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Chapter 1 : Books similar to To the North Anna River: Grant and Lee, May ,

In his gripping fourth volume on the spring Overland campaign -- which pitted Ulysses S. Grant against Robert E. Lee for the first time in the Civil War -- Gordon Rhea vividly re-creates the battles and maneuvers from the North Anna stalemate through the Cold Harbor offensive.

Rhea discusses the thinking of both Generals Lee and Grant as each labors to decide what to do next. Another unsuccessful attack at the salient is orchestrated by Grant before he makes the first move by deciding to disengage and maneuver Lee out of his trenches. He advances Winfield Hancock to the southeast with the idea of using him as bait to get Lee to follow. This strategy works as Lee starts his army southward toward the North Anna river. Troop movements and lost opportunities dominate this portion of the book as Grant and Lee engage on the next portion of the campaign. Cavalry battles also are covered at this point as Union General Philip Sheridan drives the Federal cavalry on a threatening movement towards the Confederate capital at Richmond. Rhea then discusses how this movement, although somewhat successful, ultimately hurt the Union cause. Lee then entrenches south of the river as he waits to see what Grant will do. Rhea shows how Confederate chief field engineer Martin Smith "proposes an ingenious solution" that results in the famous inverted "V" entrenchment below the river. Grant initiates offensive probes and becomes increasingly concerned that his troops are trapped. The little known battle at Ox Ford on the North Anna is the final proof that he needs. Lee meanwhile becomes ill and fails to delegate to his subordinates his instinctive thought to attack and the opportunity is lost. Rhea ties all this together with some of his best writing to date: He often worked after midnight and was generally awake by 3: Dysentery was endemic in the Army of Northern Virginia, and Lee had contracted the illness by the time he had reached the North Anna. Normally even-tempered and robust, he was now irritable and rode in a carriage. But the Army of Northern Virginia could not strike a blow. It required a firm hand to coordinate so complex an undertaking. In better times, when Jackson and Longstreet commanded the wings of the Confederate army, Lee had liberally delegated responsibility. But Jackson was dead and Longstreet disabled and Lee lacked confidence in their successors. His decision to maneuver again "by the left flank" to the southeast closes out the text portion of the book. In retrospect, it is doubtful that even a healthy Lee could have dealt a decisive blow. Nightfall would likely have prevented him from crossing the North Anna. Grant could take severe casualties in stride. Terrible subtractions in the Wilderness and at Spotsylvania Court House did not deter him, nor did severe losses at Cold Harbor in the coming weeks. I give this book a very high recommendation.

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Chapter 2 : Project MUSE - Cold Harbor

With To the North Anna River, the third book in his outstanding five-book series, Gordon C. Rhea continues his spectacular narrative of the initial campaign between Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee in the spring of

Additional Information In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: Rebel earthworks loomed only a few hundred yards away, visible across open fields. The Confederates had mastered the art of field fortifications, and the North Anna position was their most accomplished effort yet. The rebel line appeared as a raw mound of red dirt atop commanding ground that looked across killing fields cleared of brush and trees. Entanglements lay heaped along the face of the fortifications, sharpened branches facing outward. Dirt and wood ramparts rose several feet, surmounted by headlogs that protected the defenders while firing. Trenches behind the earthworks gave the rebels safe places to load, and short, stubby earthen walls called traverses ran rearward every fifteen feet to provide havens from flanking fire. Carefully sited artillery lunettes rendered the position impregnable. They had no stomach for testing them here on the North Anna. High, brush-covered bluffs crowned with Confederate artillery made the position unassailable. Union guns lined the northern bank. Grant pondered his options. The present situation was untenable. Lee had the advantage of interior lines and could shift troops at will to various parts of his wedge. Federal troops moving from one wing of the Union army to the other had to cross to the north side of the river, traverse three muddy miles past Ox Ford, and then cross the river again. Grant was not concerned that Lee would attack, since both Federal wings south of the river were well entrenched. The two armies reminded the 5th Corps aide Major Washington A. Roebling "very much of two schoolboys trying to stare each other out of countenance. Trying to push south made no sense, either, as doing so would only force the divided wings of the Union army farther apart. For all practical purposes, the campaign had reached deadlock. You are not currently authenticated. View freely available titles:

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Chapter 3 : To the North Anna River: Grant and Lee, May , by Gordon C. Rhea

Gordon C. Rhea is the author of The Battle of the Wilderness, May , ; The Battles for Spotsylvania Court House and the Road to Yellow Tavern, May , ; and To the North Anna River: Grant and Lee, May , , winner of the Fletcher Pratt Literary Award, among other books.

Anderson , including the divisions of Maj. Field and George E. Pickett , and Brig. Second Corps , under Lt. Ewell , including the divisions of Maj. Early and Robert E. Jubal Early was temporary commander of the Third Corps until May 21; during this assignment, his Second Corps division was commanded by Maj. Gordon then was given command of two brigades that had earlier been in the division of Maj. Third Corps , under Lt. Hill , including the divisions of Maj. Henry Heth , John C. Breckinridge , and Cadmus M. Wilcox , and Brig. Hill returned from sick leave on May Cavalry Corps , without a commander following the mortal wounding of Maj. Stuart on May 11, including the divisions of Maj. Wade Hampton , Fitzhugh Lee , and W. Hampton became the commander of the Cavalry Corps on August 11, For the first time in the campaign, Lee received sizable reinforcements, including three of the four brigades in Maj. Benjamin Butler and two brigades 2, men of Maj. Grant knew that Lee could probably beat him in a straight race to the North Anna, so he devised a stratagem that might be a successful alternative. If he did, Grant would attack him with his three remaining corps; if he did not, Grant would have lost nothing and his advance element might reach the North Anna before Lee could. Torbert , who skirmished with their Confederate counterparts led by Brig. The Union cavalry, riding out ahead, encountered soldiers from Maj. After a brief skirmish, the Confederates withdrew across the Mattaponi River to the west of Milford Station, but the 11th Virginia Infantry did not receive the order and was forced to surrender. Rather than risk his corps in a fight in an isolated location, he decided to terminate his maneuver. He also notified Maj. Breckinridge , who had just defeated a small Union army in the Shenandoah Valley and was en route to join Lee, to stop at Hanover Junction and defend the North Anna River line until Lee could join him. Meanwhile, Grant started the rest of his corps on their marches. Lee failed to take the bait of the isolated II Corps and instead marched by the most direct route to the North Anna. Grant realized that Lee had beaten him to his objective and decided to give his exhausted men an easier day on the march, following Lee down the Telegraph Road for only a few miles before resting for the night. There were no significant fortifications to their front. Henagan had created a dirt redoubt , and there was a small party guarding the railroad bridge downstream, but all of the other river crossings were left undefended. Grant had been presented with a golden opportunity if he moved quickly enough to take advantage of it. The division of Maj. General Lee, observing at the Fox house, was nearly hit by a cannonball that lodged in a door frame. Egan and Pierce were supported by Col. Soldiers stabbed their bayonets into the earthworks and used them as makeshift ladders, allowing their comrades to climb up over their backs. They attempted to burn it behind them, but Union sharpshooters drove them off. Instead, they entrenched on the northern bank of the river. Hearing from a prisoner that Confederates were camped nearby at the Virginia Central Railroad, Warren arranged his men into battle lines: General Lee convinced his Third Corps commander, A. Wilcox , along with artillery commanded by Col. Lane and the South Carolinians of Brig. Brown, and the North Carolinians of Brig. Wainwright , which placed 12 guns on a ridge and subjected the Confederates to plunging fire. At the same time, the 83rd Pennsylvania led a portion of Brig. Seeing that reinforcements from the division of Maj. Henry Heth would not arrive in time, Wilcox ordered his men to withdraw. He had been outnumbered about 15, to 6, His division suffered casualties, including Col. Brown, who was captured; Union casualties were The next morning, Robert E. Wright arrived on the northern bank in support of Warren. Lee finally understood that a major battle was developing in this location and began to plan his defensive position. Instead, Lee and his chief engineer, Maj. Smith , devised a solution: On the western line of the V, reaching southwest to anchor on Little River, was the corps of A. Hill; on the east were Anderson and Ewell, extending through Hanover Junction and terminating behind a swamp. Breckinridge and Pickett were in reserve on the Virginia Central

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Railroad. By moving south of the river, Lee hoped that Grant would assume that he was retreating, leaving only a token force to prevent a crossing at Ox Ford. Lee hoped that if Grant pursued, the pointed wedge of the inverted V would split his army and that Lee could leave a force of about 7, on the western arm of the V to keep Warren and Wright pinned down, then launch an attack against Hancock on the eastern arm of the V, concentrating his force to achieve local superiority, about 36, Confederate to 20, Union. As Lee had achieved at Spotsylvania Court House and Meade at Gettysburg, interior lines could be used as a force multiplier; unlike the "Mule Shoe" at Spotsylvania, however, this position had the advantage of a strong anchor at the apex the bluffs above Ox Ford, dissuading any attack from that direction. Lee confided to a local physician, "If I can get one more pull at [Grant], I will defeat him. Sharpshooters dashing across to disperse a thin Confederate picket line. Downriver, the Confederates had burned the railway trestle, but soldiers from the 8th Ohio cut down a large tree and the men crossed on it single file. This was soon supplemented by a pontoon bridge and all of Maj. Seeing the ease of crossing the river, he assumed the Confederates were retreating. He wired to Washington: We are in pursuit. Crawford marched upriver to Quarles Mill and seized the ford there. Ledlie, who was known for excessive drinking of alcohol in the field. Intoxicated and ambitious, Ledlie decided to attack the Confederate position with his brigade alone. Encountering the Confederate earthworks manned by Brig. Ledlie sent an officer back to Crittenden to ask for three more regiments as reinforcements. The request surprised the division commander, who instructed the officer to tell Ledlie not to attack until the full division had crossed the river. When several Confederate artillery batteries on the earthworks were pointed out to Ledlie, he dismissed them and ordered a charge. His men stepped off as a rain began to fall, and in their rush toward the earthworks, the regiments became jumbled and confused. Weld of the 56th Massachusetts was wounded and Lt. Chandler of the 57th was mortally wounded. Despite his miserable performance, Ledlie received praise from his division commander that his brigade "behaved gallantly. After pushing aside Confederate skirmishers they ran into earthworks manned by the Alabama brigade of Brig. Law and the North Carolina brigade of Col. The fierce fighting was briefly interrupted by the thunderstorm as men on both sides paused with concern that their gunpowder would be ruined. As the rain diminished, Maj. Lee suddenly suffered a debilitating attack of diarrhea and was forced to remain in his tent, bedridden. Unfortunately, he had no suitable subordinate commander to take over during his illness. Hill, who had become sick with an unidentified illness at the Wilderness had returned to duty, but was still sick and had performed poorly the previous day near Jericho Mills. Ewell was exhausted from his ordeal at Spotsylvania. Stuart had been mortally wounded at Yellow Tavern. His strongest subordinate, Lt. James Longstreet, had been wounded in the Wilderness and his replacement, Maj. Anderson, was still inexperienced in corps-level command. Lee lamented in his tent, "We must strike them a blow" "we must never let them pass again" "we must strike them a blow. However, some have shed doubt on this interpretation. Venable, who gave a speech about it in Richmond in, which included the "we must strike them a blow" quotation. Grimsley notes that "no surviving contemporaneous correspondence alludes to such an operation, and the troop movements made on the night of May 23 and on May 24 were limited and defensive in nature. Our lines covered his front, with the six miles separating the two wings guarded by but a single division. To get from one wing to the other the river would have to be crossed twice.

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Contents Preface xi Abbreviations xvii I MAY 25, Lee Deadlocks Grant on the North Anna 1 II MAY Grant Shifts to the Pamunkey 27 III MAY 28 Sheridan and.

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Chapter 6 : - To the North Anna River: Grant and Lee, May , by Gordon C Rhea

With his third book, To the North Anna River, Gordon Rhea resumes his spectacular narrative of the initial campaign between Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee in the spring of May 13 to 25, a phase oddly ignored by historians, was critical in the clash between the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia.

Chapter 7 : To the North Anna River: Grant and Lee, May , Book Reviews

may 26, lee deadlocks grant on the north anna 5 in the Valley and below Richmond, altogether , Federals were to hold Lee's 66, Confederates in a massive three-jawed vice and crush them. 1.

Chapter 8 : www.nxgvision.com:Customer reviews: To the North Anna River: Grant and Lee, May ,

Gordon Rhea's gripping fourth volume on the spring campaign-which pitted Ulysses S. Grant against Robert E. Lee for the first time in the Civil War- vividly re-creates the battles and maneuvers from the stalemate on the North Anna River through the Cold Harbor offensive.

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To The North Anna River, Grant and Lee May , Published by www.nxgvision.com User, 17 years ago Gordon C. Rhea's account of the Civil War in Northern Virginia covering the period after the Wilderness Battle through the fighting south of the North Anna River in late May is well written.