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Anderson, George Burgwyn [1]

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by Jeffry D. Wert, 1979; Revised by SLNC Government and Heritage Library, July 2023

12 Apr. 1831–16 Oct. 1862

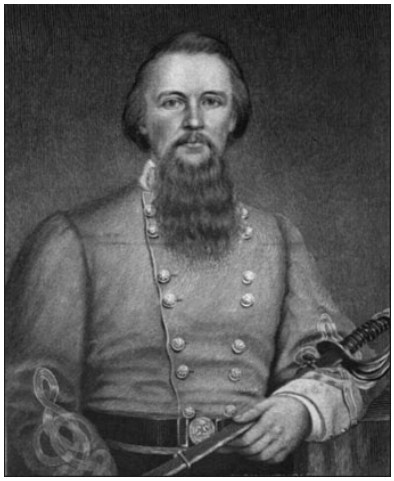

Image courtesy of Library of Congress via National Park Service. [2]George Burgwyn Anderson, Confederate [3] soldier, was born near Hillsborough of Scot-Irish ancestry. His father was William E. Anderson; his mother, Eliza Burgwyn. At an early age, Anderson demonstrated marked intellectual abilities that enabled him to enter The University of North Carolina [4] at age sixteen. After one year there, he received an appointment to West Point, where he was graduated in 1852, standing ninth in a class of forty-one. Anderson was appointed brevet second lieutenant in the Second Dragoons and, following a brief tour in California, joined the regiment at Fort Chadbourne, Tex. Promoted to first lieutenant on 13 Dec. 1855, he served as regimental adjutant for over a year. With the regiment, Anderson witnessed the civil strife and violence engulfing Kansas during this period and marched under Albert Sidney Johnston to settle the Mormon problems in Utah. In the fall of 1859 he was detached on recruiting duties to Louisville, Ky. He remained on this duty until the firing on Fort Sumter [5], when he tendered his resignation (25 Apr. 1861) to offer his services to his native state.

Within a month, Anderson was appointed colonel of the Fourth North Carolina Volunteers. Organizing, equipping, and training the recruits occupied Anderson for two months. At the end of July, the regiment moved to Manassas Junction, Va., where Anderson assumed command of the post until the spring of 1862, when the Confederate army [6] withdrew to the Peninsula. Anderson's first real action came at Seven Pines or Fair Oaks on 31 May. Temporarily commanding a brigade in D. H. Hill's [7] division, he led a charge down the Williamsburg road. The attack stalled until Anderson, seizing the flag of the Twenty-seventh Georgia, personally led the brigade in the capture of Federal breastworks. His display of courage and leadership prompted President Jefferson Davis [8] to promote him on 9 June to brigadier general.

Anderson assumed command of four North Carolina regiments, Second, Fourth, Fourteenth, and Thirtieth, a brigade whose combat record would be equalled by few others. In the Seven Days, he commanded the brigade with skill and conspicuousness, being wounded in the hand at Malvern Hill. His next battle was at South Mountain, Md., where Hill's division alone stubbornly resisted the Federal attacks for a full day on 14 Sept. Three days later, Anderson's brigade held the right of the Confederate line in the bloody lane at the Battle of Sharpsburg [9]. The Confederate soldiers repulsed three concerted Federal attacks, until a mistake in orders caused one brigade to withdraw, resulting in a collapse of the line. Anderson, while standing on a knoll rallying his men, was hit in the ankle by a minie ball. Though the wound was painful, it was not considered serious, and Anderson was sent home to Raleigh [10] to recover. The wound failed to heal, however; an amputation was performed, but he never fully responded and died on 16 Oct. He was buried with full military ceremony in Oakwood Cemetery [11] at Raleigh.

Anderson married Mildred Ewing, 8 Nov. 1859; they were the parents of two children, one of whom, George, B., Jr., lived to adulthood.

Additional information from NCpedia editors at the State Library of North Carolina:

This person enslaved and owned other people. Many Black and African people, their descendants, and some others were enslaved in the United States until the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in 1865. It was common for wealthy landowners, entrepreneurs, politicians, institutions, and others to enslave people and use enslaved labor during this period. To read more about the enslavement and transportation of African people to North Carolina, visit https://aahc.nc.gov/programs/africa-carolina-0 [12]. To read more about slavery and its history in North Carolina, visit https://www.ncpedia.org/slavery [13]. - Government and Heritage Library, 2023

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George Burgwyn Anderson, National Park Service: https://www.nps.gov/resources/person.htm?id=178 [2]

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George B. Anderson Bio-Sketch, Sons of the Confederate Veterans: http://www.ncscv.org/george-burgwyn-anderson [15]

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George Burgwyn Anderson, UNC Alumni:http://alumni.unc.edu/veterans/veteran.asp?pid=706685336 [18]

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Subjects:
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Civil War (1861-1865) [20]
Military personnel [21]
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