, and staff, rode past...and every one knew that there was

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serious work in the front.” A member of the 10th Alabama later described the typical thoughts of soldiers nearing a battlefield:

...the echoing sounds were well understood...and that numbers of our boys would never return from the Pennsylvania soil back to the good Dominion state.... No soldier was gifted with prophecy so as to say who would be the next of his company's comrades to miss roll call, that there was a secret inspiration of hope in each one's heart that "I will escape the dangers so prevalent in battle."²³

What had started as an early morning skirmish between leading elements of the two armies who were approaching Gettysburg, had turned into a full-scale conflict by the afternoon. Heth and Pender were heavily engaged with the Army of the Potomac's 1st Corps along a series of ridges west of the town. At the same time two divisions of Ewell's corps assaulted the Union 11th Corps in the fields north of Gettysburg.²⁴

Despite the apparent magnitude of the situation, there was a discernable lack of urgency in the division's march to the front. A member of the 12th Virginia recalled "we moved leisourly forward" and Sergeant Kirkpatrick recorded in his diary the "frequent halts" made throughout the day.²⁵ As they neared the front, the normal scenes of the conflict became more evident. Gen. Wilcox reported, "as we approached near the field of battle, prisoners and wounded were met passing to the rear...."²⁶

When the division reached the battlefield later that afternoon, sometime between 4 and 5 p.m., Anderson was ordered by Hill to deploy his five brigades along Herr's Ridge "in line of battle that had just been vacated by Pender's division...." Yet, even then the men were again halted "for about two hours...looking at the smoke and listening to the sounds of the battle." According to one soldier, the obvious question, "Why are we not put in?" was prevalent in the ranks. Yet the men consoled themselves with the idea that "if we were indeed needed "Marse Bob" would have us there."²⁷

Robert E. Lee faced a critical decision that afternoon. Despite having blundered into a large segment of the Union army and starting a major battle, his scattered forces had concentrated quickly enough that day to win a significant victory. By late afternoon, Hill's and Ewell's men had inflicted severe casualties upon the Union 1st and 11th corps while driving them in confusion through Gettysburg. Yet Lee faced a dilemma, involving perhaps one of his most important decisions of the war. Though defeated, the Union troops quickly rallied on Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill, south of Gettysburg, where they "displayed a strong force of infantry and artillery." Lee sensed an opportunity to follow up the initial Confederate success by continuing the assault before the new Union line could be solidified. But he lacked the vital knowledge of the whereabouts of the remainder of the Army of the Potomac. He explained this predicament in his report:

Without information as to its proximity, the strong position which the enemy had assumed could not be attacked without danger of exposing the four divisions present, already weakened and exhausted by a long and bloody struggle, to overwhelming numbers of fresh troops.²⁸

Lee's explanation, however, has one fault. Though "four divisions" of his army had been heavily engaged, they were not the only ones "present." Anderson's Division was on the field, unscathed and relatively fresh despite its long, yet "leisourly" march. Why did not Lee immediately order them forward to assault Cemetery Hill? With nearly two hours of daylight remaining, and the possibility of a great Southern victory hanging in the balance, it would seem worth the risk. Yet, the order never came and the division remained in place on Herr's Ridge. Neither Lee nor Hill provided an explanation, writing vaguely in their reports, that Anderson "came up after the engagement" and that the division "had just come up" and was ordered bivouacked.²⁹ Though there are many well-known "What if?" questions concerning Gettysburg, this episode is not among them. Whether Anderson's Division could have made a difference on July 1 will never be know, for once it was bivouacked that question became a mute one.

One reasonable explanation, through a second-hand story, ties back into Lee's overwhelming anxiety concerning the proximity of the remainder of the Union army. After the war Capt. Louis Young, a staff officer with Pettigrew's Brigade, Pender's Division, related:

General R.H. Anderson...told me...that hearing our guns early in the day,

he was hastening with his (division) to join us...when he was met by a messenger from General Lee with an order for him to halt and bivouac.... Surprised at this he first obeyed the order, and then rode on to Gettysburg to see General Lee and learn from him if this message was correctly delivered. General Lee...explained that his army was not all up, that he was in ignorance as to the force of the enemy in front, that his (General Anderson's) alone of the troops present, had not been engaged, and that a reserve in case of disaster was necessary.³⁰

Whatever the reason, Anderson's men remained idle along Herr's Ridge as the first day of fighting sputtered to a conclusion. Earlier rumors that the Union forces "was only Pennsylvania militia" had proven false, for they had passed Union prisoners during their approach and learned that the entire Army of the Potomac "was at hand or in striking distance." This news erased hopes of a quick victory and made combat probable the next day. Despite this, the confidence within the ranks of the division remained high. Edmund Patterson of the 9th Alabama recalled:

...we all knew that one day's work could not decide the contest between two such powerful armies.... Our noble army, flushed with a long series of victories and feeling unlimited confidence in the ability of General Lee and the justice of the cause for which we were fighting, were eager for the fray.³¹

Anderson's men were roused up before dawn on July 2 as orders to prepare to move passed through the ranks. Yet, as is typical in armies, the men waited for hours before those orders finally arrived around 7 a.m. The brigades marched back to the Chambersburg Pike and "along it toward Gettysburg" before bearing "off to the right over fields and through woods" west of Seminary Ridge. During this approach march the men passed their old First Corps comrades of McLaws' and Hoods' divisions, who "with arms stacked" awaited orders.³²

Anderson had been ordered to relieve Heth's badly battered division and "take up a new line of battle on the right of Pender's division." In doing so he was "extending [the Confederate right] along a crest of hills which faced the Cemetery Hill..." As his brigades deployed along Seminary Ridge, the men remained concealed "just below the rise" and among the wood lots and "narrow strip" of trees" along its crest.³³ Anderson had four of his five brigades in position by 10 a.m.³⁴



*Brig. Gen. Cadmus Wilcox
(CWLM)*

Wilcox's Brigade, having been detached the previous evening to guard the division's right flank, and with the longest distance to march, was the last to move into position. Some time shortly before noon, as his Alabama soldiers moved southward behind Seminary Ridge and the rest of the division, Anderson directed the brigade commander where to position his regiments. Wilcox was to place his line in the "large open field" just south of the H. Spangler Woods and extend it to the S. Pitzer Woods on Warfield Ridge. "Not knowing whether the woods against which the right of my line was to rest was occupied by the enemy," Wilcox reported that he ordered two of his regiments (the 10th and 11th Alabama) to screen the advance of his brigade.³⁵

Unexpectedly, the regiments received "a heavy volley of musketry...from the enemy" and a "spirited musketry fight ensued...." Wilcox and his men had run into a force of U.S. Sharpshooters, supported by the 3rd Maine Volunteers, who were conducting a reconnaissance along Warfield Ridge. This sharp engagement lasted approximately 20-30 minutes before Wilcox's men drove the Union soldiers' back. Upon occupying the woods Wilcox's brigade established "the right of the division and the extreme right of the army."³⁶

At this point Anderson had deployed his entire division along Seminary Ridge, from just south of the David McMillan house to the northern edge of Pitzer Woods on Warfield Ridge. From left to right the brigades were aligned in the following order: Mahone, Posey, Wright, Lang and Wilcox. The entire line covered a broad

front of approximately 1,750 yards. Though Anderson's Division was a large one, the length of the front seems excessive and would make it difficult for him to communicate with his brigade commanders. It is not known whether Anderson took up this line on his own vacillation or if he was ordered by his commander, A. P. Hill to do so. Because Hill's report states that, once positioned, his corps was "almost entirely covering the whole front occupied by the enemy...." it seems likely it was either he or Lee who determined Anderson's position. Wherever the responsibility lay, Anderson was forced to deal with the consequences of this overextended front throughout the remainder of the afternoon.³⁷

Once in position each brigade formed its line of battle and the men began to take in their surroundings. Nearly the entire line faced eastward, toward the Union line on Cemetery Ridge, except the 10th Alabama on right of Wilcox's line who faced south for "the safety of [the] right flank." In his official report Anderson described the situation:

*The enemy's line was plainly in view, about 1,200 yards in our front, extending along an opposite ridge somewhat more elevated than that which we occupied, the intervening ground being slightly undulating, inclosed by rail and plank fences, and under cultivation.*³⁸

There are indications that some of the men, especially those in Mahone's and Posey's brigades, were ordered to build entrenchments or "such protection as would shelter them." Being without tools, however, those works that were completed were "frail" at best. Each brigade also deployed skirmishers who, according to Anderson, "soon became engaged with those of the enemy, and kept up an irregular fire on one another." All those not on the skirmish line could do was settle down and wait.³⁹

With nothing to do, tension naturally began to mount in the ranks. Westwood Todd, positioned on the left end of the division in Mahone's Brigade, described the fears of the combat soldiers waiting the call to action:

*Several times during the morning I went up on top of the hill...with a view of looking at the ground over which we would probably have to charge. The enemy occupied a more elevated range of hills...about fourteen hundred yards from our line, the intervening space being open fields under cultivation. In all of my experience I never had so good an opportunity of calmly surveying the field and contemplating the dangers which we had to encounter. Although I never had any presentment that I was going to be killed or wounded in any fight...when I looked over that valley, and thought of the shot, shell, spherical case, grape and canister, and minnie balls to which we would be exposed in charging over those 1400 yards, I hardly hoped to come out unhurt.*⁴⁰

Few of Anderson's men realized how long that wait would be. They were also ignorant of their role in the battle plan of the army. Wanting to follow up his partial victory from the day before, Gen. Lee decided make a series of coordinated assaults using all three of his corps in an effort to pressure the entire Union line. The "principal" effort would be made by Longstreet, who would place two of his divisions to the right of Anderson, thus "partially enveloping the enemy's left," which Longstreet "was to drive in." Ewell's Second Corps, opposite the Union right, was to make a "simultaneous demonstration...to be converted into a real attack should the opportunity offer." A. P. Hill's Third Corps was given a two-pronged role in this offensive. According to Lee's report, "General Hill was ordered to threaten the enemy's center, to prevent reinforcements being drawn to either wing, and co-operate with his right most division in Longstreet's attack."⁴¹

The "right most division," was Anderson's. This was probably done to bring the main attack up to three divisions, as Longstreet's third division (Pickett's) had not yet arrived on the field. Thus Anderson found himself in an awkward situation. Though he would co-operate with Longstreet, Anderson remained under the direct orders of A. P. Hill. For this arrangement to work smoothly, Longstreet and Hill would have to stay in close and constant communication throughout the engagement. This situation did not bode well for Anderson, for the history between Longstreet and Hill was an unpleasant one and their ability to work together must be questioned.

Less than a year before, just after the Seven Days Battles in which Hill served under Longstreet's command, the two officers became embroiled in a heated debate over matters of the press and honor. Eventually Hill was placed under arrest

and the two nearly duelled. It took the personal intervention of Lee to settle the matter. Though Major Moxley Sorrel stated after the war that "Later on Longstreet and Hill became fairly good friends" their disposition toward each other at Gettysburg on July 2, 1863 is unknown.⁴²

Lee's plans were passed down the chain of command and "shortly after the line had been formed" Anderson was given his orders. His official report also makes it clear that these orders were rather specific regarding when and how Anderson's movements would be conducted:

*...I received notice that Lieutenant-General Longstreet would occupy the ground on the right...that he would assault the extreme left of the enemy and drive him toward Gettysburg, and I was at the same time ordered to put the troops of my division into action by brigades as soon as those of General Longstreet's corps had progressed so far in their assault as to be connected with my right flank.*⁴³

It is fairly certain that Lee directed the en echelon style of attack "by brigades" as part of his original plan. Lee wanted Longstreet's division to be placed "nearly at right angles" to Anderson so that the initial assault would strike "the left flank of the enemy, and sweep down his line..." By the time the fighting reached Anderson's front, Lee was hoping the Union line would be in retreat. Thus, Lee envisioned the en echelon style of attack as an ideal method for Anderson to "commence the pursuit," thus keeping constant and even pressure on the collapsing Union line.⁴⁴

By the time Anderson got his orders nearly all of the major decisions (i.e. when and how he would attack) had already been dictated to him. The only thing that was left to Anderson was to prepare his brigade commanders by making these orders clearly understood and overseeing the execution of these orders when the fighting began. The first of these tasks he seemed to have done very well, as four of his five brigade commanders specifically mentioned the en echelon attack in their official reports.⁴⁵ The second of these responsibilities, as will be seen, left much to be desired.

Anderson and his men could do nothing however, until Longstreet got his divisions into position and began the attack. For numerous reasons, Longstreet's approach march ran afoul of many difficulties and took longer than expected. This delay was hard on Anderson's men, who had nothing to do but wait. A veteran in Wilcox's Brigade recalled, "The sun was fiercely hot, and there was no shade or other protection for the men" who "sweltered and sweated and swore." Anderson's brigade commanders were busy nonetheless. Wilcox took advantage of this respite to inform his subordinates "the general plan of battle," the role of their brigade and how it would execute their attack once it began. Holding the right end of the Confederate line, Wilcox was careful to take in his surroundings. He noticed "a large road [Emmitsburg Road] parallel to my front...and then a field, and off a mile or more...a high conical shaped mountain without trees covered with rocks [Little Round Top]."⁴⁶

Along the division's skirmish line a "brisk fire" was kept up during the long wait for the attack to commence. This was especially true along the center and left of Anderson's line, where the skirmishers of Wright, Posey and Mahone found themselves involved in a "very animated" fight and facing "a pretty heavy fire."⁴⁷ Posey's Mississippians faced the worst of this fighting, for located approximately 750 yards to their front was the William Bliss farmstead. Located about halfway between the battle lines these buildings, especially the large stone bank barn, provided ideal shelter for skirmishers and sharpshooters. Ordered to replace the skirmishers from Scales' Brigade (Pender's Division), Posey ordered companies from the 16th and 19th Mississippi regiments out to the skirmish line, located just west of the farmstead which was then held by Union soldiers from the 2nd Corps. As the day wore on this fight escalated, both in size and intensity, so much so that artillery batteries on both sides entered the fray. Sensing a weakening in the Union line, Posey's men eventually pushed forward and captured the buildings.⁴⁸ This only marked the beginning of a long and bitter struggle that continued through the afternoon for control of the farmstead. Eventually, most of Posey's Brigade would be drawn into the struggle, directly effecting his ability to participate in the general assault later that afternoon.

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During this time Longstreet was still conducting his approach march toward the Confederate right. It was nearly 3:00 p.m. before the head of his column began to deploy along Warfield Ridge, beyond Anderson's right.⁴⁹ In Wilcox's Brigade, Edmund Dewitt Patterson remembered he suddenly "noticed battery after battery and brigade after brigade being moved up to our right...."⁵⁰

By approximately 3:30 p.m. Longstreet had positioned his two divisions along Warfield Ridge. They took up a 2,500 yard front, from Anderson's right to south of the Emmitsburg Road, thus "partially enveloping the enemy's left." At this point over 21,000 soldiers were posed to launch the main Confederate attack against the Union left. From south to north the divisions were; Hood, McLaws and Anderson.⁵¹

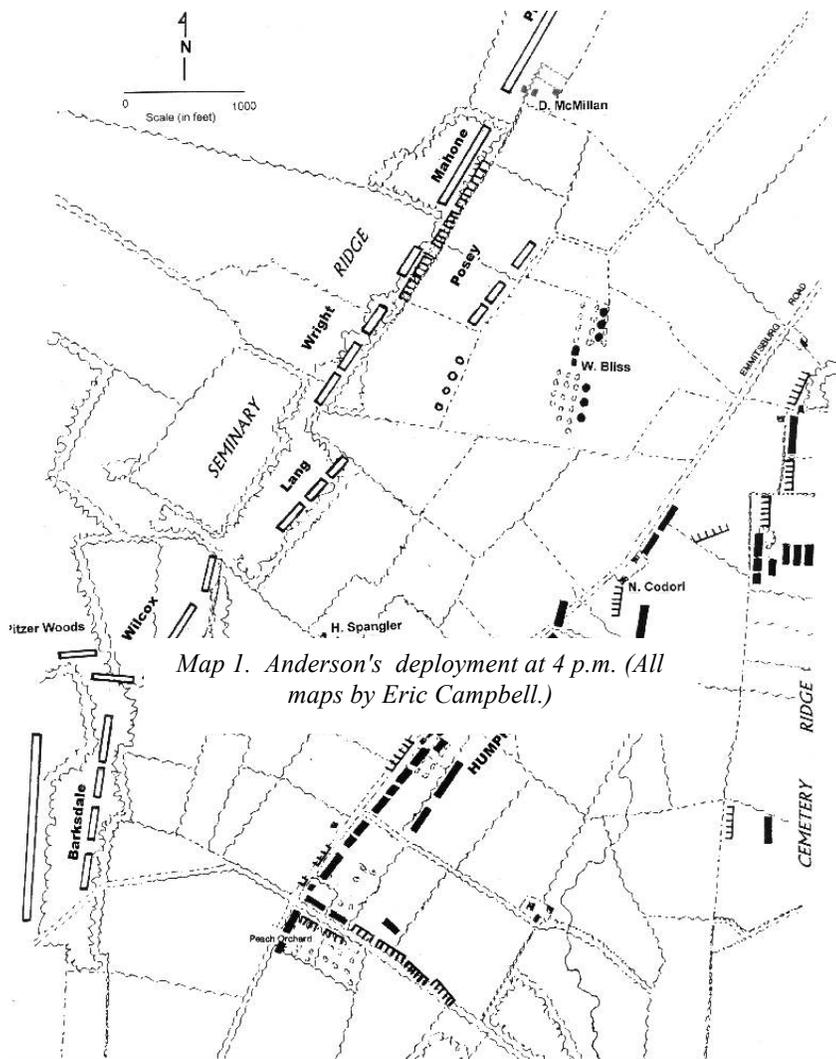


Despite having only half as many men, Anderson's Division occupied a front nearly as long as Longstreet's two divisions. This occurred because the First Corps commander positioned his divisions in two lines, thus giving each brigade on the front line a supporting brigade in its rear.⁵² In order to cover his extended front Anderson had no such luxury and was forced to arrange his brigades in a single line. This formation gave Anderson no depth and could make it difficult to follow through with any successes his brigades achieved. Apparently, nobody saw this as a concern, for Lee's plan anticipated that Anderson's men would be pursuing a broken enemy. As will be seen, this formation later created serious problems during Anderson's assault.

Another problem the Confederate high command had not foreseen was a dramatic alteration in the Army of the Potomac's position. The information Lee had used to develop his plan that morning, and which dictated the tactics Longstreet would use to execute his attack, had located the left flank of the Union battle line on Cemetery Ridge. Instead they found this section of the Union line had moved forward and "appeared to extend from Little Round Top" to "the Peach Orchard, heavily supported by artillery, and extended...toward our left along the Emmitsburg road." Holding this advanced and overextended position was the Union 3rd Corps, commanded by Major General Daniel Sickles. Earlier that afternoon this flamboyant commander, in one of the most controversial decisions of the battle, had pushed his corps up to three-quarters of a mile forward to ground he deemed more suitable. The left flank of this new "V" shaped line was located in front of Little Round Top at Devil's Den while the salient angle occupied the Peach Orchard and the right wing ran northeastward along the Emmitsburg Road.⁵³

This unexpected situation forced Longstreet to adjust the direction of his attack from the northeast, or "to guide... by Emmitsburg Road," to that of one a more eastward direction. Thus the deployment of his divisions, and direction of their attack, was not at right angles to Anderson's front, as Lee's original plan directed. This change in the Union position also brought the right wing of Sickles' line, now along the Emmitsburg Road, to within 650 yards of Anderson's front. A member of Wilcox's Brigade recalled "solid masses of fresh troops, moving up...." These were troops of Major General Andrew A. Humphreys 3rd Corps division of approximately 4,900 officers and men.⁵⁴

Anderson and his men probably had little time to contemplate this new situation, for activity quickly began to increase to their right. In Wilcox's Brigade Edmund Patterson recalled, "we knew that something of interest was soon to take place in that direction and were not long in suspense." Another Alabama soldier wrote, "the thunder of cannon upon the right announced the beginning of the action." Patterson vividly recalled the Confederate "artillery opened fire throwing their missiles of death right down the enemy's line and making the very earth tremble with the thundertones...."⁵⁵



Map 1. Anderson's deployment at 4 p.m. (All maps by Eric Campbell.)

By 4:00 p.m. the Confederate infantry assault began as Hood's Division struck the Union left hard at Devil's Den and Little Round Top. The fighting then spread northward as Longstreet fed his brigades into action en echelon, from south to north. For Anderson's men this meant a long and suspenseful wait. Knowing they could not advance until all of Longstreet's men were engaged, the men could only listen pensively to the "continued boom of Artillery, and the roar of Musketry, far to the right." A member of Lang's brigade recalled:

...we strained our eyes as we caught the roar of the cannon and rattle of musketry, coming nearer and nearer, we soon see brigade after brigade going in to the charge the enemy's lines of defense.⁵⁶

Despite being at a distance, the men of Anderson's Division sensed the magnitude of the fighting. John Lewis, in Possey's Brigade, wrote, "it was the most terrific musketry fire...I have ever heard in so short a time." A Virginian in Mahone's Brigade remembered "for hours the thunder of cannon and crash of musketry rent the air." Increasing the tension within their ranks was the realization that the fight was drawing nearer as the Confederate attack "rolled down the entire line." One of

Wright's Georgia soldiers recalled, "Every moment brought the sounds of the conflict nearer." By 6:00 p.m. Longstreet's assault had spread from Little Round Top to the Wheatfield and was about to strike the Peach Orchard.⁵⁷

The men of Wilcox's Brigade were the first to sense this as the troops to their right moved forward. George Clark, a veteran in the 11th Alabama, vividly recalled the attack of Brig. Gen. William Barksdale's Mississippians:

As Longstreet's brigades came into action the roar of the cannon was accompanied by the rattle of musketry, mingled with the yells of our boys as they moved forward on the run, and the scene was grand and terrific. As the fire and the clamor approached the Alabama Brigade Barksdale threw forward his Mississippians in an unbroken line in the most magnificent charge I witnessed during the war.... The scene was grand beyond description.⁵⁸

With this movement, Longstreet had committed the last of his brigades and the time arrived for Anderson's Division to advance. Anderson's previous orders regarding this were clear, as Brig. Gen. Cadmus Wilcox reported:

My instructions were to advance when the troops on my right should advance, and to report this to the division commander, in order that the other brigades should advance in proper time.⁵⁹

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Wasting no time, the “long awaited” order was immediately given. One Alabama soldier recalled the moment:

*The spirit of the troops were never better, and as Gen'l. Wilcox rode down the line giving orders to charge, cheer after cheer filled the air almost drowning the sound of shells that were bursting above and around us.*⁶⁰

Anderson seemed to be moving at the right time, for he not only outnumbered Humphreys' Division, but would also overlap his right as the Confederate assault developed. Making matters worse for Humphreys' was the removal of 1/3 of his men (bringing his total strength to approximately 3,600) along with the mounting pressure on his left as Longstreet's troops steamrolled the 3rd Corps line in the Peach Orchard. Nevertheless, Humphreys' men did have some factors in their favor in opposing Anderson's advance.⁶¹ Their position along the Emmitsburg Road gave them several advantages. Their battle line was located on a low ridge that ran northward from the Peach Orchard before slowly dropping off near the Nicholas Codori farm. This forced the right of Anderson's Division, especially Wilcox's Brigade, to advance up hill in order to reach the Union line. Humphreys also reported that “the ground occupied by my division was open,” which gave his men an excellent field of fire. Lastly, these Union defenders used a “series of orchards” and the double line of fences along the road, along with several farmsteads, for protection and cover. Even with these advantages the Union soldiers sensed they faced a difficult task as the Southern onslaught moved towards them. One of Humphreys' aides vividly described the approach of Anderson's men:

*Our batteries kept up a rapid fire....and beyond our Corps [to the left]... a terrible pounding and crashing was going on. The breeze blowing from the southward carried the heavy sulphurous smoke in clouds along the ground, at times concealing everything.... Our skirmishers now began a lively popping, the first drops of the thunder shower that was to break upon us. An aide...rode up...with the report that heavy masses of the enemy were gathering in our front & to prepare for an attack.... Our skirmishers were hotly engaged now and moving back, slowly.... A copious shower of shell and canister from the enemy was followed up by a diabolical cheer and yells, and “here they come” rang along the line.*⁶²

These were the Alabama troops of Wilcox's Brigade. Because of the pre-assault alignment of his regiments, and the change in direction of Barksdale's Brigade, Wilcox reported that he moved his regiments “by the left flank so as to uncover the ground over which” the Mississippians would advance.⁶³ “This was done,” Wilcox wrote, “as rapidly as the nature of the ground...would admit.” Once in position, the brigade advanced across “an open field, the ground rising...to the Emmitsburg turnpike.” Despite being “subjected to a terrible artillery fire” and “a shower of musket balls.” the movement continued. Edmund Patterson left one of the most spirited accounts:

*The battle now rages furiously, but our lines move onward—straight onward. The roaring of the artillery,--grape and canister that came plunging through our ranks,--bullets thick as hailstones...men falling on every side...is terrible, yet our men falter not....*⁶⁴

Lang's Florida troops, to Wilcox's left, were watching the progress of the battle and realized their time had arrived. As per orders, Lang took up the attack. One veteran remembered:

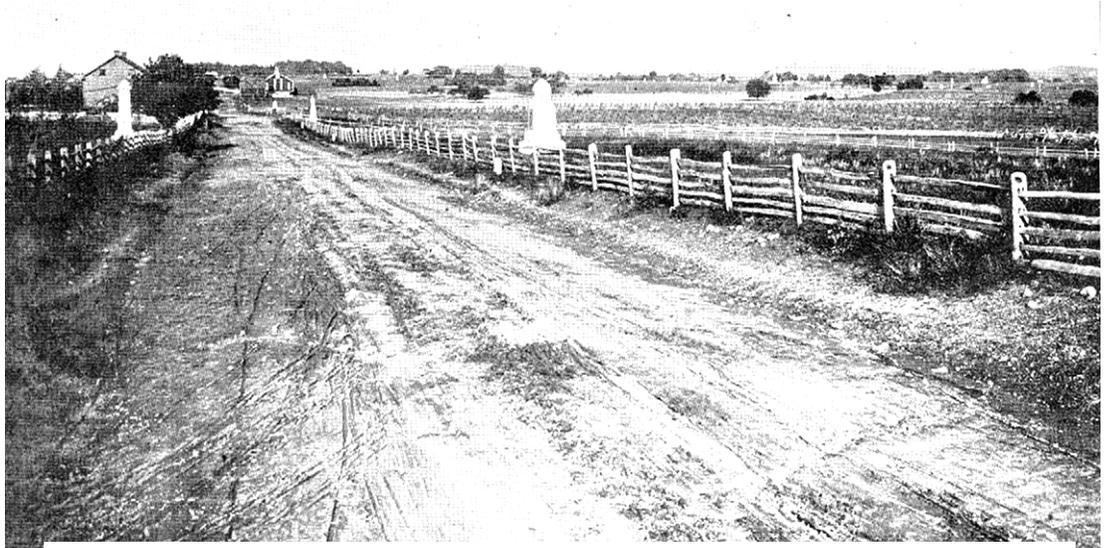
*There goes Wilcox's brigade, and soon all to the right is hidden by dense smoke, and the rebel yell can be heard above the rattle of musketry. Then the order to us, “attention, forward, charge,” and we are into the thickest of the fight.*⁶⁵

Indeed they were, as one Floridian recalled the “enemy’s guns were making great gaps in our lines, and the air seems filled with musket balls, our men falling on all sides.” At that same time Wilcox’s men reached the Union line. Upon nearing the road a “brisk musketry fight” ensued. Wilcox wrote later “the brigade approached the pike...and under fire...crossed two fences, the last near the road, then engaged the enemy at short range.”⁶⁶

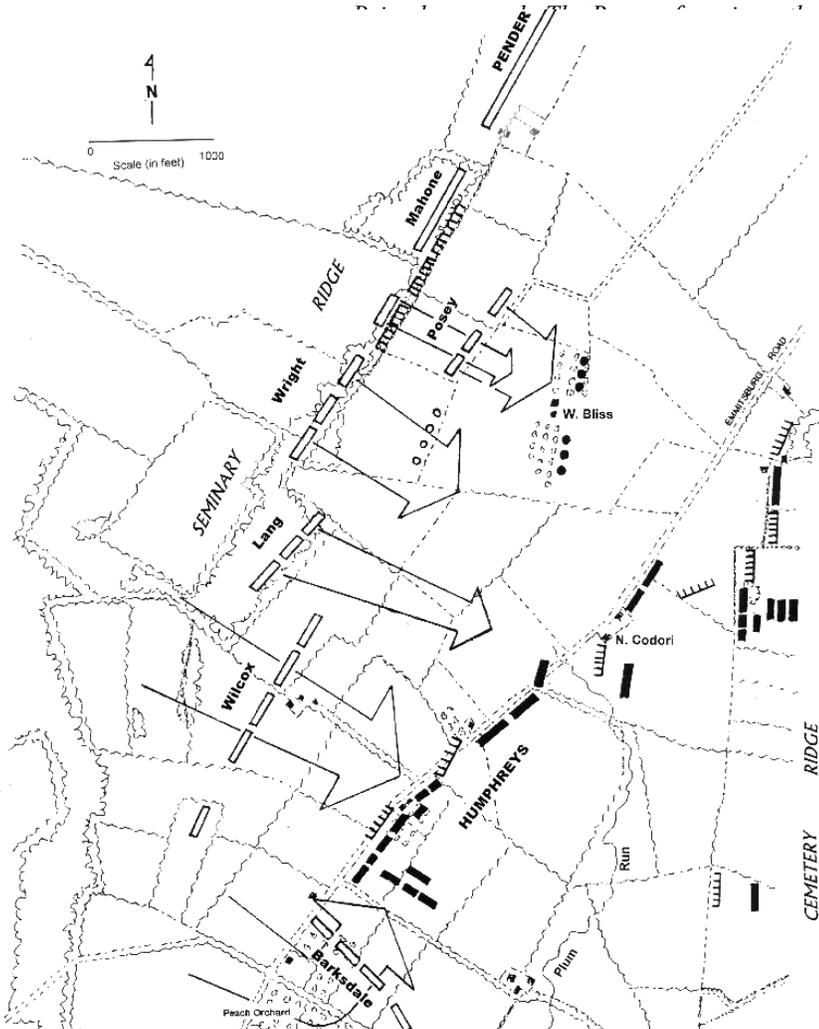
For a time the Union line put up a stiff resistance. One Union veteran described the initial clash:

*Our batteries opened, our troops rose to their feet, the crash of artillery and the tearing rattle of musketry was staggering...and added to the noise in our side, the advancing roar & cheer of the enemy’s masses, coming on like devils incarnate.*⁶⁷

Their situation rapidly deteriorated, however, when the Union line in



An 1880's view looking north along the Emmitsburg Road in the vicinity where Wilcox's [?] and Codori farm can be seen to its right, in [?] and Now)



the Peach Orchard collapsed. With his left “in [the] air” Humphreys was hit from two directions, Wilcox from the east and Barksdale’s Brigade from the south. Having no choice, Humphreys’ line began to fall back towards the northeast. Wilcox recalled what happened next, “As the enemy gave way it brought my men and Barksdale’s Brigade quite close, and mine were ordered slightly to the left.” Col. Hilary Herbert, commanding the 8th Alabama, remembered:

*The artillery & Infantry of the [enemy] fled before us, and we poured a destructive fire into the retreating masses. They retreated towards our left, we changed direction to follow.*⁶⁸

Whether this change of direction had been pre-arranged is unknown, though it seems unlikely. That Wilcox and

Barksdale would converge during their respective advances was obvious before the assault began. Ideally such maneuvers should have been worked out prior to the attack. Yet it seems that Wilcox's adjustment was one of reaction made in the midst of combat. This episode, though seemingly normal on a battlefield, provides a good example of the lack of coordination between Longstreet and Hill. Years later Longstreet claimed that Anderson's brigades were lax in providing proper "support of Barksdale's left," a charge which Wilcox was quick to deny. How true Longstreet's claim was, or whoever is to blame for this lack of preparation, is debatable. What this episode makes obvious, however, was that the communication and coordination between the First and Third corps, so necessary for this assault to succeed, was instead almost non-existent.⁶⁹

During this time Lang's men continued their advance, which he described in his report, writing "I moved forward, being met at the crest of the first hill with a tremendous fire of grape, canister, and musketry." Upon reaching the Emmitsburg Road the brigade struck the right end of Humphreys' line, partially turned its flank and delivered "a most destructive cross-fire" into its ranks. These Union troops, along with the rest of their division began to fall back over towards Cemetery Ridge. "Our men charged splendidly," wrote one Florida veteran, "It was a grand sight to see our Boys after the Yankees.... Gave them the Yell and drove them before us."⁷⁰

Shortly after Lang moved forward the next brigade in line, Brigadier General Ambrose R. Wright's, stepped off. Immediately his men encountered the first in a series of obstacles that plagued their entire advance. Wright described the first problem, writing "As soon as we emerged from the woods...the enemy poured a most terrific fire of shells into our ranks." This fire was overwhelming, as a member of the 3rd Georgia recalled:

Rushing down the hill side...we were greeted by a sheet of fire rolling out

up 2. Approximately 6:30 p.m. Barksdale has turned the 3rd Corps flank, while Wilcox and Lang press its front.

from the opposite side, the smoke extending and ascending until it darkened the rays of the sun.⁷¹

The numerous fences that slowed their march and broke up their formations compounded this lack of cover. Wright described the effect of these impediments in his report:

I was compelled to pass for more than a mile across an open plain, interested by numerous post and rail fences, and swept by the enemy's artillery, which was posted along the Emmitsburg road and upon the crest of the heights... a little south of Cemetery Hill.⁷²

Wright also discovered, however, that the field they were crossing "was broken by a series of small ridges and hollows, running parallel with the enemy's line." He was quick to take advantage of these depressions, writing:

...in the first of these depressions or hollows our line paused for breath. Then we rushed over the next ridge into the succeeding hollow, and thus we worked our way across that terrible field...under the most furious fire of artillery I ever saw.⁷³

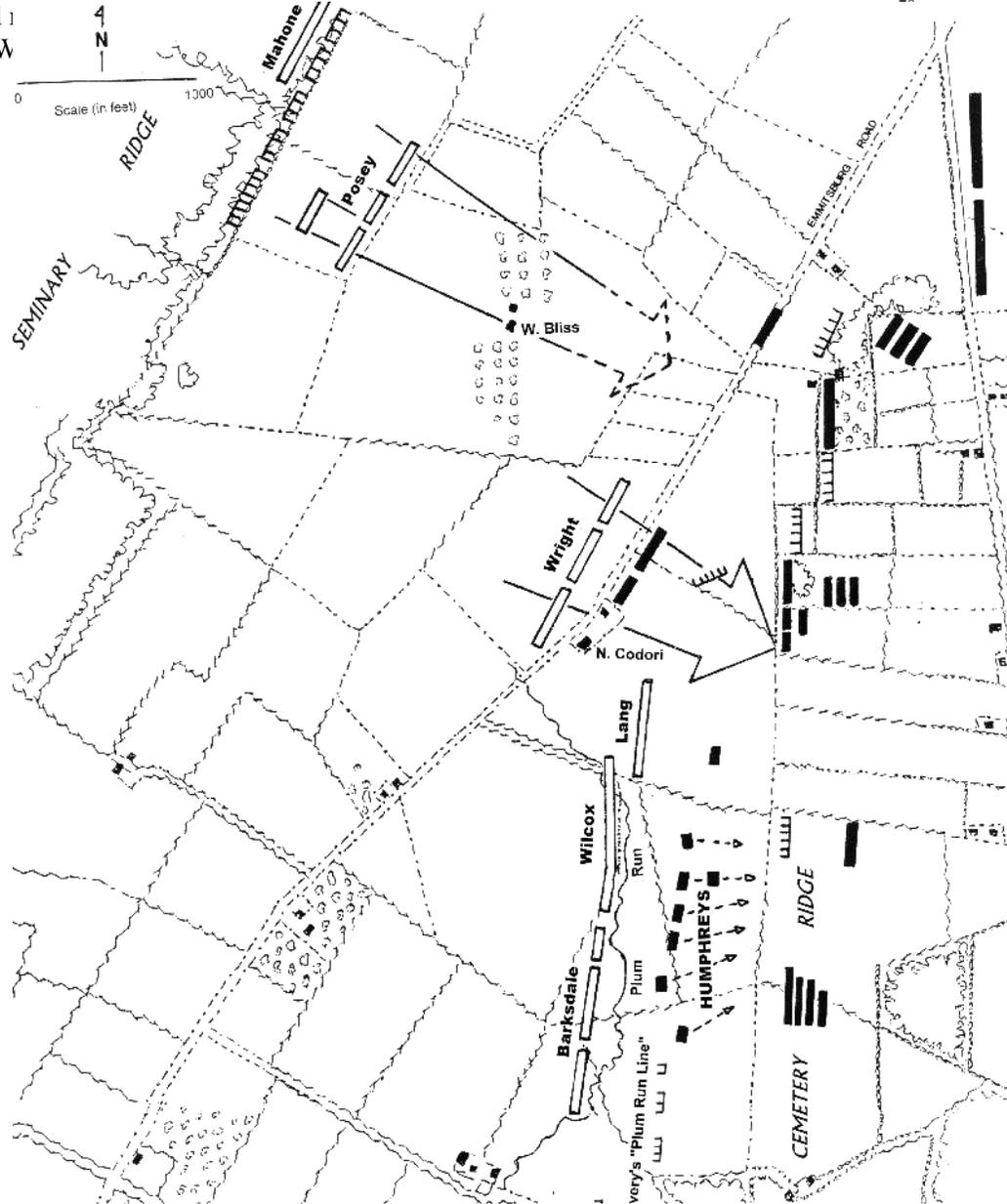
As Wright continued his hop-scotch advance, the combined attack of Wilcox and Lang, along with Barksdale to their right, "swept...down the gradual slope" beyond the Emmitsburg Road, pushing Humphreys' men before them. Though outnumbered, without support and with both his flanks partially turned, Humphreys managed to conduct a slow and deliberate withdrawal. In a letter to his wife written just two days later, Humphreys stated, "I had to retire...and falling back on open ground under a precise and heavy artillery fire and infantry fire; twenty times did I bring my men to a halt and face about, myself and Harry [his son] and others forcing the men to it." This masterful withdrawal, however, cost Humphreys dearly. One of Wilcox's veterans remembered, "they did not run, but retreated slowly and in good order, and returning our fire, but leaving the ground literally covered with their dead."⁷⁴

While Barksdale and Wilcox attacked the left and center of Humphreys' line, Lang crossed the mostly open ground to the right. In doing so the Florida brigade threatened Humphreys' right, swept aside two isolated Union infantry regiments and captured three guns of Battery C, 5th United States Artillery.⁷⁵ These units had been hastily placed there in an attempt to plug a growing gap in the Union line on Cemetery Ridge.⁷⁶

The forward movement of the 3rd Corps earlier that afternoon had essentially left the southern end of Cemetery Ridge undefended. Throughout the fight this ground was left unoccupied, for nearly all of the reinforcements sent to the Union left went to support Sickles' overextended line. Nevertheless, the 3rd Corps line continued to collapse and in desperation, Meade eventually ordered a 2nd Corps division on Cemetery Ridge to move to the left, thus widening the breach, from the foot of Little Round Top to the area just south of the Clump of Trees on Cemetery Ridge.⁷⁷

In reaction to this growing threat Union officers used stopgap measures to shore up the line. At the southern end of this gap, along the east bank of Plum Run, Lieutenant Colonel Freeman McGilvery had assembled a patchwork artillery line, consisting of between 6 to 23 guns, depending upon the time one is counting, but with no infantry supports. Beyond McGilvery's right Cemetery Ridge was almost completely undefended. In a desperate attempt to cover this area two 2nd Corps brigades were broken up and their regiments were dispatched to crisis points. At other points on the Union front, not then under attack, more front line units were detached and hurried toward the southern end of Cemetery Ridge. The two isolated brigades of

Barksdale, W



As these Confederate brigades reached the swale formed by Plum Run they sensed this opportunity. Their mile long advance had driven back the enemy line and "swept like a hurricane over [the] cannon and caissons" of Battery F and K, 3rd United States Artillery. A member of Wilcox's brigade recalled, "We felt that the supreme moment of the war had come--that victory was with our army and we ourselves were the victors."⁸⁰ This success, however, had come at high cost.

By the time Barksdale, Wilcox and Lang reached the banks of Plum Run a combination of factors brought their advance to a halt. These included the rapidity of their assault, the hard fight along the Emmitsburg Road, the sweltering heat and the confusion of battle. A soldier in Wilcox's brigade described the result of this chaos, writing, "By the time the small brushy drain...was reached the brigades of Barksdale, Wilcox [and] Perry...were in marked confusion, mixed up indiscriminately, officers apart from their men, men without officers...." Nevertheless, he remembered they were "all pushing forward notwithstanding." It was so bad that another soldier recalled, "There were no longer companies or regiments, scarcely brigades...we were mingled in glorious confusion." Further hindering their progress was "grape and canister" from McGilvery's batteries which Wilcox reported was "poured into our ranks." Col. Hilary Herbert, commanding the 8th Alabama later claimed that, "Worn out in the fatigue of the pursuit, exhausted by the excessive July heat, our ranks thinned by a fearful loss...were unable to follow up the victory."⁸¹

With their forward progress halted the men "took our stand" along Plum Run "seeking...shelter behind the rocks" and "undergrowth of bushes." It was here that "officers were using their utmost endeavors to get the men in order." Setting the example were general officers like Barksdale, who was "almost frantic with rage" as he was both "cheering...and swearing" at his men. Gen. Wilcox, according to one of his soldiers "moved among them and before them, as if courting death...." Lang stated simply "I halted for the purpose of reforming, and allowing the men to catch breath before the final assault...."⁸²

These same officers also began to seek reinforcements, sensing the momentous issue before them. Barksdale dispatched at least two couriers for support while Wilcox wrote later that he "sent back to my division commander requesting to be reinforced, believing the line now in my front was weak and could be broken easily with fresh troops." Lang probably requested assistance from Anderson at this time.⁸³ As these soldiers in the swale of Plum Run attempted to hold their hard earned gains, Anderson's other brigades encountered difficulties of their own.

Wright's Brigade experienced several problems at this time, foremost among these was the Union artillery which was "raking the whole valley" the brigade traversed. Even more serious to Wright was his inability to directly coordinate his movements with the brigades on either of his flanks. The head-start Lang's Brigade had gotten from the en echelon attack, combined with its advanced position along the eastern edge of Spangler Woods completely isolated the two brigades. The separation was so great that Wright apparently never communicated with Lang during the entire action.⁸⁴ The situation to Wright's left was even more serious.

Before reaching the Emmitsburg Road, Wright remembered "looking to the left through the smoke" and "observed that Posey's brigade...had not advanced..." thus leaving that flank "wholly unprotected." Realizing he "might become involved in serious difficulties," Wright reacted the only way he could, reporting:

*I dispatched my aide-de-camp, Capt. R.H. Bell, with a message to Major-General Anderson, informing him of my own advance and its extent, and that General Posey had not advanced on my left.*⁸⁵

Wright did not know the cause of Posey's delay. As noted earlier these Mississippi soldiers had become embroiled in a bitter struggle for control of the Bliss farm, which by this time had been retaken by Union skirmishers. By the time the rolling Confederate attack reached his front Posey had assigned three of regiments to the skirmish line. Thus, when the time arrived to advance, Posey's brigade was in no condition to do so, having only one regiment readily available. As Wright's Brigade passed Posey's skirmishers, the Mississippians took up the forward movement. Col. N. H. Harris, commanding the 19th Mississippi, reported "I...gave the order to advance, pushing forward my line and driving the enemy from his position..." thus retaking the Bliss buildings. At this time Posey committed his last regiment, personally leading forward the 12th Mississippi while requesting Mahone, on his left, "to send me a regiment to support my left." Upon reaching the farm buildings, however, Posey later wrote, "I found my three regiments well up in advance." After

recapturing the farm, parts of these regiments, apparently in a disorganized fashion, continued to advance. Some of the officers, however, made efforts to stop this advance, convinced their orders were to consolidate their gains.⁸⁶

By this time Posey also must have known that the support he sought for his left was unavailable. According to Posey, Mahone had replied that he “could not comply” with the request “being at this time ordered to the right....” Mahone made no mention of this order in his brief report, and indeed never advanced his brigade from the cover of Seminary Ridge. All of this relates to the most perplexing episode in Anderson’s Division that day. Sometime during the fight Anderson had Lt. S.D. Shannon, of his staff, deliver orders for Mahone to advance. Mahone refused, telling the lieutenant that “Gen A[nderson] had told him to hold that position.” Though Shannon told the general the orders came directly from Anderson, Mahone still refused, supposedly replying, “No...I have my orders from Genl A[nderson] himself to remain here....” Thus, the brigade remained idle throughout afternoon.⁸⁷

Obviously unaware of this situation, and having no choice anyway, Ambrose Wright continued to push his brigade forward while hoping for the promised support on his left. Their first opposition came from two Union regiments near the Nicholas Codori farm. These isolated units belonged to the 2nd Corps and had been ordered to the Emmitsburg Road in an effort to provide support to the 3rd Corps’ right.⁸⁸ Completely outnumbered they now faced the irresistible onslaught of Wright’s Brigade. A Massachusetts soldier recalled this clash:

...there was terrible excitement. A charge. They sprang forward with that demoniac yell wich is peculiar to themselves only, at the same time giving us a deadly volley. Now it was our turn. With a shout we sprang up...and... give them one of the most destructive volleys I ever witnessed.... They hesitated, they reeled, they staggered and wavered slightly, yet there is no panic.... On they came, bound to do or die....⁸⁹

Though these Union soldiers “held their position doggedly for some moments” they were soon overwhelmed, outflanked and forced “to retire in some disorder.” Following in pursuit, Wright’s men “pressed...closely,” capturing “quite a number of prisoners.” Swarming over the fences along the road and around the buildings of the Codori farm, Wright’s men rushed their next target, Battery B, 1st Rhode Island Artillery. Completely unsupported, the battery was located on a small bushy knoll 180 yards southwest of the Clump of Trees. Beyond the battery lay the dangerous gap in the Union line along Cemetery Ridge. A Rhode Island cannoner described Wright’s advance:

...we commenced to receive their fire and heard that well known “rebel yell,” as they charged...for the gap.... The enemy were in solid front of two lines of battle. As our artillery fire cut down their men they would waver for a second, only to soon close up and continue their advance, with their battle flags flying in the breeze, and the barrels of their muskets reflecting the sun’s dazzling rays.⁹⁰



Brig. Gen. Ambrose R. Wright
(CWLM)

Wright’s return fire was so severe that it forced the battery to abandon two of its guns, most of their horses being killed. As the four remaining guns scrambled toward the rear, Wright’s men followed closely and, according to one Union officer, seemed “absolutely seized upon the cannon.” Defending this section of the Union line was Brig. Gen. John Gibbon’s 2nd Corps Division, who reported that Wright’s advance was so furious and rapid “as to drive everything before him.”⁹¹ Despite this success, however, Wright encountered many problems.⁹²

Sometime during this final assault Anderson’s reply to Wright’s earlier request for support finally arrived. The division commander, according to Wright, said “that both Posey and Mahone had been ordered in, and that he [Anderson] would reiterate the order[,] that our Brigade go on.” This was hardly comforting for, once beyond the Emmitsburg Road, what little support Posey’s scattered regiments provided to Wright evaporated, as the Mississippi soldiers advanced no further. This exposed the left flank of Wright's Brigade to a devastating raking fire from the Union infantry and

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artillery posted north of the Copse of Trees. The 48th Georgia got the worst of this fire, as Wright described in his official report:

*This regiment suffered more severely than any other in the command. Being on the extreme left, it was exposed to a heavy enfilade as well as direct fire. The colors were shot down no less than seven times....*⁹³

Having no choice, Wright's men pushed on, overrunning another gun of Battery B and "charged up to the top of the crest...drove the enemy's infantry" and penetrated through the gap in the Union lines.⁹⁴ It was here, Wright proudly stated later, that "We were now complete masters of the field, having gained the key, as it were, of the enemy's whole line." Wright's success was as short-lived as that of his fellow brigade commanders. He reported:

*Unfortunately, just as we had carried the enemy's last...position, it was discovered that the brigade on our right [Lang] had...given way, ...while on our left we were entirely unprotected, the brigade ordered to our support having failed to advance.*⁹⁵

It was at this point that the situation in Anderson's Division reached crucial proportions. Though the advance of four of his brigades posed a serious threat to the Union army, critical problems had already developed which foreshadowed the division's ultimate demise. Lack of communication, misunderstanding of orders, apparent uncertainty in their assigned roles and outright disobedience of orders all combined to unravel the division's assault just as its brigades reached the zenith of their attacks. The man most responsible for this situation and the one who should have provided the proper direction was Richard Anderson.

In an attack such as this, it was Anderson's responsibilities as division commander to bring maximum firepower against the enemy, keep in close contact with his brigade commanders and to commit available reserves at the correct moment. On July 2, 1863 Anderson failed miserably on all three counts. Only three of five brigades were fully committed to the assault. Thus nearly half of the men in the division never struck the main Union line.⁹⁶

Keeping abreast of his brigades movements and their needs would have been difficult enough, considering the extreme length of his battle line and his only available methods of communication; courier or signal flag. Anderson compounded this problem by failing to move his headquarters forward behind his advancing line. Instead, he and his staff remained along Seminary Ridge. Wilcox complained afterwards that his courier "found Genl A[nderson] back in the woods which were in rear of the Emmetsburg road." Thus the farther his brigades advanced, the more out of touch Anderson became from his command. Even if the couriers managed to reach Anderson and return with a reply, his response might be meaningless due to the fluid nature of the battlefield. Such was the case with Ambrose Wright's request for support for his exposed left.⁹⁷

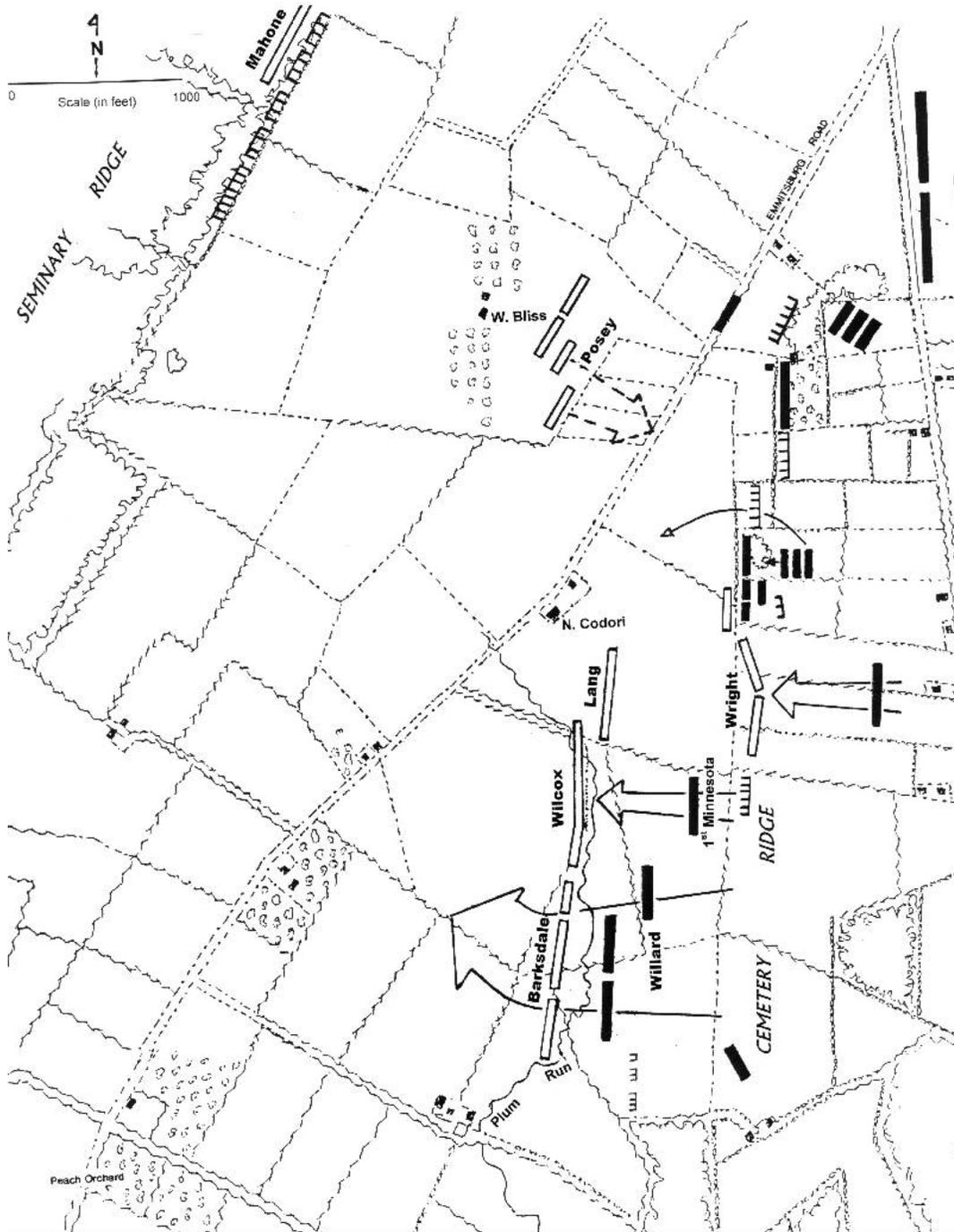
Anderson's reaction and response to his embattled brigade commander's calls for help was all but useless. As noted earlier, Anderson's long awaited reply to Wright was simply to continue the attack and that Posey would be ordered in again. Wilcox was even more frustrated, as his men struggled to hold their position in the Plum Run swale. He remembered that, "my adjt Genl returned, & reported that Genl Anderson said, 'tell Genl Wilcox to hold his own, that things will change.'"⁹⁸

Even when Anderson belatedly responded to these calls for support he failed to insure that his orders were carried out. The fact that Mahone's Brigade, the second largest in the division, remained idle along Seminary Ridge is clear proof of this. This episode also reveals another serious problem with infected the division that afternoon.

After the battle had been lost, when the Southern press began to assign the blame, Anderson came under some criticism for not using all of his troops. In his defense, Anderson replied that he had been ordered by Hill to hold back Mahone and Posey as "reserves." When the critical time came to order them forward, Anderson maintained that Hill was nowhere to be found. Mahone also offered his own version of the division's orders that day, which were, he claimed, "to advance by brigades from the right...that is *if the successes should warrant it.*"⁹⁹ (Emphasis added). While these different excuses reek of blame shifting, they are more importantly proof of the confused nature of the leadership within the division's high command. Exactly what was the role of Mahone's Brigade on July 2? Anderson's report implies that the entire division was to be used in the assault. Yet other sources, including later statements by Anderson, indicate Mahone was the

division's reserve. Obviously there was confusion that day over the brigade's role in the attack. This, in turn, might explain why Mahone disobeyed Anderson's direct orders to advance.

Whatever the reason, the failure of Posey and Mahone to advance caused serious problems on several levels. At the highest level the failure of these two brigades to move forward essentially caused the Confederate en echelon attack to



Map 4. 7 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Union counterattacks force Anderson's brigades to retreat.

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break down along Anderson's front. Thus, Pender's four brigades, positioned to the north, were effectively eliminated from the assault. Any chance to overcome this failure was lost when Pender himself was wounded around this time.¹⁰⁰ On a smaller scale, the break down of the attack left the remaining three brigades of Anderson's Division, still struggling to maintain their hard won gains, completely without support.

Not surprisingly, all of these deficiencies and failures proved too much to overcome for Anderson's men. As they waited desperately for reinforcements that never came, the Union high command reacted quickly to close the gap in their line. Instrumental in this effort was 2nd Corps commander, Major General Winfield Hancock. After leading Colonel George L. Willard's Brigade down Cemetery Ridge, Hancock ordered it to attack Barksdale's Brigade. After a bitterly contested struggle, in which Willard was killed and Barksdale mortally wounded, the Mississippians were forced to withdraw. Hancock then rode north and ordered the 1st Minnesota Infantry to counterattack Wilcox's Brigade. Though numbering less than 300 officers and men, this Union regiment delivered its attack with so much force and discipline that Wilcox felt the ensuing 30 minute struggle was an "unequal" one for his men. This attack, along with his right flank being exposed by Barksdale's withdrawal, left Wilcox with no choice. "The brigade was withdrawn," he recalled, "not being able to accomplish more without support."¹⁰¹

Wilcox's retreat, in turn, impacted Lang's Brigade. Already facing stiffening resistance to his front, Lang now "discovered that the enemy had passed [beyond my right] more than 100 yards, and were attempting to surround me." Having no choice, Lang "gave the order to fall back" to the Emmitsburg Road. Finding "there was no cover under which to rally," Lang withdrew to Seminary Ridge "rallying and reforming upon the line from which we started."¹⁰²

The last of Anderson's brigades to reach the Union lines faced the most serious difficulties. Wright's Georgians had accomplished all that could be expected of them, having advanced over a mile, broken two Union lines, captured at least three cannon and planted their battle flags triumphantly on Cemetery Ridge. Yet, their moment of success was short lived, for Wright recalled:

*Just after taking the enemy's batteries we perceived a heavy column of Yankee Infantry on our right flank...and were rapidly getting into our rear. Posey had not advanced on our left, and a strong body of the enemy was advancing...to gain our left flank and rear. Thus we were perfectly isolated from any portion of our Army a mile in its advance.*¹⁰³

"We were now in a critical condition," he wrote, for looking back toward Seminary Ridge, "still no support could be seen coming to our assistance. ..." Feeling "all was lost, and that my gallant little band would all be inevitably killed or captured" Wright remembered "with painful hearts we abandoned our captured guns, faced about and prepared to cut our way through the closing lines in our rear."¹⁰⁴

Soon after, the attack of Anderson's Division came to a conclusion when the small and disorganized remnant from Posey's Brigade along the Emmitsburg Road withdrew. It was here that Posey received his *only* orders from Anderson after the assault had begun. These were, Posey remembered, to "fall back to my original position...."¹⁰⁵

As twilight deepened that July 2 the remnants of Anderson's brigades began to regroup along Seminary Ridge. Wright recalled the scene in his command:

*...we...fell back...and then reformed our line. But alas, very few of the brave spirits who so recently had passed over that line buoyant in spirit and confident of success, now answered to the order that calmly sang out upon the air, 'Fall in, Wright's Brigade, and here we'll stand again.'*¹⁰⁶

Though the men still retained their confidence, their losses were high. Though the division's casualties for July 2 are impossible to state with precision, they probably numbered over 1,700, or about 25 per-cent of its strength. When one considers, however, that only three brigades took the brunt of these casualties the impact becomes more powerful. Wilcox's Brigade lost approximately 570 men (33 per-cent) while Lang's Brigade took approximately 40 per-cent casualties. Suffering the worst, however, was Wright's Brigade, which lost nearly 700 officers and men, or nearly 50 per-

cent of its strength. Leadership in these three brigades also suffered severely. Wilcox lost at least seven field officers, including four of his five regimental commanders, while three of Wright's four regimental leaders were casualties.¹⁰⁷ Compounding the sting of their depleted ranks was the fact that the division had absolutely nothing to show for its sacrifices.

This was particularly frustrating for many in the division felt the results of their assault could have been much different. This attitude pervaded the ranks, from the general officers down to enlisted men. Wilcox stated flatly in his official report that "With a second supporting line, the heights could have been carried." Wright agreed, stating, "I have not the slightest doubt but that I should have been able to maintained my position on the heights" if properly supported. Col. Edward Walker, commanding the 3rd Georgia, wrote, "Had the whole line advanced and been properly supported, there would have been no trouble about holding our position" on Cemetery Ridge. A member of the 5th Florida summed up their moment of retreat by later writing, "The battle was won, but the battle will be lost."¹⁰⁸

The obvious question then, was who was to blame for the failure to achieve success? As discussed earlier, Anderson must shoulder a large part of the responsibility for the failure of his division on July 2. At the minimum he failed to fully commit his available strength, properly position himself to keep abreast of his brigades movements, respond in a timely fashion to requests for assistance and insure that his orders were carried out. He can further be criticized for the apparent confusion over orders that existed within his command. After the battle Wilcox was unreserved in his criticism of Anderson, writing, "I am quite certain that Genl. A. never saw a foot of ground on which his three brigades fought on the 2d of July." He also added, "I always believed that [Anderson] was too indifferent to his duties at Gettysburg."¹⁰⁹

Yet there were others who must share the blame. A. P. Hill, the Third Corps commander and Anderson's immediate superior failed in several key areas that day. It was Hill who either ordered, or at least approved, of Anderson's over extended line, which led to so many problems. Once the fighting began, he apparently never made an effort to coordinate his efforts with Longstreet's command. Hill was also ultimately responsible for the execution of his divisions' movements, yet he apparently did nothing when Anderson's attack broke down nor bothered to find out why Pender's Division remained idle along Seminary Ridge.¹¹⁰ It also seems likely that Hill was guilty of being out of touch with his divisional commanders.¹¹¹

Robert E. Lee can also be assigned part of the blame for the failures that day. A good account of Lee's activities and whereabouts comes from Lt. Col. Arthur Freemantle, a British observer with the Confederate army, who wrote:

*So soon as the firing began, General Lee joined Hill just below our tree, and he remained there nearly all the time, looking through his field-glass--sometimes talking to Hill and sometimes to...his Staff. But generally he sat quite alone on the stump of a tree.*¹¹²

Lee was apparently using the same style of command he had on numerous other battlefields, which were mostly victories. Freemantle described this style as such:

*It is evidently [Lee's] system to arrange the plan thoroughly with the three corps commanders, and then leave to them the duty of modifying and carrying it out to the best of their abilities.*¹¹³

With perfect hindsight it is easy for the modern historian to state that at Gettysburg Lee should have modified his normal method. His most trusted subordinate, "Stonewall" Jackson, was dead and two of his three corps commanders (Hill and Ewell) were new to their positions, both of whom had shown some hesitancy in their movements on July 1. Yet Lee did not change. Instead he watched the battle of July 2 from afar, almost completely detached from the events around him. Freemantle recalled that, "during the whole time the firing continued, [Lee] only sent one message, and only received one report."¹¹⁴

Even Anderson's brigadiers must share some of the blame for their defeat that day. It is obvious there was little or no communication between the brigades during the assault. Posey was partially responsible for allowing his strength to be frittered away in a skirmish for the Bliss buildings and Mahone outright disobeyed direct orders to advance.

It is obvious that the Confederate leadership failed on nearly every level on July 2. Ironically, it was this same leadership that was responsible for many earlier victories. All of the officers listed above provide perfect examples of this phenomenon, for each were considered excellent, if not brilliant, leaders. Mahone and Posey were both experienced and capable leaders. Mahone was even later promoted to major general and led a division with distinction the last year of the war. Anderson had commanded a division for over a year and was briefly considered for promotion to corps command on the eve of the campaign. As for A. P. Hill, that spring Lee called him "the best soldier of his grade with me."¹¹⁵ Hill was fierce, courageous and active on the battlefield; all reasons why he was given command of the newly created Third Corps. And what of Lee, who even by modern standards is regarded as one of the nation's most brilliant military minds.

Possible explanations for the performances of these men can be offered. Anderson was newly reassigned from Longstreet's command. As quoted earlier, Moxley Sorrell had stated that "Longstreet knew [Anderson] well and could get a good deal out of him, more than anybody else." This transfer, along with the absence of cooperation between Longstreet and Hill on July 2, might have effected Anderson. Beyond being new to corps command, Hill's lapses might also have resulted from an unknown illness he suffered from during the battle. Lee's laissez-fair attitude is harder to fathom for, though this approach was his normal policy, he had been very active and hands-on during other battles, such as Antietam and Chancellorsville. During the latter engagement, just two months before Gettysburg, Anderson received most of his orders directly from Lee.¹¹⁶

Whatever the reasons, the end result was that Anderson's assault, along with the Confederate battle plan for July 2, failed. The Union army, though battered and bloodied, had held its ground. Despite this Lee, encouraged by the "partial successes" his troops had gained, determined to continue the assault on July 3. Originally his "general plan was unchanged" from the previous day. However, when that strategy unraveled during the early morning hours of July 3, a new attack was devised.¹¹⁷ The plan, forever known as the Pickett-Pettigrew Charge, called for a massive assault against the Union center. The attack would be preceded by the largest artillery cannonade ever attempted on the North American continent. Little could the officers and men of Anderson's Division then realize that they would be involved in this final Confederate assault and, once again, their efforts would be wasted by poor leadership and mismanagement.

Lee's basic plan called for the fresh division of Maj. Gen. George Pickett, along with six brigades from Heth's and Pender's divisions, to spearhead the assault. Though details are few, other nearby troops, including Anderson's Division, were apparently to be used to support the assault and exploit any success gained. But, as occurred the day before, there was confusion over the division's exact role in the assault. Though two-thirds of the main attack force (the six brigades from Pender's and Heth's divisions) were Hill's men, these Third Corps troops were placed directly under Longstreet's orders.¹¹⁸ For Anderson, the situation remained the same as it was on July 2. Though he remained under Hill's direct orders, he was to have his division "in readiness to move up in support" of Longstreet.¹¹⁹

There were also questions concerning Wilcox's and Lang's brigades. Early in the morning, "before sunrise," both brigades were ordered forward, nearly to the Emmitsburg Road "on ground won from the enemy the day before." Wilcox understood this movement was made to support Col. E. P. Alexander's First Corps artillery line positioned near the road. Anderson, however, reported the brigades were placed there "so as to be in position to render assistance, or to take advantage of any success gained by the assaulting column...." A third version comes from Lee and Longstreet. In their reports both described Wilcox and Lang as part of the main attack and their role was to support Pickett's right. More than likely the latter version is correct for it appears the two brigades were detached on July 3 and received orders directly from Longstreet.¹²⁰ Whatever the arrangements the Confederate leadership failed once again, for it is clear that neither Wilcox nor Lang understood their role in the upcoming attack.

This temporary reorganization was made in order to place the bulk of the assaulting troops and supports under the direct control of one officer, James Longstreet. Instead they created confusion and hesitancy in the Confederate chain of command and Anderson's Division serves as a perfect example. Reassigned to the Third Corps Anderson was not only unfamiliar with A. P. Hill's style of command, but Hill himself was untried as a corps commander. Yet ironically, during the fighting of July 2 Anderson cooperated with Longstreet's assaults, yet remained under Hill's direct command. July 3 found Anderson once more cooperating with Longstreet in the same unwieldy fashion in order to support the final Southern attack at Gettysburg, an assault that Longstreet himself opposed. Compounding this already inconstant situation was the fact that two of Anderson's five brigades were detached from his direct control. Not surprisingly these conditions, along with other numerous factors, lead to the misuse of Anderson's Division during one of the darkest disasters in the history of the Army of Northern Virginia.

As this planning continued, Posey's regiments again found themselves involved in a hard fight for the Bliss farmstead. This vicious skirmish lasted until mid-morning, during which control of the buildings changed hands four times. By 10:30 a.m., however, Union troops burned the house and barn and a lull in the fight soon followed.¹²¹

As Longstreet oversaw the arrangements for this final assault, including the placement of both the infantry and artillery, Anderson's men could do nothing but wait. Besides sweltering in the summer heat, the men also suffered from hunger. Wilcox recalled the "men had had nothing to eat since the morning of the 2d..." Anderson's brigades, with the exception of Wilcox and Lang, held basically the same positions along Seminary Ridge as they had the day before. This placed them within easy supporting distance of Pickett, Pettigrew and Trimble. Wilcox and Lang were positioned just behind the First Corps artillery line along the Emmitsburg Road and slightly to the front of Pickett's right.¹²²

By 1:00 p.m. Longstreet's final preparations were complete and shortly after the pre-assault bombardment began. To the men of Anderson's Division, along with the rest of the Confederate army, this cannonade was unprecedented in scale. Being just behind their own artillery, the men of Wilcox's Brigade had an excellent vantage point. One Alabama soldier recalled:

*After hours of waiting, the bombardment opened with a fury beyond description. The earth seemed to rise up under the concussion, the air was filled with missiles, and the noise and din were so furious and overwhelming as well as continuous that one had to scream to his neighbor lying beside him to be heard at all. The constant roar...with the explosion of the shells and frequently the bursting of a caisson wagon, was terrific beyond description. ...the wreck of matter and the crush of worlds seemed to be upon us.*¹²³

Wilcox agreed with this assessment, writing in his report, "In no previous battle of the war had we so much artillery engaged, and the enemy seemed not to be inferior in quantity." Despite this overwhelming fire, Wilcox reported "my brigade suffered but little under this terrible fire, being sheltered by a gentle crest in front." It was Pickett's men, especially James L. Kemper's brigade, just to the rear that took the brunt of the Union artillery over-shots.¹²⁴

Nevertheless, the men of these two brigades protected themselves as best they could. A member of the 5th Florida recalled:

*...we dug a shallow trench with our swords and bayonets for protection.... The roar of the cannon and bursting shells from the enemy's was something indescribable and terrific. I would look at the cannon around us, some of which were no[t] over twenty feet away; could see the smoke and flame belch from their mouths, but could distinguish no particular sound, it was one continuous and awful roar.*¹²⁵

Though farther to the rear, along Seminary Ridge, the men in Anderson's other three brigades suffered as well. A soldier in Mahone's Brigade vividly recalled the cannonade:

*I never hear such a roar in my life. For two hours, which seemed an age, an incessant storm of missiles rained around us. The solid shot would crash through the woods with terrific violence, cutting off tops of trees and limbs.... Sometimes a shell would burst in front of us and send death into the ranks.... At first our men were a little shaken; they had never been subjected to such a hot fire.... It was really amusing to see some of our men digging holes with their bayonets. The disposition to burrow was quite prevalent and not unnatural. To stand firmly under such a shelling required all the nerve a man could summon up.*¹²⁶

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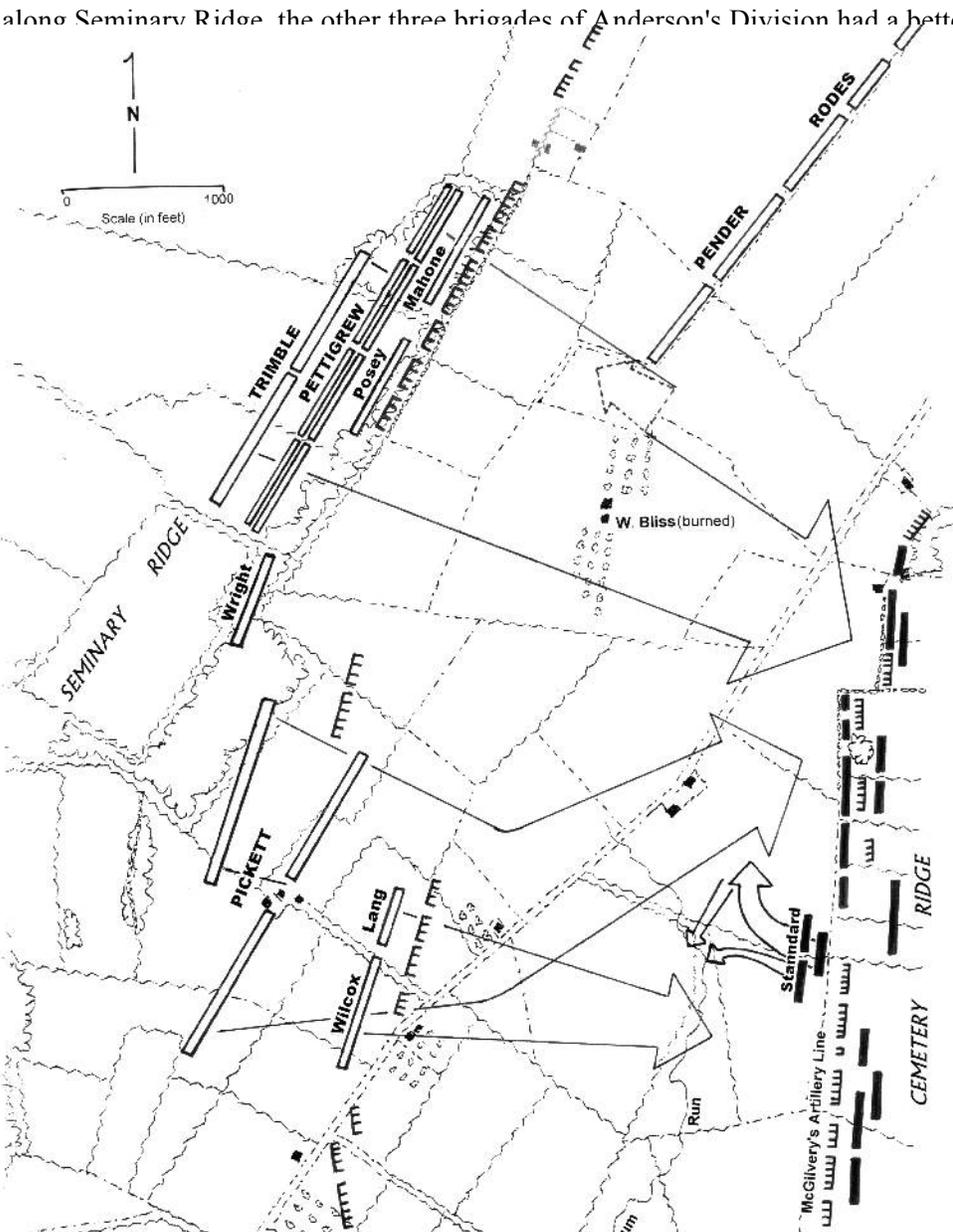
By 3:00 p.m. the cannonade was over and the Confederate advance began. Years later a member of Lang's brigade recalled the scene, writing, "Looking back to the rear, I see two long lines of men advancing; it is Pickett's division in that memorable charge. On they came, they pass over us...." Wilcox reported:

*As soon as [Pickett's] troops rose to advance, the hostile artillery opened upon them. These brave men...nevertheless moved on...without wavering. The enemy's artillery opposed them on both flanks and directly in front. Every variety of artillery missiles was thrown into their ranks.*¹²⁷

Once through the ranks of Wilcox and Lang, Pickett's men crested the ridge to their front, crossed over the Emmitsburg Road and "were soon out of sight." Having no idea they were to move in support of Pickett's right, the two brigades remained in place and listened intently to the advance of Pickett's men. A member of Lang's Brigade recalled:

*...the rebel yell is raised; and the rattle of musketry takes the place of the roar of the cannon. ...the terrible roar of artillery tells us that the enemy are pouring grape and shrapnel into those brave lines.*¹²⁸

Positioned along Seminary Ridge, the other three brigades of Anderson's Division had a better view of the assault. A soldier in Ma heard from the Ambrose Wright



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*It was the hottest work I ever saw. My men falling all around me with brains blown out, arms off and wounded in every description. I used every exertion in my power to cheer the men on, they acted nobly and many a brave fellow fell....*¹³²

Bad as this situation was for Wilcox and Lang, it worsened as the men continued down the slope. Wilcox reported, “Not a man of the division that I was ordered to support could I see, but as my orders were to go to their support, on my men went down the slope....” At first he “supposed that [Pickett’s Division] had taken the enemy’s works, and had passed beyond.” Unknown to Wilcox, Lang or any of their officers and men, was that Pickett’s Division was off to their left, as the main assaulting column had marched at a left oblique in order to strike the Union line near the Copse of Trees. By a tragic and inexcusable oversight, no one had informed Wilcox or Lang of this and thus the two brigades continued to move straight ahead.¹³³

At this moment the earlier lack of communication and poor planning within the Confederate high command culminated with tragic results. The absence of proper support on Pickett’s right, which Wilcox and Lang were to have provided, exposed that flank to a disastrous counterattack, by Vermont regiments of Brigadier General George Stannard’s brigade. Two of his regiments, over a 1,000 strong combined, wheeled out from the main Union line and delivered a destructive enfilade fire into Pickett’s right. This movement left a gap in the Union line, which Wilcox mistakenly assumed was Pickett’s breakthrough.¹³⁴

Seeing that Wilcox and Lang were passing south of his brigade, Stannard wheeled parts of two of his regiments in that direction. Thus within a short span of time the Vermont regiments had successfully executed two flank attacks against separate Confederate columns. Colonel Wheelock Veazey, commanding the 16th Vermont, described his counterattack upon Wilcox and Lang, who by this time had reached the Plum Run swale:

*...upon the order the men cheered and rushed forward at a run...and quickly struck the rebel flank.... The movement was so sudden and rapid that the enemy could not change front to oppose us.*¹³⁵

Lang took the burnt of this attack and recalled its impact upon his depleted ranks:

*...a heavy body of infantry advanced upon my left flank. The noise of artillery and small-arms was so deafening that it was impossible to make the voice heard above the din, and the men were by this time so badly scattered...that it was impossible to make any movement to meet or check the enemy’s advance. To remain in this position, unsupported...was certain annihilation.*¹³⁶

Wilcox agreed with this assessment and, after failing to obtain any support, ordered his troops to fall back. Though they promptly rallied beyond their artillery the ranks of each brigade were shattered. Though the men had “acted with their usual gallantry,” they realized their efforts on July 3 had been a “useless sacrifice.”¹³⁷

This attitude was prevalent within the ranks and not surprisingly led to the men to question their role in the attack. A member of the 11th Alabama probably summed up this demeanor best when he later wrote, “What such an absurd movement meant was never known to the officers then, nor has it ever been satisfactorily explained since.”¹³⁸

Once again poor Confederate leadership had led to this “useless sacrifice” of Anderson’s men. On July 3 the officer most responsible was James Longstreet, who failed in several key areas. Not informing his subordinates of their role in the assault was his first mistake. Neither Wilcox nor Lang had any idea they were to be part of the main assault. Lang was still uncertain sixteen days after the attack when he wrote, “we were thrown forward (as a forlorn hope I suppose).” Col. Hillary Herbert, commanding the 8th Alabama, used similar wording when he wrote later “it never occurred to any officer of the 8th, nor...had it been even suggested to any of us, that we had been expected to support Pickett’s charge.” Indeed, Herbert explained, “our speculation was that we had simply been ordered forward” after Pickett’s Charge “as a forlorn hope to prevent the enemy from making a counter charge.”¹³⁹

Longstreet’s second mistake was his delayed use of Wilcox and Lang. If these two brigades were to protect Pickett’s right, as Longstreet described in his report, then they should have moved with the main assaulting column. Instead, the

orders for these brigades to advance did not arrive until long after Pickett's Division had moved; "more than twenty or thirty minutes" by Wilcox's account. This statement seems reasonable, considering the circuitous route the orders took in being delivered. Capt. Robert Bright, one Pickett's staff officers, gave the best account of this delay. Bright stated that as Pickett's brigades passed the half waypoint in the assault he was directed by Pickett to ride to Longstreet and request support. After passing back over the field the captain found "General Longstreet sitting on a fence alone...[and] delivered the message...." Longstreet's initial reply was that the "charge was over." As Bright turned to deliver this message to Pickett, Longstreet called the captain back and said, "Tell General Pickett that Wilcox's Brigade is in that peach orchard [pointing], and he can order him to his assistance." Once again Bright rode back over the field, and upon returning to Pickett delivered his message. It was only at this point that Pickett issued the orders for Wilcox to advance.¹⁴⁰

If Bright's account is correct, Longstreet's mistakes were twofold. It appears almost as if the First Corps commander had forgotten about Wilcox and Lang until Pickett's request for support arrived. Upon deciding to put these two brigades in, Longstreet should have ordered them in directly through his staff. Instead he compounded this delay by having the orders issued in a roundabout method through Pickett.

Longstreet's last mistake concerning Wilcox and Lang was the method of their deployment. Not only did these officers think that they were not part of the main assault, but they also had no idea of the direction of that attack. Thus, being completely unaware of Pickett's left oblique march, Wilcox and Lang advanced in the wrong direction. This exposed both them and Pickett's Division to flanking attacks, which their advance was supposed to prevent. In essence, Longstreet failed Wilcox and Lang in three critical areas. He never informed them of their role in the attack, he delayed their commitment and finally he failed to insure they were used correctly. All of this resulted in what Wilcox termed, "Want of concert," and led to their useless repulse.¹⁴¹

While these Alabama and Florida troops were sacrificed to no purpose, the rest of Anderson's Division anxiously waited and watched from along Seminary Ridge. Among them was Anderson, who felt the time had come to move his remaining brigades forward to Pickett's support. Orders were quickly passed down the line. A member of Mahone's Brigade recalled the scene:

After the firing had been going on for some time on our right, the order was given along our line, "Fall in, men." We thought our time had come. We believed that we were about to make the charge. The men were solemn and silent, but their faces evinced the stern determination of men who knew the bloody work before them. ...the men rose at the command to fall in [and the] order was soon given; the whole line moved promptly forward....¹⁴²

Apparently all three of Anderson's remaining brigades received orders to advance and each was in various stages of executing them when Longstreet directed Anderson "to stop the movement, adding that it was useless, and would only involve unnecessary loss...." With the attack repulsed, Longstreet began to take steps to prepare for a possible Union counterattack. This included ordering Wright's Brigade forward "500 or 600 yards, to cover the retreat of Pickett's division" and "to oppose the enemy should he follow our retreating forces." In resuming their former positions Anderson's men witnessed one of the more memorable scenes of Gettysburg. A soldier in Mahone's Brigade remembered:

As the troops retraced their steps General Lee was riding among the shatered remenants of the assualting colum[n], praising their valor, taking all blame of failure upon himself, and showing himself greater in the hour of disaster than any man of our time has been in the moment of supremest triumph.¹⁴³

Whether the advance of Mahone, Posey and Wright would have made a difference is a moot point. Longstreet's commitment to the assault and how he handled the supporting troops must be questioned.

The day's action increased the division's casualty list by nearly 400. Wilcox and Lang were the hardest hit, losing approximately 360 men combined, including many prisoners.¹⁴⁴ This brought Anderson's total losses to approximately 2,145, nearly 32 per-cent of his strength.¹⁴⁵ These heavy casualties were all the more depressing because the officers and men of the division had no success to offer consolation for their sacrifices.

It is obvious that something had gone seriously wrong within the Confederate command structure at Gettysburg. One need look no farther than the casualty returns for Anderson's Division to see the proof of this statement. A breakdown of these losses by brigades starkly reveals the fact that the division was mishandled and poorly served by their leadership. Three of the five brigades (Wilcox, Lang and Wright) took 90 per-cent of the division's casualties (losing 45 per-cent, 61 per-cent and 49 per-cent respectively). Combined, these three brigades lost approximately 1,929 officers and men. The other two brigades (Mahone and Posey) were virtually unused during the battle, suffering only 7 per-cent and 8.5 per-cent loss each. And Mahone had the second largest brigade within the division. Such inefficient use of manpower, especially within an army already significantly outnumbered and on the offensive, was inexcusable.¹⁴⁶

Similar errors surrounded the role of Maj. Gen. Richard H. Anderson's Division during all three days at Gettysburg. On July 1 it was the decision to hold the division in reserve as the battle sputtered to an indecisive conclusion. A plethora of mistakes on July 2, committed from brigade level to army command, combined to frustrate the division's role in the Confederate attack. These included, among others, a lack of cooperation between Longstreet and Hill, misunderstanding of orders, poor tactical deployment of the division, failure to fully commit available strength, weak or even non-existent leadership from Anderson and Hill, and disobedience of orders. The misuse of Wilcox and Lang on July 3 highlighted the numerous deficiencies in leadership concerning the division's use on the final day of the battle. These failures resulted in confusion, missed opportunities, a breakdown in Confederate strategy and high casualties.

The men in the ranks were well aware of the reasons for their defeat at Gettysburg. It was not for a lack of bravery or devotion on their part. In praising the efforts of his brigade, Ambrose Wright reported, "all the officers and men behaved in the most handsome manner; indeed I have never seen their conduct excelled on any battle-field..." Instead, they felt poor leadership caused their downfall. Wright stated this attitude bluntly in a letter to his wife just four days after the battle, writing, "we were...sacrificed to the bad management and cowardly conduct of others."¹⁴⁷

The officer to whom Wright was most likely referring to, and who committed numerous mistakes during the battle, was Richard H. Anderson. He agreed with Wright's assessment of the troops performance and he commended their efforts at great length in his official report. Yet, in a masterful piece of eloquence, Anderson conveniently found a higher authority to blame for their defeat, writing:

*In battle they lacked none of that courage and spirit which has ever distinguished the soldiers of the Army of Northern Virginia, and if complete success did not attend their efforts, their failure cannot be laid on their shortcoming, but must be recognized and accepted as the will and decree of the Almighty disposer of human affairs.*¹⁴⁸

Besides suffering the depressing effects of the army's defeat at Gettysburg, and the futile sacrifice of their comrades, Anderson's men were even denied the credit for what they did accomplish. Within months their efforts seemed completely forgotten, overshadowed by the exploits of Pickett's Virginians and the bias of the Richmond press. This was a struggle they would face the remainder of their days. Nevertheless they attempted to set the record straight. At the 1874 reunion of the 3rd Georgia a member of that unit stated with conviction:

*Papers in Virginia about the time and since have lauded Pickett's Division as have made the charge, going farther over this very ground than any other body of men. And while I would not, if I could, detract one iota from that grand division or pluck one leaf from its well earned crown, yet it is due to the vindication of the truth of history to say that they did not...get to the ... heights...over which Wright's Brigade passed on the preceding day.*¹⁴⁹

Though virtually forgotten, these Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Georgia and Virginia troops could take solace in the fact that, despite the many obstacles and adversities they faced at Gettysburg, they had performed admirably. This attitude is probably best reflected by Col. David Lang, who wrote three weeks after the battle:

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*The men I have the honor to command are staid, sober men, most of them having families, who, knowing the perilous condition of their country, entered the service to do all in their power to avert the impending danger, they fight not for vain dreams of glory, nor yet for newspaper fame or notoriety.... All we ask of those who record history whilst we make it, is simply justice. Give us this, and we ask no more.*¹⁵⁰

NOTES

¹ William Allan, "Memoranda of Conversations with General Robert E. Lee," in Gary W. Gallagher, ed., *Lee, The Soldier*, (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1996), pp. 13, 14. Lee expressed these views in a conversation with Allan on April 15, 1868.

² Douglas S. Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants, A Study in Command*, 3 vols. (New York, 1944), 3, p. 169.

³ John Busey and David Martin, *Regimental Strengths and Losses at Gettysburg*, (Hightstown, New Jersey, 1986), pp. 150, 163, 172, 185; U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1890-1901), series I, 27, pt. 2, p. 288 (Hereafter cited as *OR*). All references are to series I. The strength of Anderson's Division includes Maj. John Lane's Sumter Artillery Battalion. In infantry alone, the division numbered approximately 6,550. Maj. Gen. Robert Rodes's Second Corps Division also consisted of five brigades and numbered approximately 8,000 officers and men.

⁴ Joseph H. Crute, Jr., *Units of the Confederate States Army*, (Gaithersburg, Maryland, 1987). pp. 9-10, 11, 12, 14, 74, 76, 77, 82-83, 84-85, 99-100, 110-111, 174, 176, 178, 189, 357-358, 363-364, 367, 383, 392.

⁵ Edward Porter Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy*, edited by Gary W. Gallagher (Chapel Hill, 1989), p. 365; Clement A. Evans, editor. *Confederate Military History*, 1, (Atlanta, 1899), p. 691.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 691-692; *OR*, 11, pt. 2, p. 556.

⁷ John Bigelow, Jr., *Chancellorsville*, (New Haven, Connecticut, 1910) p. 135; *OR*, 25, pt. 1, pp. 796-803, pt. 2, p. 811. Lee gave Anderson orders at Chancellorsville because his corps commander, Lt. Gen. James Longstreet, was on detached service near Suffolk, Virginia during the battle.

⁸ Of the army's nine infantry division commanders, only Maj. Gen. Lafayette McLaws (November, 1861) and Maj. Gen. John B. Hood (July, 1862), both of Longstreet's First Corps, had as much or more experience than Anderson.

⁹ G. Moxley Sorrel, *Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer*, edited by Bell Irvin Wiley (Jackson, Tennessee, 1958), p. 128.

¹⁰ *OR*, 12, pt. 2, pp. 546, 547; *OR* 19, pt. 1, p. 804; 21, p. 539; *OR* 25, p. 790. During the Second Manassas Campaign the brigades of Wilcox, Pyor (Florida Brigade) and Featherston (Posey) belonged to Brig. Gen. Cadmus Wilcox's Division. Anderson commanded three brigades, including Mahone's and Wright's.

¹¹ Ezra Warner, *Generals in Gray* (Baton Rouge, 1959), p. 337; Joseph H. Crute, Jr., *Units of the Confederate States Army*, (Gaithersburg, Maryland, 1987), pp. 9-12, 14; Busey and Martin, *Regimental Strengths*, p. 185.

¹² *Ibid.*; Warner, *Generals in Gray*, p. 208; Jon L. Wakelyn, *Biographical Dictionary of the Confederacy*, (Westport, Connecticut, 1977), p. 310; Crute, *Units*, pp. 357-358, 363-364, 367, 383, 392.

¹³ Busey and Martin, *Regimental Strengths*, p. 185; Warner, *Generals in Gray*, p. 345; Crute, *Units*, pp. 82-83, 84-85, 99-100, 110-111; Wakelyn, *Biographical Dictionary of the Confederacy*, pp. 447-448.

¹⁴ Busey and Martin, *Regimental Strengths*, p. 185; Warner, *Generals in Gray*, p. 244; Crute, *Units*, pp. 174, 176, 178, 189.

¹⁵ Busey and Martin, *Regimental Strengths*, p. 185; Bertram Groene, ed., "Civil War Letters of Col. David Lang," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 1976, pp. 340-341; Robert Krick, *Lee's Colonels*, (Dayton, 1979), pp. 210-211; Crute, *Units*, pp. 74-75, 76, 77.

¹⁶ Douglas S. Freeman, *R. E. Lee, A Biography*, 3, (New York, 1935), pp. 8-13.

¹⁷ Maj. Gen. Henry Heth, new to the army, was assigned command of A. P. Hill's old Second Corps division, while newly promoted Maj. Gen. Dorsey Pender was given command of the entirely new third division.

¹⁸ Freeman, *R.E. Lee*, Vol. III, p. 14.

¹⁹ Longstreet's corps only had eleven brigades at Gettysburg because two of Pickett's five brigades were left in Virginia during the campaign.

²⁰ *OR*, 27, pt. 1, p. 613; Judge George Clark, "Wilcox's Alabama Brigade at Gettysburg," *Confederate Veteran*, 17, No. 1, (Richmond, 1909), p. 229; Ada Christine Lightsey, *The Veteran's Story*, (Meridian, Mississippi, n. d.), p. 33; Eugene Matthew Otts, Jr., "The Civil War Diary of James J. Kirkpatrick, Sixteenth Mississippi," Unpublished Thesis, Texas A&M University, p. 112, photocopy in files of Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park (hereafter cited as FSNMP); John Lewis letter of July 21, 1863 to mother, published in "The Battle of Gettysburg," *Lee Republican*, July 19, 1924, photocopy in files of Gettysburg National Military Park Library (hereafter cited as GNMP).

- ²¹ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 613; John H. S. Funk to Mother and Sister, June 26, 1863, photocopy in FSNMP; Westwood A. Todd Reminiscences, Southern Historical Collection, Library of University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, (hereafter cited as SHC), p. 123.
- ²² Edwin Coddington, *The Gettysburg Campaign, A Study in Command*, (New York, 1968), p. 186; Charles H. Andrews, "Condensed History of the Campaigns of the Third Regiment of Georgia Volunteers...", p. 23, photocopy in GNMP; J. W. Lindsey, "History of the Campaigns of the Third Georgia Regiment," unpublished manuscript, p. 10, Duke University Library.
- ²³ *Ibid.*; J. J. Renfroe to "Brother Henderson," in August 13, 1863 *South Western Baptist*, transcription in GNMP; Baily G. McClellan, "Civil War History of Company D, 10th Alabama Regiment," *Anniston Star*, January 2-March 7, 1901, transcription in GNMP.
- ²⁴ Coddington, *The Gettysburg Campaign*, pp. 260-294.
- ²⁵ George Bernard Papers, SHC, p. 9; Kirkpatrick Diary, FSNMP. This included at least two long halts, one of approximately one and a half hours, followed by another of an hour at Cashtown, where the "brisk cannonading near Gettysburg" could be heard, (see reports of Maj. Gen. Richard Anderson and Brig. Gen. A. R. Wright, *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 613, 622).
- ²⁶ Brig. Gen. Cadmus Wilcox's original report, Virginia Historical Society, (hereafter cited as VHS), transcript in GNMP.
- ²⁷ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 613, 622; Maurice S. Fortin, ed., "Col. Hilary A. Herbert's History of the 8th Alabama Volunteer Regiment, C.S.A.," *Alabama Historical Quarterly*, 39 (1977), p. 114.
- ²⁸ Coddington, *The Gettysburg Campaign*, pp. 294-308; *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 317-318.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 317, 318, 607.
- ³⁰ Louis G. Young, "Pettigrew's Brigade at Gettysburg," *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War, 1861-'65*, vol. 5, edited by Walter Clark, (Goldsboro, 1901), p. 121.
- ³¹ Renfroe to "Brother Henderson," August 13, 1863; John G. Barrett, ed., *Yankee Rebel, The Civil War Journal of Edmund Dewitt Patterson*, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1966), p. 114.
- ³² Lindsey and Andrews, "History of the Third Georgia", p. 2; *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 622.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 607, 613; Kilpatrick Diary, July 2, 1863, FSNMP; Lewis to Mother, July 21, 1863, *The Woodville Republican*; Capt. C. H. Andrews, "Another Account," *Atlanta Journal*, March 9, 1901.
- ³⁴ Cadmus Wilcox, "General Wilcox to the Rescue," *Philadelphia Weekly Times*, November 24, 1877.
- ³⁵ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 617.
- ³⁶ *OR*, 27, pt. 1, pp. 515, 517, pt. 2, p. 617. The Union force was lead by Col. Hiram Berdan and consisted of 4 companies of the 1st U.S. Sharpshooters (100 men) and the 3rd Maine Volunteers (210 men). During the encounter only the 10th and 11th Alabama (approximately 600 men combined) were engaged. Confederate losses totaled approximately 60 while they inflicted nearly 70 casualties upon the sharpshooters and their supports. In later years Berdan attempted to place greater significance on this engagement by claiming it delayed the Confederate assault delivered later that day.
- ³⁷ John Bachelder Battlefield Map, July 2; *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp 607-608, 614.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 614.
- ³⁹ Lewis to Mother, July 21, 1863, *The Woodville Republican*; Diary of Josiah W. Mosely, entry for July 2, 1863, transcription in GNMP; *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 614, 617.
- ⁴⁰ Todd Reminiscences, SHC, p. 129.
- ⁴¹ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 318-319.
- ⁴² Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants*, 3, pp. 664-668; Sorrel, *Recollections*, pp. 79-82. The dispute arose over a series of newspapers articles that appeared in the Richmond Examiner which elevated the accomplishments of Hill's division at the expense of other commands, including Longstreet's. A series of terse communications between the two followed with the result being that Hill requested a transfer and refused to obey Longstreet's orders. This in turned forced Longstreet then placed Hill under arrest.
- ⁴³ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 614.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 608, 614; A. R. Wright, "Army Correspondence From Wright's Brigade," letter dated July 7, 1863, *Daily Constitutionalist*, July 23, 1863.
- ⁴⁵ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 618, 622, 631, 633. Only Mahone, whose report is miniscule in both size and detail, did not mention these orders.
- ⁴⁶ Clark, "Wilcox's Brigade at Gettysburg," *CV*, p. 229; Wilcox's original official report, VHS.
- ⁴⁷ Hilary A. Herbert, "A Short History of the 8th Alabama Regt.," McLaws Papers, SHC, p. 27; Kirkpatrick Diary, FSNMP; Josiah Mosely Diary, entry for July 2, 1863, transcription in GNMP; Todd Reminiscences, SHC, p. 129; *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 621, 627-628, 630, 633.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pt. 1, pp. 453-454, pt. 2, pp. 633, 671; Terrence J.. Winschel, "Posey's Brigade at Gettysburg, Part 2," *The Gettysburg Magazine*, Issue 5 (Dayton, Ohio, 1991), pp. 90, 92.
- ⁴⁹ For an explanation of Longstreet's approach march and the delays he encountered see, Coddington, *The Gettysburg Campaign*, pp. 376-381.

⁵⁰ Barrett, ed., *Yankee Rebel*, p. 115; Busey and Martin, *Regimental Strengths and Losses*, p. 130; *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 358; Coddington, *The Gettysburg Campaign*, pp. 380-384; Clark, "Wilcox's Brigade at Gettysburg," *CV*, p. 229.

⁵¹ Bachelder Map, July 2, 1863; *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 358.

⁵² Bachelder Map, July 2, 1863.

⁵³ J. B. Kershaw, "Kershaw's Brigade at Gettysburg," and Henry J. Hunt, "The Second Day at Gettysburg," *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, (New York, 1884-1888), 3, pp. 303-304, 332.

⁵⁴ James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox. Memoirs of the Civil War in America*, (Philadelphia, 1896), p. 367; *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 404, 407; Busey and Martin, *Regimental Strengths and Losses*, pp. 47. Because Humphreys' Division moved to the Emmitsburg Road just as Longstreet's assault began, it was not recorded in any of the reports relating to Anderson's Division.

⁵⁵ Barrett, ed., *Yankee Rebel*, p. 115; Clark, "Wilcox's Brigade at Gettysburg," *CV*, p. 229.

⁵⁶ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 408; Andrews, "History of the Third Georgia," GNMP; J. B. Johnson, "A Limited Review of What One Man Saw of the Battle of Gettysburg," transcription in GNMP.

⁵⁷ Lewis to Mother, July 21, 1863, *Woodville Republican*; Bernard Papers, SHC, p. 11; J. J. Renfroe to "Brother Henderson," *South Western Baptist*, August 13, 1863; Andrews, "History of the Third Georgia," p. 35; Coddington, *The Gettysburg Campaign*, pp. 390-405.

⁵⁸ Clark, "Wilcox's Brigade at Gettysburg," *CV*, p. 229.

⁵⁹ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 618.

⁶⁰ Hilary Herbert to John Bachelder, July 9, 1884, *The Bachelder Papers*, 2, edited by David and Audrey Ladd, (Dayton, Ohio, 1994), p. 1056; Barrett, ed., *Yankee Rebel*, p. 116.

⁶¹ Bachelder, July 2, 1863 Map; *OR*, 27, pt. 1, p. 532. Humphreys' had been ordered to send his Third Brigade (Col. George Burling) to support the 3rd Corps left.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 532, 543; Adolpho Fernandez Cavada Diary, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, (hereafter cited as HSP), transcription in GNMP.

⁶³ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 618. After smashing the Union line at the Peach Orchard, Barksdale wheeled to his left in order to continue his attack northward. This brought his regiments directly across the front of Wilcox's Brigade. The movement Wilcox executed involved moving his regiments 400 to 500 yards to the left, or north, before moving forward.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 618; Wilcox, "General Wilcox to the Rescue," *Philadelphia Weekly Times*, November 24, 1877; Fortin, ed., "Herbert's History of the 8th Alabama," *AHQ*, p. 115; Barrett, ed., *Yankee Rebel*, p. 116. The brigade was aligned, from left to right, 9th, 14th, 11th, 10th, and 8th Alabama and covered a front of approximately 800 yards. The extreme length of the line was due to a separation between the 10th and 8th Alabama.

⁶⁵ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 631; Johnson, "A Limited Review." Lang's regiments were aligned 2nd, 5th and 8th Florida, from left to right, covering a front of 300 yards. It can be argued that Lang's small command was attached to Wilcox during the advance. Though Lang's report simply states "I was ordered to...advance with General Wilcox," a similar arrangement was used during the fighting the next day. This arrangement makes some sense, as the Florida brigade was small and Lang was new to brigade command.

⁶⁶ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 618; Johnson, "A Limited View;" Wilcox, "Wilcox to the Rescue," *PWT*.

⁶⁷ Cavada Diary, HSP.

⁶⁸ *OR*, 27, pt. 1, p. 533; Wilcox, "Wilcox to the Rescue," *PWT*; Herbert, "A Short History of the 8th Ala. Regt.," UNC.

⁶⁹ Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*, p. 371; Wilcox, "Wilcox to the Rescue," *PWT*. Years earlier, Longstreet was even more direct in his criticism of Wilcox, unfairly writing that Wilcox "went astray at the opening of the fight, either through ignorance of his orders...or violation of them," thus "failing to cover McLaws' flank...as directed." (see, Longstreet, "The Campaign of Gettysburg," *Philadelphia Weekly Times*, November 3, 1877).

⁷⁰ *OR*, 27, pt. 1, pp. 543, 551, pt. 2, p. 631; Raymond J. Reid to "Hal," September 4, 1863, Raymond J. Reid Papers, St. Augustine Historical Society, transcript in GNMP.

⁷¹ Wright, "Army Correspondence," *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, July 23, 1863; Clariborne Snead to R. W. Douthart, May 13, 1905, copy in GNMP. The brigade covered a front of approximately 400 yards and was aligned 48th, 3rd and 22nd Georgia, from left to right. The 2nd Georgia Battalion, on the skirmish line, was to form on brigade's left when the advance began, but due to a misunderstanding of orders fell in amongst the rest of the regiments during the forward movement.

⁷² *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 623.

⁷³ Wright, "Army Correspondence." *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, July 23, 1863.

⁷⁴ Clark, "Wilcox's Brigade at Gettysburg," *CV*, p. 229; Humphreys to wife, July 4, 1863, Book 33, Humphreys Papers, HSP; Barrett, *Yankee Rebel*, p. 116.

⁷⁵ *OR*, 27, pt. 1, pp. 417, 419, 420, 442-443, 880. The Union infantry was the 19th Massachusetts and 19th Maine regiments. All four guns of Battery C, 5th United States Artillery, commanded by Lt. Gulian Weir, were temporarily captured.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 379-380. This was Brig. Gen. John C. Caldwell's 1st Division, 2nd Corps, which eventually fought in the Wheatfield.

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 416-417, 419-420, 436-437, 882. The 2nd Corps regiments belonged to the 1st and 2nd brigade of Brig. Gen. John Gibbon's Second Division (commanded by Brig. Gen. William Harrow and Col. Norman Hall respectively).

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Herbert, "A Short History of the 8th Alabama," p. 28; Fortin, ed., "Herbert's History of the Eight Alabama", *AHQ*, p. 117. Battery F and K, 3rd United States Artillery, commanded by Lt. John Turnbull, retired by prolong in conjunction with Humphreys' Division. By the time the battery reached the "rocky" swale so many horses had been killed that four of the unit's six Napoleons had to be abandoned and were captured by Wilcox's men (See Turnbull's statement to Bachelder, n. d., BP).

⁸¹ Clark, "Wilcox's Brigade at Gettysburg," *CV*, p. 229; Barrett, ed., *Yankee Rebel*, p. 117; Herbert, "A Short History of the 8th Alabama", p. 29.

⁸² Fortin, ed., "Herbert's History of the Eighth Alabama" *AHQ*, p. 117; *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 618, 631; Clark, "Wilcox's Brigade at Gettysburg," *CV*, p. 229; Charles Richardson to Bachelder, May 8, 1868 and August 18, 1869, BP; Barrett, *Yankee Rebel*, p. 117.

⁸³ E.P. Harman to W. S. Decker, August 16, 1886, photocopy in GNMP; Wilcox, "General Wilcox to the Rescue" *PWT*; *OR*, 27, pt. 2, 631; Johnson, "A Limited Review." There is no proof that Col. Lang sent for reinforcements, though it can be inferred from his report that he did so. If Lang was indeed "attached" to Wilcox's Brigade during the advance, then the latter's request would have kept Anderson informed concerning the condition of both brigades.

⁸⁴ Wright's official report, along with his account in the Augusta *Daily Constitutionalist*, make it obvious that Wright and Lang were completely out of touch with each other during their respective advances. (See *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 623-624 and Wright, "Army Correspondence," *Daily Constitutionalist*, July 23, 1863). The lack of communication was so bad that Wright never realized Lang had reached Plum Run. Wright went so far as to write in his report that "the brigade on our right [Lang] had not only not advanced across the turnpike, but had actually given way...." (see *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 623-624).

⁸⁵ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 623; Wright, "Army Correspondence," Augusta, *Daily Constitutionalist*, July 23, 1863.

⁸⁶ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 633, 634; Winschel, "Posey's Brigade at Gettysburg, Part 2," *Gettysburg Magazine*, pp. 97-98. The only regiment on the main line was the 12th Mississippi. On the skirmish line, from left to right, were the 16th, 19th and 48th Mississippi, covering a front of approximately 350 yards.

⁸⁷ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 621, 634; Wilcox's original report, VHS. Mahone's entire report consists of six sentences.

⁸⁸ *OR*, 27, pt. 1, p. 419. These were the 15th Massachusetts and 82nd New York totaling approximately 600 officers and men.

⁸⁹ Gregory A. Coco, ed., *From Ball's Bluff to Gettysburg...And Beyond, The Civil War Letters of Private Roland E. Bowen, 15th Massachusetts Infantry*, (Gettysburg, 1994), p. 201.

⁹⁰ Andrews, "Another Account of General Wright's Brigade at Gettysburg," *Atlanta Journal*, March 9, 1901; *OR*, 27, pt. 1, p. 423; John Rhodes, *The History of Battery B, First Regiment Rhode Island Light Artillery*, (Providence, 1894), p. 201

⁹¹ *OR*, 27, pt. 1, pp. 416, 431.

⁹² Rhodes, *The History of Battery B*, p. 202; *OR*, 27, pt. 1, p. 431.

⁹³ Wright, "Army correspondence," Augusta *Daily Constitutionalist*, July 23, 1863; Winschel, "Posey's Brigade at Gettysburg, Part 2," *Gettysburg Magazine*, p. 98; *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 625.

⁹⁴ Rhodes, *The History of Battery B*, pp. 202-203; *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 623. There has been some debate over the years as to whether Wright's Brigade actually pierced the Union line on Cemetery Ridge as he claimed. While some of his accounts contain exaggeration concerning the obstacles he faced and the importance of his brigade's achievements, there seems little doubt that his regiments not only reached the Union line, but actually penetrated it. Even Brig. Gen. John Gibbon, the Union officer responsible for defending this section of Cemetery Ridge, all but admitted as much in his official report, writing, "The enemy came on with such impetuosity that *the head of his column came quite through a vacancy in our line* to the left of my division, opened by detaching troops to other points." (emphasis added, See *OR*, 27, pt. 1, p. 417).

⁹⁵ Wright, "Army Correspondence," Augusta *Daily Constitutionalist*, July 23, 1863; *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 623-624.

⁹⁶ The combined strength of Mahone and Posey's brigades was approximately 2,900, or 43% of the division's strength.

⁹⁷ Wilcox's original report, VHS.

⁹⁸ Ibid.; *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 623.

⁹⁹ Wilcox's original report, VHS; "P. W. A." to Editor, *Savannah Republican*, August 2, 1863; Hillary Herbert to E. P. Alexander, August 18, 1903, transcription in GNMP. Especially critical of the role of the division was an article by "P. W. A." which appeared in the *Savannah Republican*, who insinuated that if Anderson had used his entire division that attack would have been successful. It appears that Anderson's version of both Mahone and Posey being "reserves" was simply a cover story he created to shift the blame. While Mahone's role in the attack is an enigma, it is obvious that Posey was originally intended to participate in the main assault (see *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 633). It seems that the only units that received discretionary orders to advance were those of Pender's Division, off to Anderson's left. (see Brig. Gen. James Lane's report in *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 665).

¹⁰⁰ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 658.

¹⁰¹ Eric A. Campbell, "'Remember Harper's Ferry': The Degradation, Humiliation, and Redemption of Col. George L. Willard's Brigade, Part I," *Gettysburg Magazine*, Issue 7 (Dayton, 1992), pp. 65-69, 71-73; *OR*, 27, pt. 1, pp. 370-372, 425; pt. 2, p. 618; Wilcox's original report, VHS; Clark, "Wilcox's Brigade at Gettysburg," *CV*, pp. 229-230.

¹⁰² *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 632; Lang to Gen. Edward Perry, July 19, 1863 as quoted in "Gettysburg, The Courageous Part Taken in the Desperate Conflict...By the Florida Brigade...," *Southern Historical Society Papers*, R. A. Brock, ed., 27, (Richmond, 1899), p. 195.

¹⁰³ Wright, "Army Correspondence," *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, July 23, 1863. The Union troops that moved against Wright's left flank was the 106th Pennsylvania from Brig. Gen. Alexander Webb's Brigade.

¹⁰⁴ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 624; Wright, "Army Correspondence," *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, July 23, 1863.

¹⁰⁵ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 634.

¹⁰⁶ Wright, "Army Correspondence," *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, July 23, 1863.

¹⁰⁷ Busey and Martin, Regimental Strengths and Losses, pp. 293-294; *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 619, 624-625. The loss of junior officers too was extremely high. As an example, the 22nd Georgia lost 7 of 8 captains, while the 48th Georgia lost 5 of its 6 captains and 11 of its 17 lieutenants.

¹⁰⁸ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 618, 624, 628; Johnson, "A Limited Review."

¹⁰⁹ Wilcox's original report, VHS.

¹¹⁰ The official reports of A. P. Hill and all of those from the various officers in Pender's Division are strangely quiet on Hill's involvement in this phase of the fight. None of them mention any orders or inquiries by Hill concerning the possible movement of the division on the evening of July 2. (see *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 656-673) The only mention of a possible advance comes from Brig. Gen. James Lane who, upon taking over the division after Pender's wounding, reported that he received orders from a member of Brig. Gen. Edward Thomas's staff to "advance, if I saw a good opportunity for doing so." (see, *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 665).

¹¹¹ Several eyewitnesses stated Hill watched the fighting that day with Lee near the grounds of the Lutheran Theological Seminary. Among them were several foreign observers with the Confederate army, including Lt. Col. Arthur Freemantle, of the British Coldstream Guards, Capt. FitzGerald Ross of Austria and Capt. Justus Scheibert of the Prussian army (see Freemantle, Three Months in the Southern States, New York, 1864, pp. 255, 257, 259-260; Richard Harwell, ed., Cities and Camps of the Confederate States, by Fitzgerald Ross, reprint, Urbana, Illinois, 1958, pp. 48, 50; Stanley Hoole, ed., Seven Months in the Rebel States, by Justus Scheibert, reprint, Tuscaloosa, 1958, pp. 112-113). Confederate Lt. William Owen of the Washington Artillery also placed Hill in this area on July 2 (see, Owen, In Camp and Battle with the Washington Artillery, Boston, 1885, pp. 245, 246). That area fell within the sphere of command of Ewell's Second Corps, not Hill's Third Corps.

¹¹² Freemantle, Three Months in the Southern States, (New York, 1864), pp. 259-260.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Stewart Sifakis, Who was Who in the Confederacy, (New York, 1988), pp. 191-19, 229; *OR*, 25, pt. 2, p. 810.

¹¹⁶ Sorrell, Recollections, p. 128; Freemantle, Three Months, p. 254; *OR*, 25, pt. 1, pp. 849-853.

¹¹⁷ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 308, 320. Lee's original attack miscarried due to an unexpected Union attack on Culp's Hill and the unexplained delay in Gen. Longstreet's preparations to assault the Union left.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 320. Brig. Gen. J. J. Pettigrew took over Heth's Division while Maj. Gen. Isaac Trimble was placed in command of two of Pender's brigades.

¹¹⁹ The reports of both make it appear as though Anderson was temporarily under Longstreet's command on July 3 (see *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 359, 360, 614-615). Hill's report, however, makes Anderson's status clear, writing, "I was directed to hold my line with Anderson's division and the half of Pender's division..." (see *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 608).

¹²⁰ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 320, 359. In his description of the assaulting force, Lee gave the same weight to Wilcox and Lang as he did to the two brigades under Maj. Gen. Isaac Trimble (Lane and Scale from Heth's Division). Longstreet described the role of Wilcox and Lang in the attack as such, "Wilcox's brigade was ordered to move in rear of [Pickett's] right flank, to protect it from any force that the enemy might attempt to move against it." (see *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 359). Being such a small brigade, especially after the losses suffered on July 2, Lang was placed under Wilcox's command on July 3 and ordered "to conform to his movements." (see, *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 632).

¹²¹ Winschel, "Posey's Brigade at Gettysburg, Part 2," *Gettysburg Magazine*, pp. 99-100.

¹²² Bachelder, "Battle Field of Gettysburg" Troop Movement Maps, July 3, 8-11 a.m., copy at GNMP; *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 619; Wilcox's original report, VHS. Some accounts and histories of the battle have placed Wilcox and Lang's brigades behind and to the right of Pickett's Division. It seems fairly clear, however, from Wilcox's reports that his men were in the front, just behind the Confederate artillery. He stated in his first report that "the brigade was ordered forward to support a number of batteries placed on the Emmetsburg road.... About 10⁰⁰ A.M. three brigades of Pickett's division, Garnett, Armistead and Kemper, took position *immediately in rear of mine*...." (emphasis added) (see Wilcox's original report, VHS). Though most maps, including Bachelder's, indicate that Posey and Mahone's brigades were placed behind Pettigrew and Trimble, it seems likely that the reverse was true. A soldier in Mahone's Brigade wrote that during the cannonade, "A line of Heth's men, among them Davis brigade, lay *in our rear*," (emphasis added) and more

e[x]posed then was our own line. Among these men many of the sho[t] which passed over the bateries fell with fearful effect." (see Bernard Papers, SHC, p. 15).

¹²³ Clark, "Wilcox's Brigade at Gettysburg," *CV*, p. 230.

¹²⁴ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 619; Wilcox's original report, VHS; James Kemper to E. P. Alexander, September 20, 1869, Dearborn Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University, transcription in GNMP. Wilcox estimated his casualties from the bombardment at less than a dozen (see, *OR*, pt. 2, p. 620), while he estimated Kemper's losses at 200 (see, Wilcox, "Letter from C. M. Wilcox," *SHSP*, Vol. 4, p. 116).

¹²⁵ Johnson, "A Limited Review."

¹²⁶ Todd Reminiscences, SHC, p. 131.

¹²⁷ Johnson, "A Limited Review."; *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 620.

¹²⁸ Wilcox's original report, VHS; Johnson, "A Limited Review."

¹²⁹ Bernard Papers, SHC, p. 17; Wright, "Army Correspondence," *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, July 23, 1863.

¹³⁰ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 620; Robert Bright, "Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg," *Confederate Veteran*, 38, (Richmond, 1930), p. 265.

Pickett had sent three staff officers to deliver the order for Wilcox to advance, feeling that probably only one would get through. The last officer to arrive was Capt. Robert Bright, who wrote, "When I rode up to Wilcox he was standing with both hands raised waving and saying to me: 'I know; I know.'"

¹³¹ Wilcox's original report, VHS; Fortin, ed., "Herbert's History of the Eighth Alabama," *AHQ*, p. 125; Clark, "Wilcox's Brigade at Gettysburg," *CV*, p. 230. The worst of the artillery fire directed against Wilcox and Lang came from an artillery line commanded by Lt. Col. Freeman McGilvery, who had massed 39 guns along the southern end of Cemetery Ridge. McGilvery claimed his fire was so effective that the Confederate line was "completely broken up and scattered by our fire before coming within musket range of our lines." (see, *OR*, 27, pt. 1, p. 884).

¹³² Wilcox's original report, VHS; *OR*, pt. 2, p. 633; "James Wentworth Wrote Diary of Civil War Days," *Perry News*, unknown date, Civil War Museum, Havana, Florida, copy in GNMP.

¹³³ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 620; Wilcox's original report, VHS.

¹³⁴ *OR*, 27, pt. 1, pp. 349-350.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 350, 353; Veazey to George Benedict, July 11, 1864, as quoted in Kathleen Georg, "A Common Pride and Fame, The Attack and Repulse of Pickett's Division at Gettysburg, July 3, 1863, 1, p. 213, unpublished manuscript, GNMP. The other Union regiment involved in this counterattack was the 14th Vermont.

¹³⁶ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 632.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 620, 632, 633.

¹³⁸ Clark, "Wilcox's Brigade at Gettysburg," *CV*, p. 230.

¹³⁹ Lang to Brig. Gen. Perry, July 19, 1863 in Fleming, "Gettysburg, The Courageous Part Taken...By the Florida Brigade," *SHSP*, 27, 196; Fortin, ed., "Herbert's History of the Eight Alabama," *AHQ*, p. 230.

¹⁴⁰ Bright, "Pickett's Charge," *CV*, pp. 264-265. Wanting to make sure these orders were delivered Pickett then sent three of his staff orders to Wilcox. Bright was the last of these officers.

¹⁴¹ Wilcox, "Letter from General C. M. Wilcox," March 26, 1877, *SHSP*, 4, p. 117. In later years Wilcox held Longstreet personally responsible for the "sacrifice" of his brigade, which "availed nothing." (see, Wilcox, "General C. M. Wilcox on the Battle of Gettysburg," *SHSP*, 6, p. 119).

¹⁴² *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 615; Todd Reminiscences, SHC, p. 132.

¹⁴³ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 360, 615, 625; Bernard Papers, SHC, p. 19.

¹⁴⁴ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, pp. 620, 632, 633. Wilcox stated his losses for July 3 were 204 while Lang listed his at approximately 155.

Particularly hard hit was the 2nd Florida, positioned on the extreme left of the line. Lang stated that "a large number of the Second Florida Infantry, together with their colors" were captured (see *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 632). Though the exact figures were not recorded, it is certain that Wright, Posey and Mahone lost a number of men on July 3 from skirmishing and during the cannonade.

¹⁴⁵ Busey and Martin, *Regimental Strengths*, pp. 293-294. These losses do not include the division's artillery battalion (Maj. John Lane's Sumter Battalion), as it was detached from his command early on July 2.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 624; Wright "Army Correspondence," *Augusta Daily Constitutionalist*, July 23, 1863.

¹⁴⁸ *OR*, 27, pt. 2, p. 616.

¹⁴⁹ Carol Reardon, *Pickett's Charge In History and Memory*, (Chapel Hill, 1997), pp. 39-61; "Address of Col. Snead," p. 10, FSNMP.

¹⁵⁰ David Lang letter to the editors, July 26, 1863, *Richmond Enquirer*, unknown date, photocopy in GNMP.

