

Ephraim Foster Anderson

Co. "I"

Broad Top Mountain, Bedford County, Pa.

Ephraim Foster Anderson was born in 1839 as the ninth of ten children to James and Mary (Horton) Anderson on Broad Top Mountain, in Bedford County Pennsylvania. [Now Fulton County, created from the eastern section of Bedford County in 1851] As a young student, it was determined that he was "one of the brightest students on Broad Top" and so was sent to Hagerstown, Maryland where he was privately educated. He then taught school in Hagerstown, in a building which housed the Junior Fire Company. Young Anderson was active in this organization and may have resided at the fire company. During this time, he also studied for the law in the Hagerstown law office of Andrew Kershner Syester, one-time Attorney General of Maryland.



THE CIVIL WAR

On 25 August 1862, not long after the outset of the Civil War, the 23-year-old Ephraim Anderson enlisted at Hagerstown as a Federal volunteer and raised a company of largely Western Marylanders which became Company "I" of the 7th Regiment, Maryland Volunteers (U.S.). The members of the company elected him as its commander with the rank of Captain. Quoting from a contemporary newspaper article of August 20, 1862, "Mr. E. F. Anderson, a young student at law, in Hagerstown, made a spirited war speech in this place on Monday evening. Animated by that love of country which should characterize every patriot at this crisis in our nation's destiny, he is energetically engaged in recruiting a company for the war. He made a stirring appeal to the young men to come forward to the defense of our country's flag and we hope that it will not have been made in vain."

Little information is known of Captain Anderson's military career. We can be sure that he drilled, that he wrote and read orders, reports, requisitions, receipts, vouchers and an overabundance of other documents in duplicate, triplicate and quadruplicate. He conducted and was subjected to inspections, participated in dress parades and reviews, he detailed men for guard, picket, police duties, fatigue and working parties and drilled. He meted out punishment, provided rewards and promotions, granted or denied leave, approved or disapproved applications, and in the midst of it all, he drilled. He drilled his company, he drilled with the battalion, with the regiment, with the brigade and with the division. Skirmish drill, target practice, and "rally on the colors" were standard exercises. He was required to be knowledgeable in tactics and army regulations.

Most of his army time was routine and in many ways tedious. His schedule was dictated by bugle and drum and was much the same every day. Reveille at daybreak, police call 15 minutes later, surgeons' call, breakfast, guard-mount, drill, recall, dinner, drill again, recall again, first call for parade and company inspection, second call and dress parade with retreat at sunset, tattoo about 9 p.m. and taps some 20 minutes later. However, there must certainly also have been many good and enjoyable times. Time spent socializing with his fellow officers and enjoying the unique comradeship developed while living in the field with a collection of men engaged in a common goal.

As with his official duties, we do not know the specifics of how he passed his off-duty time. We can know that he very likely did participate in some of the variety of pastimes soldiers found for their amusement during those times when the army had exhausted its call on them. Captain Anderson may have played cards, pitched horseshoes, performed readings from the plays of Shakespeare or the poetry of Robert Burns, joined in song with his fellows. He likely read and wrote letters, could have drunk wine or hard liquor, engaged in debates and discussions of the issues of the day, played chess or checkers. He could have enjoyed amateur theatrics put on by enlisted men, whittled, participated in bible readings, played base ball. It is possible that he continued his legal studies, enjoyed band concerts, read the poetry of Wordsworth or the novels of Walter Scott, perhaps wrote poetry himself or made pencil

sketches. He may or may not have done them all, but like all soldiers, he most certainly did at least some. We do know that on April 25, 1863, Lieutenant Colonel Phelps of the 7th preferred court martial charges against Captain Anderson arising out of an incident that occurred on April 19th, 1863 while Anderson's company was stationed at Bolivar Heights on the outskirts of Harpers Ferry. Captain Anderson was charged with a) neglect of duty, b) disobedience of an order, and c) in three separate specifications, insubordinate conduct. The substance of the incident was that Captain Anderson refused an order to furnish a detail of three enlisted men from his company "for police duty". In the presence of Colonel Phelps, Captain Anderson respectfully admitted his disobedience of the order. All other details of this incident seem to have disappeared from the record. According to the regimental history compiled by Colonel Phelps for the *History and Roster of Maryland Volunteers, War of 1861-5*, "There had not been a single officer court-martialed down to this period of its history [1898]", so it seems that the charges were dismissed as some point. Whatever the disposition and outcome of the accusations, Captain Anderson continued to command his company and was apparently not disciplined.

While in the army, Captain Anderson was taken into the Masonic Lodge. The records of the Office of the Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of Maryland Masons show that Captain Anderson was initiated on May 6, 1863 and was a member of Friendship Lodge No. 84 in Hagerstown. He was suspended for non-payment of dues on April 15, 1874.

It is stated in "Seventh Regiment Infantry", contained in the *History and Roster of Maryland Volunteers, War of 1861-5* that during the skirmish at Funkstown on July 12, 1863, as Lee was being pursued from Gettysburg, "The Seventh being called on for a company to relieve the skirmishers of the Sixth Corps in its front, it happened to be the turn of Company I to go on that duty. This company (Captain E. F. Anderson) was raised in the neighborhood, and most of the men had harvested or hunted over the ground. Ridges of limestone cropping out here and there furnished accidents of position of which the skirmishers of both sides made it a point to avail themselves quite liberally. . . . the work of our skirmishers went on prosperously and they advanced gradually, pressing back the enemy's skirmishers. The next morning Company I, with a loss of only one man wounded (Scoffin), was relieved on the skirmish line by Captain Bennett, Company E."

In November, 1863, Colonel Edwin W. Webster, the original commanding officer of the 7th and a member of the U.S. Congress was re-elected to that body and resigned his commission to fulfill his duties in Washington. Lieutenant Colonel Charles E. Phelps was elected to take his place as Colonel of the 7th by the officers of the regiment. The 7th was heavily engaged in the Battle of the Wilderness on May 5 and 6, 1864. Casualties in the regiment were high with 11 killed, 46 wounded and 17 missing. The specifics of Captain Anderson's actions during this battle are not known, but he was commended for gallantry for his services on this field of battle. At the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse on May 8, 1864, the division commander, General Robinson, was shot from his horse and borne from the field with the loss of a leg. At about the same time, the Maryland Brigade commander, Colonel Denison was also shot from his horse and assisted to the rear with the loss of his right arm.

The following two paragraphs are extracted from the "Seventh Regiment Infantry", contained in the *History and Roster of Maryland Volunteers, War of 1861-5*.

"Upon the fall of these two ranking officers [Robinson and Denison], the command of the division, or what there was of it in sight (the two left brigades having been repulsed or mingled with the Maryland brigade), was promptly assumed by the Colonel of the Seventh Maryland. The situation at that moment, was very plainly that of a forlorn hope, calling for nothing but quick and reckless work. What remained of the movement was no longer a column, but a bunched and ragged line. At points where the enemy's fire was most concentrated, the drone of bullets blended into a throbbing wail, like that of a sonorous telegraph wire pulsing in a strong wind, punctuated by the pert zip of the closer shots. The din and racket were such that but few could have heard the commands: 'Hold your fire! Double quick!' What was plainly seen in the front, was the sudden appearance of the new commander, pointing with sabre to the breastworks, and trotting up towards them, until horse and rider came down. Following closely, was Captain Anderson, of the Seventh, and when he fell, or possibly before he fell, all was over.

"The unordered retreat left these two officers lying within ten paces of the works, Anderson having stopped three bullets while taking a step forward, just after an unsuccessful attempt to extricate Phelps from the weight of his dying horse. Anderson was well in the lead of everything when he fell, and [was commended] for his conspicuous gallantry on this occasion, and in the Wilderness. . . . He commanded one of the Washington County companies (Co. D)." In a November 30, 1866 pension record entry, [Colonel] Charles E. Phelps, late commanding officer of the 7th [and at least somewhat ironically, the charging officer for Captain Anderson's court martial offenses] recorded, "I hereby cer-

tify and depose that [Captain] Ephraim F. Anderson . . . was wounded while in the line of his duty and in command of Co. I, 7th Regt. Md. Inf. at the Battle of Spotsylvania C.H. on the 8th day of May, 1864, under the following circumstances:

"While in the act of charging upon a line of breastworks held by the enemy, and while leading his company, and when within a very short distance of the works, Capt. Anderson was wounded in the left wrist joint, also in the right hand, losing the index finger of the same by amputation, also in the right thigh, upper third injuring the bone and paralyzing the limb, shortly after which he was made prisoner, together with myself. . . . Capt. Anderson fell having just made an unsuccessful effort to release me from my horse which had been shot and had fallen upon me, and that he was wounded within a distance of eight paces from where I lay, and while moving forward in obedience to my express order to push on, given immediately before he was struck."

After being severely wounded in this instance, Captain Anderson was captured on the field. He was ultimately transported to Richmond's notorious Libby Prison where he arrived on May 22, 1864. Like other prisoners at this facility, he endured many brutal privations during his imprisonment. Additionally and more importantly for his future, he contracted tuberculosis before finally being exchanged. On September 3, 1864 he was admitted to a Union hospital in or near Annapolis, Maryland.

He sufficiently recovered that on September 23rd, he was given a thirty-day leave of absence. He tendered his resignation from the army effective October 31, 1864. His honorable discharge "on account of wounds received in action" is dated November 30, 1864 with a pension of \$15.00 per month. On March 13, 1865, He was brevetted to Major for "Gallantry at the Battle of the Wilderness" and to Lieutenant Colonel "for conspicuous gallantry" at Spotsylvania. His name was on the Company muster-out roll at Arlington Heights, Virginia on May 31, 1865.

POST-WAR CAREER

After his release from active duty, Colonel Anderson resumed residence in Hagerstown. He was elected to the Maryland House of Delegates from Washington County as a Unionist-Republican. This brought him to Annapolis where he served until 1865 when he received a Federal Treasury Department appointment as the Customs Appraiser of the Port of Baltimore. He held offices with the U.S. Department of the Treasury in both Baltimore and Washington, D.C. until within a very few years of his death on April 5, 1877. He was selected as a Delegate from Maryland to the Republican National Convention of 1868 which selected General Ulysses S. Grant to be its nominee for President and who was subsequently elected to that office. He delivered the memorial address for the annual Decoration Day [now celebrated as Memorial Day] commemoration at the Antietam Battlefield National Cemetery on May 30, 1870. The speech embraces history, honor, poetry, biblical quotations, morality, duty, politics; all of the elements that went into the stirring oratory of the day. He even speaks of the, ". . . dear flag which our fathers bore over Saratoga and Yorktown", a line most certainly inspired by a popular wartime play.

On October 15, 1870, for the price of \$4,000, Colonel Anderson purchased 31 acres of land along the main line of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad adjacent to a railroad station in what is today Hanover, Maryland. He laid out a town site, created lots and leased them to various individual for modest yearly rentals, starting at \$12 a year or sold them for \$200 each. This town was named Anderson and a post office existed under that name between January 15, 1874 and December 5, 1885.

Less than a year later, on August 10, 1871, he was described as being "feeble in health because of his suffering from his wounds, and because of his suffering and cruel treatment while lying with his wounds in Libby Prison as a prisoner of war in and during the summer of 1864, that his wounded limbs . . . have not recovered in strength but still render him wholly incapable of performing manual labor [in addition to suffering from the effects of the tuberculosis he contracted during his imprisonment]; that he is compelled to find a man servant to perform the household and other duties requiring manual exertion."

Colonel Anderson had a church built in this town in 1873 at his own expense and which became a Presbyterian Church known as the Anderson Church or Chapel. An 1874 newspaper item states that, "Last summer Colonel Anderson built a handsome church near the railroad station which has been turned over to the Baltimore Presbytery, and services have been held therein each Sunday afternoon for some months, conducted by the Presbyterian clergymen of Baltimore." Colonel Anderson not only paid for the construction, but also bore the cost of furnishing it, its upkeep and the expenses of maintaining services.

By November 15, 1876, likely due to failing health, Colonel Anderson sold the last of his holdings in Anderson Village and spent part, if not all, of the winter of 1876-77 in Florida for relief from his pains. Colonel Anderson passed away on April 5, 1877 at the age of 38 at Providence Hospital, Washington, D.C. as a consequence of the tuberculosis he contracted as a prisoner of war in Richmond. His funeral was held in Washington and he was temporarily interred in a public vault in Congressional Cemetery in Washington before being removed for permanent burial in Anderson on April 12. An itemized bill for his funeral expenses dated May 17, 1877 totaling \$161.40 includes an "imitation of Rosewood casket with silver molding and satin head lining." He died unmarried and without children.

He was put to rest near the front entrance to the Anderson Presbyterian Church at Anderson which is now a part of Hanover, Howard County, Maryland. The church has since been demolished, but it occupied a vacant tract of land that today sits opposite the residential address of 6413 Ryan Avenue, Hanover, Maryland.

REDISCOVERY

The Presbyterian Association of Baltimore sold the church on August 3, 1918. It then became known as the Sweeten Church after its new owner and apparently services continued at least intermittently into the 1930's or 1940's. A local resident stated that in the early 1950's, "the church was still in fairly good condition and that the pews still had hymnals. The church appeared to be vacant. It was like the congregation just one day got up and left never to return. . . . it seems that one day the church was there and the next day it was gone."

A 2004 visitor to the site of the by then demolished Anderson Presbyterian Church was told that Colonel Anderson's grave site at Anderson was destroyed when the building was torn down and that his grave marker had been covered over. Mr. Marvin Anderson believes that a reasonable estimate of the time this process occurred would be sometime during the 1960s.

A group of persons and organizations interested in locating and possibly restoring Colonel Anderson's gravesite received permission from the property developer that owns the former Anderson Church location to search for the grave. They met on the lot on Sunday morning, July 8, 2007. This group performed some preliminary searching and probing of the ground but little was achieved due to the heavy summer woods growth. A more systematic "grid-type" of search with appropriate equipment was planned for the winter of 2007-2008.

During the winter of 2007, Anderson family members and volunteers from the Elkridge Community Association spent weeks bagging leaves and clearing the site. This task completed, the family members, local historian Ms. Joetta Cramm, members of the Upper Patuxent Archaeology Club, and other interested parties gathered to renew the search in late March, 2008. A most important member of the team was general manager of nearby Meadowridge Memorial Park, Mr. Mike Bennett who volunteered his services by paying a team of five groundskeepers.

And now, from a description by Mrs. Gretchen Anderson, wife of Bruce Anderson a great-great nephew of Ephraim with extra details from *The Howard County Times*, the events as the investigation recommenced on Saturday, March 29, 2008. After a couple of hours of probing the area with long metal rods, cemetery employees centered in on what they considered to be a "soft spot", suggesting that there was a lot of dirt with no stones, evidence that this spot had been dug and refilled at some time in the past. This ground on the south side of the remaining church foundation was found to be, even after more than 100 years, not as compact as the surrounding earth. Mike Bennett said, "We felt air seep out of the ground." Probes struck a solid surface 56 inches down that caused the ground to vibrate providing evidence of a large, solid buried object.

The workers dug at the indicated place for three hours straight and began to uncover pieces of plaster that coated the outside of a burial vault or crypt. By the end of the day, they had cleared the dirt outlining the edges of the six-foot deep crypt. It was constructed of stacked mortared brick with four stone slabs on top. The four slabs had split lengthwise to the crypt and collapsed downward. Because of historical records concerning the placement of the grave, the searchers were 99% sure they had located their objective. However further evidence was required if the monument the family wished to have erected was to be accomplished and the area, hopefully, donated to the Howard County Park Service. At this point, the arrival of nightfall halted the work for the day. The cemetery director, his children Lauren, 14 and Brian, 12 with four of his cemetery employees volunteered to stay the night to keep curiosity seekers away. It was rumored that Colonel Anderson was buried in his uniform with a sword and so souvenir hunters were a possibility. The Anderson family returned to their home, but the volunteers camped out in the chilly night air.

The family arrived back at the gravesite at 9:30 the next morning, Sunday the 30th, to learn that a group of

teens had come at 12:00 midnight armed with shovels and another similarly equipped group at 2 a.m. Both groups were chased off by the volunteer watchers. The excavation recommenced with the removal of the stone slabs from the top of the crypt. Digging in the area of where the chest would be revealed pieces of wood thought to be from the coffin. At that point all digging stopped. The memorial park manager said that going further without the State's Attorney's approval would be considered desecration of the grave. So, late Sunday afternoon, four 850-pound concrete slabs and a 400-pound metal sheet were brought in to cover the grave.

Mike Bennett was on the phone first thing Monday morning to seek approval for further excavation. This was duly obtained and permission to proceed on Wednesday morning was approved.

On April 2, 2008, the entire grave was exposed. Human remains consisted of two thigh bones, one damaged as noted in Colonel Anderson's war records, a piece of cheek bone, a piece of skull, and a piece of jaw. Also excavated were three silver coffin handles, the hinges of which still worked, together with several pieces of decorative metal, two white buttons, much cloth, pieces of a Rosewood-stained coffin, and a quantity of glass, apparently from a viewing pane at the head of the coffin.

Although no scientific tests were conducted, the evidence of the damaged thigh bone, the original funeral home records describing the coffin and the location of the grave satisfied the historians and forensics experts at the site that they had positive evidence that the gravesite of Colonel Ephraim F. Anderson has been located. After viewing the artifacts, 22-year-old Eric Anderson, son of Gretchen and Bruce, climbed down into the grave and replaced the items. Finally, he and several cemetery employees filled the grave back in.

POSTSCRIPT

According to Mrs. Gretchen Anderson, "Anderson's descendants are interested in holding a reenactment burial ceremony and converting the wooded area into a memorial of some kind." She has promised to keep Colonel Henson informed as to any ceremony the family will hold. We hope to complete this story when members of the 7th Maryland Volunteer Infantry reenactment organization gather to help dedicate a new monument to Colonel Ephraim F. Anderson, one of the members of the original 7th Maryland who inspires us to recreate and honor the admirable lives they led.

Sources:

Anderson, Gretchen, email message to Mr. Jay Henson of April 3, 2008.

Anderson, Marvin H., *A Biography of the Colonel*, 1 December, 2007. An unpublished biography written after the author encountered his relative Ephraim while surfing the web in 2007 in the process of doing genealogic research.

Blakely, Andrei, "Descendants seek grave of Civil War hero", *The Howard County Times*, week of March 6, 2008.

Blakely, Andrei, "Family digs up its history, Civil War officer's remains recovered", *The Howard County Times*, week of April 3, 2008.

Wilmer, L. Allison, J. H. Jarrett, and Geo. W. F. Vernon, *History and Roster of Maryland Volunteers, War of 1861-5*. Baltimore: Guggenheimer, Weil, & Co., 1898.



Above, Casket hardware discovered within the vault

Left, the gravesite of Col. Ephraim F. Anderson