

BRADLEY T. JOHNSON, BRIGADIER-GENERAL, C.S.A.

by

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CHAPTER I: Early Life and Background; Formation of the Maryland Line

Bradley T. Johnson, lawyer, statesman and soldier, was born September 29, 1829, in Frederick City, Md. He was the son of Charles Worthington Johnson and Eleanor Murdock Tyler. The Johnson family could lay claim to a distinguished line of Marylanders. The progenitor of this family was Thomas Johnson, a barrister from Yarmouth, England. In 1660, he and his wife sailed to America and settled on St. Leonard's Creek in Calvert County. Thomas Johnson and his wife had one son, Thomas Johnson, Jr., who married Dorcas Sedgewick, also of Calvert County. From this marriage came twelve children, one of whom was Baker Johnson, the grandfather of Bradley T. Johnson. Both Baker Johnson and his brother, Thomas Johnson, III, distinguished themselves in Maryland's colonial history. Thomas Johnson, III, became the first governor of Maryland. Baker Johnson, a lawyer, commanded the Maryland militia at Brandywine and Germantown.

On his mother's side, Bradley Johnson also had a notable lineage. Eleanor Murdock Tyler was the daughter of Dr. Matthew Brady Tyler of Frederick. His ancestor, Robert Tyler, emigrated from England in 1661 and established Brough Manor in Prince Georges County. Accompanying Robert Tyler was a brother John, who was the ancestor of President John Tyler. Robert Tyler's grandson, Robert Brady Tyler, was the father of the Dr. Matthew Brady Tyler.

Somewhere between 1829 and 1845, Bradley Johnson attended the Frederick Academy and the Rebakkah Academy in Ellicott City, Md. Not much is known about these adolescent years. He makes no mention

of any brothers or sisters in his application papers to the Maryland Historical Society in the section under family history. It may be assumed, therefore, that he was an only child. In 1849, Bradley Johnson graduated from Princeton University and received the mathematical oration from his class. He then studied law for two years at Harvard Law School. Upon returning to Frederick in 1851, he continued his law studies under William J. Ross at Dane Hall. He was admitted to the North Carolina Bar in that same year. On June 25, 1851, he married Jane Claudia Saunders, with whom he had been engaged for six years. She was seventeen, four years his junior. It was a union of two fine families. Jane Saunders was the daughter of R. H. Saunders of North Carolina. Her father had held the positions of attorney general, justice on the Supreme Court, speaker of the North Carolina House of Commons, and U. S. Minister to Spain in the 1845-1849 period. His father, Mathias Saunders, had been an officer in the Ninth Carolina Line during the Revolutionary War. Jane Saunders' mother, Anna Hays, was the daughter of William Johnson of Charleston, S. C., who had served as a justice (1802-1836) on the United States Supreme Court.

Throughout the war years, Jane Saunders Johnson was to display that quality of dedication to the Confederate cause that has so marked Southern women. Never failing her duty as a loyal wife and mother, she was to follow her husband through several of the initial battles of the war. The two were extremely devoted to each other. Bradley Johnson described his wife as "splendidly handsome, brilliant, and intellectual woman, with great artistic

talent, and a painter far beyond mediocre amateur ability."¹

The Johnsons settled in Frederick and had one child, a boy, Bradley Saunders Johnson. The precise date of his birth is unknown, but Bradley Johnson described him as being a "lad of five years" at the time of the 1862 Battle of Winchester. Later, in 1881, Bradley Saunders Johnson married Anne Key Rutherford. He practiced law with his father in Baltimore for several years in the 1880's, and then moved to Washington, D. C. The Johnson family was very close. Several quotes from Johnson allude to this fact:

In all this exciting time (1860-61) Mrs. Johnson was always with her husband, heart and soul and sustaining his every act with soul stirring sympathy and chivalric courage . . . When Beauregard moved to the Potomac and occupied the lines of Mason's and Munson's hills within the sight of the capitol at Washington, she and her escort, her little boy, were frequent visitors to the picket line and he attracted the attention and elicited the commendation of the commanding generals, Johnson and Beauregard for the gallant way in which he rode with his father in front of the Yankee picket line.²

The Johnson's house in Frederick was large and well furnished. However, the disrupting atmosphere of the war years necessitated Mrs. Johnson's departure, and the home was temporarily left in the hands of S. Teakle Willis, John Hanson Thomas and John C. Brune.

In 1851, Bradley Johnson entered politics and was elected state's attorney for Frederick County. In 1857, he was placed at the head of the ticket as the Democratic candidate for the Comptroller

¹Bradley T. Johnson, "A Memoir of Jane C. Johnson," Southern Historical Society Papers, XXIX, 33.

²Ibid., 34.

of the Treasury. Johnson asserted that he did this to "save the State from the Know-Nothing faction."³ He attributed his subsequent defeat to "the Plug Ugly and Blood Tub Clubs, and fraudulent votes, and stuffed ballot boxes of the City of Baltimore."⁴

In 1859, however, he was selected as chairman of the State Democratic Central Committee. A year later, his political successes increased when he was elected a delegate to the National Democratic convention which assembled first in Charleston and later in Baltimore. The conservative section in Baltimore supported the candidacy of John C. Breckinridge and withdrew from the convention. As a member of the Southern Democratic group backing Breckinridge, Johnson made clear that his political priorities lay with support of slavery and the state's rights philosophy. The Maryland legislature that convened in Frederick in the spring in 1861 likewise reflected the sympathies of its home town lawyer: "Maryland implores the President . . . to cease this unholy war, at least until Congress assembles; that Maryland desires and consents to the recognition of the independence of the Confederate States."⁵

Many Marylanders sympathized with the South; yet in the following November election for governor, Augustus W. Bradford, an unconditional Unionist, won. The outcome of this election destroyed all hopes of the States' Rights Party (of which Johnson

³Ibid., 35.

⁴Ibid., 40.

⁵James G. Randall and David Donald, The Civil War and Reconstruction, (Lexington, Mass., 1969), 232.

was a member) of taking Maryland into the Confederacy.⁶

In the meantime, since the presidential election of 1860, Johnson had been active in the organization of minutemen to resist possible invasion by Federal troops. Other types of "volunteer" companies had also been organized in the state. Johnson kept closely in touch with many of their leaders. The opportunity was not long in coming for these groups to defend their native state. On April 19, 1861, Abraham Lincoln, in the process of establishing a defense system for the city of Washington, ordered the 6th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment to proceed to the capitol via Baltimore. The passage of these troops incited native indignation, and the soldiers were consequently attacked by unarmed citizens. When the troops fired in retaliation upon the rioters, pandemonium erupted. A fervor of patriotism swept through the state as men of all political inclinations responded to the incident.

On the evening of April 19, and in reply to a previous offer of help from Bradley Johnson, Marshal Kane, commanding officer of the Baltimore police force, telegraphed Johnson: "Streets red with Maryland blood. Send expresses over the mountains of Maryland and Virginia for the riflemen to come without delay. Fresh hordes will be down on us tomorrow. We will fight them or whip them or die."⁷

⁶Ibid., 233.

⁷Bradley T. Johnson, "Maryland," in Confederate Military History, (Atlanta, 1899), II, 22. Hereafter cited as Johnson, CMH.

By 7 P. M., the Frederick company of seventy men were on a Baltimore and Ohio train to Baltimore. As the first group to reinforce the city, they marched to Monument Square and took a position. Two Baltimore County units soon joined them. These consisted of a troop of cavalymen under Capt. Charles Ridgely of Towson, and the Pikesville Forest Rangers under Capt. Wilson C. Nicholas.⁸ Mayor Brown of Baltimore captured the self-righteous spirit of the Marylanders with the statement: "Everywhere on the streets men and boys were wearing badges which displayed miniature Confederate flags, and were cheering the Southern cause . . ."⁹

Despite the disturbance, the Massachusetts troops continued to Washington and took quarters in the Capitol building. Mayor Brown then made a special trip to Washington to confer with Lincoln and Gen. Winfield Scott. He received assurances that no additional Union troops would march through Baltimore. The state offered no further resistance, and the election that autumn of Governor Bradford confirmed the political status of the Old Line State.

Johnson returned to Frederick, where he had been asked by the members of the States' Rights wing of the legislature to defend them against the hostility of the Union supporters of the town. On April 24, Governor Thomas Hicks had decided to change the meeting

⁸Harold R. Manakee, Maryland in the Civil War, (Baltimore, 1961), 39.

⁹Charles B. Clark, "The Attack on the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment", Maryland Historical Magazine, LV, 51.

of the legislature from Annapolis to Frederick. In the course of a month at Frederick, Johnson drilled his military company into shape. While the legislature was in session, James M. Mason, a commissioner from Virginia, arrived in Frederick. He approached the legislature with the prospect of raising Maryland troops to fight in the Confederate army. The legislature, while sympathetic to the Southern cause, disavowed any intention of secession from the Union. Yet Bradley Johnson was enthusiastic about the invitation.

In May, Johnson proceeded to Harper's Ferry and conferred with the then Confederate commander, Col. Thomas J. Jackson. This stern officer (soon to be nicknamed "Stonewall") gave his permission to Johnson to rendezvous and supply his company at Point of Rocks, the most available point for that section of Maryland.¹⁰ On May 8, Johnson proceeded with his troops to Point of Rocks. There he reported to Capt. Turner Ashby, commanding Jackson's cavalry. Other Maryland companies soon joined Johnson. These included contingents from Baltimore under Capt. Price, C. C. Edelin, and James N. Herbert, plus Capt. Wilson C. Nicholas's Baltimore County company. On May 18, the eight companies organized themselves into a battalion of about 450 men. The unit commanders were: Company A: Bradley T. Johnson; Company B: C. C. Edelin; Company C: Capt. Price; Company D: James N. Herbert; Company E: Capt. McCoy;

¹⁰Bradley T. Johnson, "Memoir of the First Maryland Regiment", Southern Historical Society Papers, IX, 344-53. Hereafter cited as Johnson, "Memoir".

Company F: Capt. Holbrooke; Company G: Capt. Nicholas; and Company H: Capt. Weldmore.¹¹ Bradley T. Johnson assumed temporary command. The battalion then received orders from Jackson to proceed to Maryland Heights and support the 1st Kentucky Infantry Regiment, under Lt. Col. Duncan.

In the process of organization, some dispute arose as to the incorporation of the Maryland Battalion into the main Confederate army. Johnson insisted that the Maryland Battalion maintain its own identity within the army of the Confederate States and not fight as a subdivision of the army. The men agreed that they should be represented by their own arms and flag. In accordance with these wishes, appropriate applications were sent to President Jefferson Davis. The battalion requested that it be incorporated into the Confederate army as a separate unit with Bradley T. Johnson as lieutenant colonel and Charles S. Winder (formerly a captain of the 9th U. S. Infantry) as colonel.¹² The Maryland Battalion formed the nucleus of the famous "Maryland Line" that served the Confederacy so well.

Its members represented the feelings of thousands of Marylanders who sympathized with the Southern cause. By the end of the war, over 20,000 men from Maryland served in the Confederate armies. In his own words, Bradley T. Johnson described the feelings of those patriots who had cast their lot with the South:

¹¹Ibid., 348.

¹²Johnson, CMH, 28.

Many persons thought they had but one alternative with honor. This was, temporarily leaving home and friends to carry the flag of Maryland with the Southern army, and then rallying around it such Maryland men as could be collected together to form a body which should try to represent the ancestral honor of that "Old Line" which before them in another Revolution, had illustrated the fame of the State . . . The Maryland organization would be the sole remaining representative of the chivalry, the high toned honor, the freedom of the "Land of the Sanctuary" and friends and relations, and well-wishers at home would point to it with pride as their representative.¹³

Outside observers also commented on the events in May that led to the formation of the Maryland Line in the Confederate army. In the diary of Catherine Susannah Thomas Markell is the entry:

Mrs. Markell describes the gallantry of Colonel Bradley Johnson and his Maryland troops on the day they left to augment the ranks of the Confederate army. Although Mrs. Markell was involved in the affairs of both combatants, and remained remarkably free of bias, in her remarks, one gains the impression that a large number of influential citizens were ardently in support of the Confederacy.¹⁴

Another report, however, was less favorable. The Brengle Home Guards Record Book contained a newspaper clipping entitled, "Recruits for the Rebel Army". It stated in part:

Since our last issue, about 120 of the most wretched specimens of humanity passed through this city from Baltimore, en route for Virginia to join the rebel forces concentrating along the line of that State bordering on Maryland. They were from Baltimore, professed to be Union men, and said there was no danger of any resistance to Federal troops passing through Baltimore now. We were satisfied at first sight from the significant appearance of the cap and shirt that many of them wore,

¹³ Bradley T. Johnson, "Memoir," 340.

¹⁴ Virginia O. Bardsley (ed.), "Frederick Diary," Maryland Historical Magazine, LX, 133.

that they were secession volunteers . . . for the Southern army and we afterwards learned that one of the members told a gentleman here that they were to be furnished with arms in Frederick by Bradley T. Johnson, and then proceed to Virginia.¹⁵

Upon assembling at Point of Rocks, the Maryland Battalion discovered that it lacked sufficient supplies. The men had no arms, munitions, clothes, blankets, tents or cooking utensils. At this point, Mrs. Bradley T. Johnson offered to travel to her home state of North Carolina to procure the necessary provisions. As noted before, her father was a man of distinction and prominence within the state. Mrs. Johnson hoped that he would aid the aspiring Maryland unit. On May 24, 1861, Mrs. Johnson left the camp at Point of Rocks and, a few days later, arrived in Raleigh. With the help of her father, she applied to Governor Thomas H. Ellis and the Council of State for arms for her husband and his men.¹⁶ The Council readily complied. The Maryland Battalion was consequently supplied with 500 Mississippi rifles and 10,000 cartridges. On May 29, Mrs. Johnson left Raleigh and traveled to Petersburg, Va., where she received a large sum of money. Stopping at Richmond, she purchased a supply of camp kettles, hatchets, axes, tents and other supplies from Governor John Letcher.¹⁷ She later returned to Richmond and secured cloth for uniforms, shoes, blankets and underclothes. Bradley Johnson later praised her efforts by stating:

¹⁵Brengle Home Guard Record Book, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Md., 135.

¹⁶Johnson, CMH, 38.

¹⁷Ibid., 40.

Such an incident of courage, heroism, of devotion and of enthusiasm thrilled that army through every rank and fiber. Colonel Jackson, then in command at Harper's Ferry, afterwards the world famous "Stonewall", called on her, with his staff and thanked her . . . The officers of the battalion in meeting: Resolved--that the thanks of the Maryland Line be tendered to Mrs. Captain Bradley T. Johnson for her earnest, patriotic, and successful efforts in arming and equipping the Maryland Line . . .¹⁸

The efforts of his wife and of Johnson himself did not go unnoticed. On June 3, 1861, John W. Ellis of the Executive Department in Raleigh wrote the following letter to Jefferson Davis:

It is against my rule to make applications to you for office for others where merely personal considerations are involved. There is a case however, where the public interests are involved, and therefore I do not hesitate mentioning it to you. Bradley T. Johnson, late of Frederick, Maryland, now at Maryland Heights, has 500 men and he is worthy of commanding them. I have sent him 500 rifles and he will soon be in a condition for active service. I know Johnson to be true, brave, and capable. Few men would prove superior to him at the head of a regiment.¹⁹

Despite this commendation, Johnson did not receive a brigade command. The Fourth Brigade, formed by direction of Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, and including the Maryland Battalion, was placed under Col. Arnold Elzey. On July 21, 1861, command of the battalion went to Lt. Col. George H. Steuart. Johnston had picked Steuart because of his outstanding prior service as a cavalry officer.

¹⁸Ibid., 41.

¹⁹U. S. War Department (comp.), War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, (Washington, 1880-1901) Ser. I, Vol. LI, Pt. 2, p. 127. Hereafter cited as OR; unless otherwise stated, all references will be to Ser. I.

Bradley T. Johnson displayed no hard feelings toward this selection of command. He stated that Steuart's appointment was, "abundantly justified by the subsequent history of the regiment".²⁰

On June 17, 1861, Johnson received his commission as major; and the next month, on July 21, he attained the rank of lieutenant colonel. This rank he held until March of the following year, when he achieved the rank of colonel. Meanwhile, Capt. Johnson took command of Company A of the 1st Maryland Infantry. He and the young Maryland Battalion had shown their enthusiasm for the coming conflict. By the summer of 1861, they were ready to do battle.²¹

²⁰Johnson, "Memoir," 349.

²¹Randall and Donald, Civil War and Reconstruction, 196.

CHAPTER II: First Manassas to Maryland

In the summer of 1861, as part of the Confederacy's major army, the Maryland Line, supported the basic strategy of the Southern War Department. This basically, was to secure the frontier defense of the Virginia boundaries.¹ This defense soon received a severe challenge from a Union army under Gen. Irvin McDowell. In July, under pressure from Washington, McDowell made a forward movement into Virginia around the area of Bull Run in hopes of dislodging the position of Gen. P. G. T. Beauregard, who had established camp at Fairfax Court House. During the ensuing battle of First Manassas, Bradley Johnson and the Maryland Line participated in their first armed conflict. Under the leadership of Col. Arnold Elzey, the Maryland Line gave substantial support to the forces of Jackson and Johnson. The nine Maryland companies contributed to the Confederate victory by attacking persistently the right of McDowell's position at Manassas Gap. The attack became a rout when the Maryland soldiers pursued the Union Line over the Stone Bridge. The actions of the Maryland Line brought notes of congratulations from President Davis. Elzey was promoted to brigadier-general, Steuart to colonel, and Bradley Johnson to lieutenant colonel.²

Bradley Johnson and the Maryland Line passed the winter of 1861-1862 camped in Bull Run. The 10th and 13th Virginia, plus the 3rd Tennessee, also joined the Marylanders in the winter retreat.

¹Johnson, CMH, 54.

²Ibid., 56.

Activities in the East were quiet that winter as the battles of Fort Donelson and Shiloh in the West occupied the nation's attention. Military responsibilities at Bull Run at this time consisted mainly of three days' open duty in the fields and, later, the establishment of picket lines to deceive the enemy.

Johnson saw battle again when, early in March, 1862, four companies under his command were sent to relieve the picket line of the 13th Virginia. Upon arriving at the line, Johnson discovered that a squadron of Union cavalry was advancing upon one of his companies from Sangster's Cross roads.³ Johnson gathered together the remainder of his companies. After a brief skirmish, he was able to repel the main attack of the enemy and gain refuge in nearby timber. Johnson then burned a railroad bridge to prevent any encirclement by Union soldiers and returned to Union Mills Ford. He protected the ford until midnight, then turned over his position to Col. L. G. Nichols of the 8th Louisiana and returned to his regiment.

Although Johnson's men waged a stubborn defense against a surprise skirmish, he nevertheless felt that his companies had made an "ineffectual defense" against a cavalry charge.⁴ He listed thirteen men as being missing and four others as dead or seriously wounded.

The Confederate strategy in the Spring of 1862 was to prevent Union forces around Washington from joining Gen. George B. McClellan's

³O. R., LI, 60.

⁴Ibid., 60.

Federal campaign against the Richmond area. As part of this strategy, Gen. "Stonewall" Jackson's forces in the Shenandoah Valley were to pose continuous threats on Washington and thus attract Union forces to that area. Jackson needed more men for these "valley" operations around Harper's Ferry. General A. S. Ewell's division, of which Bradley T. Johnson and the Maryland Line were part, was ordered to report to Jackson early in May. Before this transfer, promotions occurred in the officer ranks of the Maryland Line. On March 28, Steuart attained the rank of brigadier general, Johnson became colonel, and Maj. Dorsey became lieutenant colonel.

By the middle of May, Ewell's forces had joined Jackson and were at the outskirts of Front Royal. On May 23, Jackson ordered Johnson to leave the main part of Ewell's division and attack the enemy at Front Royal. As it turned out, the enemy was the Federal 1st Maryland, commanded by Col. John R. Kenly. Captain William H. Murray describes what happened in one of the most unusual encounters of the war: "We had marched 25 miles when we came upon and took the enemy's picket. We had been skirmishing with three companies half an hour before we knew who they were. By chance, Gen. "S" who by the way behaved beautifully found out from a prisoner what regiment it was and called out at the pitch of his voice, 'My boys in the first Md. (Union)'. You never in your life heard such a fiendish yell of joy as was given when we received the order to charge."⁵

⁵Letters from Capt. William H. Murray, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Md. M. S. 1590.

Johnson describes it as a fight between the two first Maryland regiments that was ironical and amusing to the Virginia armies. He says, "It was amusing and even jovial for one side was glad to see somebody from home, and the other, that it had fallen into the hands of relatives and kindred, although technically they were enemies!!"⁶ Johnson and the Maryland Line defeated the Federal "Maryland" forces. It delayed Stonewall Jackson's movements however for several hours. The Union commander, Gen. N. P. Banks, was able to retire from Strasburg to Winchester.

The battle of Winchester was the next major contest for Bradley Johnson and the Maryland Line. Jackson and Ewell together formed a semi-circle around the town, with the Maryland Line on Ewell's left. The Marylanders under Johnson were responsible for protecting Jackson along the Valley Turnpike and maintaining close communication with him. In a dashing attack, the Maryland Line was able to penetrate and gain a foothold on Banks's center. In the meantime, under the concerted efforts of Jackson's army, the Union lines disintegrated. Johnson led his cavalry troops into Winchester and seized the loaded warehouses and magazines.⁷ After the battle, the Maryland Line marched to Martinsburg, where it seized more munitions abandoned by Banks. Johnson's troops rejoined the main army at Charlestown.

One of the most outstanding displays of military bravery

⁶Johnson, CMH, 69.

⁷Ibid., 75.

made by Bradley Johnson and the Maryland Line took place at the June 6 battle near Harrisonburg.⁸ There Johnson's men engaged the 1st Pennsylvania. This unit, known as the "Pennsylvania Bucktails," was led by Col. Thomas L. Kane. Johnson and the Maryland Line came upon the hottest part of the battle between the 58th Virginia, led momentarily by Gen. Turner Ashby, and the Bucktail regiment. Crossing a branch, a ravine and a fence, Johnson was able to break the main part of Kane's attack and to capture Kane himself.

His attack was made under heavy fire from the enemy. Johnson fought off three regiments and also managed to do battle against enemy artillery 800 yards away. Despite the firm stand taken, Confederate losses were substantial. Among the Confederate dead were Gen. Ashby and two Marylanders: Capt. M. S. Robertson and Lt. Nicholas Snowden. At the close of the battle, Gen. George H. Steuart was wounded severely in the shoulder. Of 150 men engaged from Johnson's command, 17 killed and 24 wounded.⁹

Besides the overall gallantry of his brigade, Johnson pointed out three instances of particular bravery. In a series of articles after the war, Johnson wrote in detail of the heroic death of Turner Ashby. He also pointed out the courage of two men who were wounded in the battery. He mentioned the "precision and gallantry with which Capt. John M. Brockenbrough served his guns".¹⁰ He also

⁸O. R., XII, 817.

⁹Ibid., 818.

¹⁰Ibid.

stated that Capt. Robertson, mentioned earlier, fell in a charge while shouting: "Go on my men, don't fall back for me!"¹¹

The action of the Maryland Line during the conflict around Harrisburg did not go unnoticed. On June 16, 1862, Gen. R. S. Ewell wrote that

In commemoration of their gallant conduct, I ordered one of the captured Bucktails to be appended as a trophy to their flag. The gallantry of the regiment on this occasion is worthy of acknowledgment from a higher source, more particularly as they avenged the death of the gallant Ashby, who fell at the same time.

Ewell added that two days later, the Maryland Line distinguished itself again.

On the 8th instant at Cross Keys, in a battle against Fremont's Union forces, they were opposed to three of the enemy's regiments in succession . . . Brigadier-General Trimble, 7th Brigade, had the brunt of the action and is entitled to most thanks . . . Colonel Bradley T. Johnson of the First Maryland was able to render highly valuable service.¹²

Throughout the Valley Campaign, Jackson had accomplished his purpose in preventing the reinforcement of McClellan's forces. In accordance with Confederate strategy, Lee and Jackson were now to unite in the defense of Richmond. Jackson proceeded to move his army to supplement the strength of Lee's position. Bradley Johnson and the Maryland Line were soon to participate in the series of minor battles with McClellan known as the battles of the "Seven Days". Earlier, the Maryland Line had been depleted

¹¹Ibid., 817.

¹²Ibid., 782.

through casualties and the expiration of military contracts. The time of two of its companies had already expired, and, on June 17, the term of a third company was due also to expire.¹³

Consequently, after Cross Keys and Port Republic, Jackson ordered the 1st Maryland to recruit at Staunton. The regiment was reinforced and joined Jackson in one of the first conflicts of the Seven Days. On June 26, 1862, upon reaching Beaver Dam Creek, Johnson received orders from Jackson to take two pieces of artillery which sat on a hill overlooking the creek.¹⁴ Johnson accomplished this task and also dispersed the Union troops in that vicinity. At daylight on the next day, June 27, the Maryland Line (along with the 13th Virginia and the 6th Louisiana) marched toward Gaines's Mill. There the battery was ordered into position, and Johnson remained with it until the evening. At 6 P. M. Jackson ordered the regiment into action.

It appeared that the main part of the Union strength was centered in several batteries near a certain McGee house.¹⁵ Upon orders from Gen. Charles S. Winder of the Stonewall Brigade, the Maryland Line along with the Stonewall Brigade and some Georgia regiments assaulted the batteries. The charge was courageously executed; but upon reaching the house, the Confederates discovered that the batteries were gone. Nevertheless, the Union forces

¹³Johnson, CMH, 78.

¹⁴O. R., II, 620. pt. 1.

¹⁵Johnson, CMH, 86.

retreated, and the Battle of Gaines's Mill was won.

The quality of Bradley Johnson's military leadership had been aptly displayed in this battle. Of the battle, he wrote:

I found to my horror regiment after regiment rushing back in utter disorder. The Fifth Alabama I tried in vain to rally with my sword and rifles of my men. The Twelfth Alabama reformed readily on my right and the North Carolina regiments of Colonel McRae's command, at my appeal, rallied strongly on my left. Thus reinforced, my men moved forward at a right shoulder shift taking the touch of elbows and dressing on the alignment with the precision of a parade.¹⁶

A contemporary account, written by Orderly Sgt. Robert Cushing of the 1st Maryland, also described the leadership of Bradley Johnson.

Shells flew thick and fast--got where the minie-balls occasionally would reach. Colonel Johnson got blood up, said, 'Men I have offered to lead forward the line that never yet broke--never can be broken. Forward, quick march, guide center!' The old regiment marched proudly forward. 'Halt, order arms!' and the lines were dressed, and guns ordered like on dress parade. Other regiments were brought forward, and formed on us at last. 'Forward march' and on the line of battle moved until with a yell we charged, and took the field sleeping on it. Our regiment has reason to be proud of its action and of its colonel.¹⁷

The next morning, the 1st Maryland received orders from Ewell to drive off McClellan's picket from the York River railroad station. Johnson remained there until June 30, when his men rejoined Ewell's division in pursuit of McClellan's main columns. The final conflict of the Seven Days campaign occurred at Malvern

¹⁶O. R., II, 621. pt. 1.

¹⁷Johnson, CMH, 87.

Hill. There, within a quarter of a mile of the Hill, Johnson's forces arrived and secured a position. They came under constant fire from McClellan's seventy guns on his right and his gun boats on his left.¹⁸ By orders from Jackson, the Maryland Line did not participate in the main center of the battle. However, under the initiative of Bradley Johnson and the approval of Gen. Winder, the regiment moved toward the firing and took possession of a wood near the Littleton house. From this point Johnson was able to survey the main aspects of the battlefield. The action of the Maryland Line during the battle of Malvern Hill proved to be limited. A squadron of cavalry was repelled near that position and an infantry regiment was similarly driven off. The service of Bradley Johnson and the Maryland Line did not go unnoticed. In his report of the battle, General Winder stated:

I cannot speak too highly of the officers and men of my Brigade, their coolness, bravery, and discretion entitle them to my warmest gratitude, as also those serving under me a portion of the time, especially that gallant soldier and gentleman, Colonel Bradley T. Johnson, with his small band of veterans ever ready to advance on the enemy and aid our cause.¹⁹

Throughout the Valley Campaign and the Seven Days battles, the men of the Maryland Line had proven their worth as soldiers. Bradley Johnson had demonstrated that as a commander he was both willing to take advantage of every possible military opportunity and able to inspire courage in his men.

¹⁸Ibid., 87.

¹⁹O. R., II, 570. pt. 1.

After the Seven Days campaign, the Marylanders went to Charlottesville to recruit more men and reorganize the command. They remained there until August 9, when Jackson engaged Union forces at Cedar Mountain. A week later, the 1st Maryland received distressing orders from the adjutant-general of the Confederate States of America: the troops were to disband as a unit.²⁰ No reason was given for this abrupt and unusual action.

On August 17, Johnson mustered the men out of the regiment with regret. The soldiers in turn presented their flag and bucktail to Mrs. Johnson. Jackson sent his sympathy to Bradley Johnson and, at the same time, recommended to the President of the Confederate States that Johnson receive the rank of brigadier general.²¹ Johnson declined to go to Richmond to pursue this appointment.

Jackson therefore assigned him to command Gen. J. R. Jones's Second Brigade in Jackson's division. (Jones had been wounded in battle before Richmond.) Although a new regiment was subsequently formed with James R. Herbert as lieutenant colonel and William W. Goldsborough as major, this unit lacked the Maryland flag and colors. It also lacked the unity and "esprit de corps" of the old 1st regiment.

From that time until November, 1863, Bradley Johnson remained apart from the Maryland troops. No doubt the disbandment

²⁰Johnson, CMH, 87.

²¹Ibid., 88.

of the 1st Regiment was an issue of great bitterness to him. The organization of a strong Maryland army to fight with honor in the Confederacy had met with resistance all along the way. It seemed that the outstanding service of the Maryland Line and its company commander would not receive just commendation for a long while. The breaking up of the 1st Maryland was a significant slight to the capabilities of Johnson and his men.

In the Battle of Second Manassas, which occurred two weeks after Cedar Mountain, Johnson faithfully commanded Jackson's Second brigade. The fighting was at times elementary and crude, despite the victory of the Confederate army. Johnson himself reported that

the men fought until their ammunition was exhausted and then threw stones. Lieutenant Randolph, of the battalion, killed one Yankee with a stone. I saw him after the fight with his skull fractured. Dr. Richard P. Johnson (Bradley Johnson's first cousin), on my personal staff, having no arms, was obliged to have recourse to this means of offense from the beginning.²²

As usual, Johnson fought gallantly and commanded his men superbly. Private John H. Worsham reported: "It was the unanimous sentiment of the Second Brigade that they were never as well handled as they were by Colonel Bradley T. Johnson, during this battle and the rest of the time he was with us."²³

²²John C. Stiles, "In the Year 1862," Confederate Veteran, XVII (1917), 415.

²³Douglas Southall Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943,) 139.

After Second Manassas, Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia crossed the Potomac and entered Maryland. It was Lee's hopes that the arrival of the Confederate army would encourage the people of Maryland to rise up against the Union. The Confederate army proceeded to Bradley Johnson's home town of Frederick. On September 18, 1862, Lee issued his "proclamation to the people of Maryland" but received no substantial response from an area that was heavy in Union sentiment.

Bradley Johnson, who was at that time provost marshal of the area, also issued an appeal. He stated that the Confederate government was willing to help the Maryland people overthrow "the heel of this terrible despotism." By this statement Johnson implied that Maryland had never been able to make any real choice as to her constitutional status at the outbreak of the war. Johnson offered the Marylanders an opportunity to work out their own freedom by joining the ranks of the Confederate army. By recalling the names of such bastions of defiant liberty as Fort McHenry, Fort Warren and Fort Lafayette, Johnson urged his fellow citizens to defend the honor they have so cherished in the past.²⁴

A few companies responded to the proclamations of Lee and Johnson but they did not organize into a specific Maryland command. Johnson, who then relinquished his temporary command to the recuperated Jones, was left without a company and thereafter rode with Jackson's staff. Consequently, no large Maryland fighting

²⁴Johnson, CMH, 91.

force ever materialized. Some recruits joined Jackson's army but, after the Battle of Antietam, eventually dispersed into various units.

The pursuing movement of McClellan's Federal army forced Lee to alter his plans for a Northern invasion. Faced by superior enemy numbers, Lee divided his army and sent Jackson's forces to seize and occupy Harper's Ferry. This Jackson accomplished. He also gave McClellan a false impression of a large Confederate army. When Jackson moved toward Harper's Ferry, Bradley Johnson went to Richmond as courier with important dispatches from Lee. Left without a command, his arrival in Richmond occasioned his appointment to the military court then being organized.²⁵

With his legal background, Johnson was a perfect choice for the position. By an act of October 9, 1862, Bradley Johnson received the rank of Colonel of Cavalry. He also received orders to report without delay to the commanding officer of the respective army corps to which he had been assigned. Johnson reported to Gen. Gustavus W. Smith's corps. In his court, Johnson's fellow colleagues were William B. Rodman of North Carolina, presiding judge, John M. Patton of Virginia, and W. P. Johnston of Georgia (who was judge-advocate). Johnson served in this legal capacity throughout the winter of 1862 and into the spring of the following year. Not until the Battle of Gettysburg in July, 1863, would he be able again to participate actively in military affairs.

²⁵Ibid., 178.

CHAPTER III: The Ride Around Baltimore

Bradley Johnson passed the winter of 1862-1863 serving on the military court in Richmond. Despite his competence in this line of work, Johnson longed to be active again in military affairs. When Lee began to advance his army northward in the spring of 1863, Johnson persuaded Secretary of War James A. Seddon to allow him to organize a new brigade. Consequently, the old brigade, "the Maryland Line," was reorganized with Col. Johnson in command. The new brigade consisted of battalions of infantry and cavalry of Maryland association within the Army of Northern Virginia. Johnson received orders to report with his troops to Maj. Gen. Isaac R. Trimble in the Army of Northern Virginia.¹

In mid-June, Johnson left Richmond to join Lee's army, which had moved into Pennsylvania. In the course of his two month's travel, Johnson, while passing through Martinsburg, Va., had the opportunity to capture the order book of Federal Gen. Robert H. Milroy. Johnson's report, in essence describing the contents of Milroy's book, is indicative of Johnson's attitude toward war atrocities. It is important to take note of his letter at this point, in view of his involvement in the infamous burning of Chambersburg a year later. The letter is as follows:

Sir, enclosed you will find Milroy's order book--my first capture. The last order is June 13, the day of Ewell's attack. In it you will find many matters of interest. Orders to burn property, kill citizens, etc.

¹Johnson, CMH, 114.

It may be useful as future authority, or excuse for future acts . . . Captain McNeill, guerilla, passed down the valley road with 740 head of sheep, 160 head of cattle, and 40 horses from Pennsylvania. 'Private property is respected.' General Lee day before yesterday was north of Carlisle. The Yankees are scouting in Hagerstown and I shall have difficulty getting through.²

It is clear from this letter that Johnson abhorred any wanton acts of destruction. He certainly disapproved of any single order to burn property being used as a blanket cover for unwarranted vandalism. The guerilla, Captain McNeill, referred to in the latter part of the letter was a partisan ranger for the Confederacy. In a sarcastic tone, Johnson described the actions of McNeill: "Private property is respected."

This entire letter is an early insight into the character of the man who would later defend his actions in the burning of Chambersburg. Whether, by 1864, Johnson's views changed after a year's participation in hard battle is a fact that can be disputed. Nevertheless, in 1863, he had a distinct antagonism towards this type of civilian warfare.

On July 2, when Johnson arrived in Pennsylvania, the Confederate army was in the heat of battle of Gettysburg. Johnson reported first to Trimble and then to Gen. Richard S. Ewell. The expediency of the Gettysburg battle dismissed any immediate plans for a Maryland regiment, and Johnson received the command of Ewell's old unit, the Second Brigade. Johnson did not take actual command of this brigade

²O. R., LI, Pt.2, p. 731.

until July 4; therefore, he had no major role in the actions at Gettysburg.

Johnson did lead his brigade in the general retreat which took a route via Fairfield and Waynesborough.³ On July 7, Johnson's men established camp on the Williamsport Road near Hagerstown. Three days later, with a threat made by Union cavalry, Johnson's troops built field works for battle.⁴ For the next two days the Confederate troops were able to check the attacks of the enemy. On July 13, the men successfully crossed the Potomac at Williamsport.

Johnson's brigade proceeded to Martinsburg, where it set up camp. On July 17, the brigade received orders to destroy the Martinsburg railroad, which was successfully done. Union cavalry, however, continued to plague the men. By July 19, enemy probes were within a mile of the town of Martinsburg. To remedy the annoying situation, Johnson advanced with a Virginia Unit and engaged in an all-day skirmish with the enemy.⁵ The Union cavalry consequently retreated to a position within a mile and a half outside Hedgesville. As usual, Johnson's men performed well. In the July 19 encounter, Johnson reported no losses, while the Federals retired with 6 killed and 1 wounded. Adding to the

³Ibid., XXVII, Pt. 2, p. 534.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

proficiency of Johnson's brigade was the fact that the size of the enemy's force was large. It consisted of six regiments of cavalry, two of mounted infantry and four pieces of artillery.⁶ It is a credit to Johnson's ability as a commander that, after almost six months of inactive service, he was able to lead his troops with confidence and mastery.

In November of 1863, Johnson was finally able to organize the nucleus of the Maryland Battalion, affectionately known as the "Maryland Line." Johnson received orders from General Lee to organize his army at Hanover Junction, a strategic railroad position where the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac crossed the Virginia Central. Here congregated the "First Maryland Battalion," consisting of the 2nd Infantry, the 1st Cavalry, and the Baltimore Light Artillery, commanded respectfully by Capt. J. Parran Crane, Lt. Col. Ridgely Brown and Capt. William H. Griffin."⁷

Throughout the winter of 1863-1864, the Maryland Battalion gathered reinforcements until its total number reached about 1,500 troops. The final field and staff officers were: Bradley T. Johnson, Colonel; George W. Booth, Captain and Assistant-Adjutant General; Wilson Carey Nicholas, Captain and Adjutant-Inspector-General; George H. Kyle, Major; Charles W. Harding, Major and Quartermaster; Richard P. Johnson, Surgeon and Medical Director; Thomas S. Latimer, Assistant Surgeon; Rev. Thomas Duncan, Chaplain;

⁶Ibid.

⁷Johnson, CMH, 115.

and Andrew C. Trippe, Lieutenant and ordnance officer.⁸ After two years, the dream of a permanent Maryland army, fighting for the cause of the Confederate States had come true. The placement of this new Maryland Line under the command of Col. Bradley T. Johnson was a personal tribute to Johnson himself. General Arnold Elzey had relinquished his command of the Maryland Line when, in 1862, he was terribly wounded in the battle of Gaines's Mill. Thereafter, he served in the Department of Richmond until the fall of 1864, when he joined Gen. John B. Hood as chief of artillery for the Army of Tennessee. In his evaluation of Johnson's appointment, Douglas Southall Freeman stated: "Now at last, he received the distinction he long previously had earned. From his vigorous record, there was every reason to believe he would prove an efficient officer."⁹

In the spring of 1864, Ulysses S. Grant received appointment as supreme commander of the Union armies. This development heralded the final grand strategy of the Union to defeat the Confederate forces. Under Grant's plan of strategy, Gen. Philip H. Sheridan was to devastate the Shenandoah Valley and Gen. William T. Sherman was to destroy Johnston's forces in Georgia, while Grant annihilated Lee's army in Virginia. With this strategy in mind, Union armies once again began a hard campaign to capture the city of Richmond and to isolate Lee's army from its main sources of supplies.

⁸Ibid., 116.

⁹Freeman, Lee's Lieutenant's, III, 548.

Around March 1, Johnson received information that one of these Union armies was making its way toward Hanover Junction. Before the Union army arrived, Johnson set out to intercept part of a cavalry regiment that was riding on the Trinity Church Road. At Yellow Tavern, Johnson was able to capture most of the members of the regiment and to obtain from them valuable information. He learned that the enemy, some 3,000 strong under Maj. Gen. Judson Kilpatrick, were on their way to seize Richmond. Colonel Ulric Dahlgren, with a smaller force of 500 men traveling on the river road, was to assist in the attack.¹⁰ Johnson decided to concentrate his limited forces against Kilpatrick. In a coordinating plan that involved Confederate Gen. Wade Hampton and Bradley Johnson, Kilpatrick's course ran aground. With the 1st and 2nd North Carolina Cavalry, Hampton attacked the main part of Kilpatrick's camp. The next day, Bradley Johnson and the Maryland Line attacked the rear guard. Johnson also destroyed the Union ferry boats on the Pamunkey River and thus completely severed any means of escape by the river. Kilpatrick, with his army in disarray, and his boats destroyed, was forced to take a position and fight at Old Church. In the ensuing battle, the Marylanders killed, wounded and captured over 100 Federals.¹¹ In the meantime, Dahlgren had lost all communication with Kilpatrick's main force. Unable to assist Kilpatrick in the battle, Dahlgren attempted to make his way back

¹⁰Johnson, CMH, 117.

¹¹Ibid., 118.

to Union lines, but was killed in King and Queen County. Kilpatrick's survivors on the other hand, were able to reach the railroad at Tunstall's Station, where they received an escort sent by Gen. B. F. Butler. Johnson's initiative and quick thinking had saved the city of Richmond from certain attack. General Hampton, in appreciation of Johnson's distinguished service, presented him a saber with a pattern possessed only by himself and President Jefferson Davis.¹² In his March 8, 1864 official report, Hampton stated:

I cannot close my report without expressing my appreciation of the conduct of Colonel Bradley T. Johnson and his gallant command. With a mere handful of men he met the enemy at Beaver Dam and he never lost sight of them until they had passed Tunstall's Station, hanging on their rear, striking them constantly and displaying throughout the very finest qualities of a soldier. He is eminently fitted for the cavalry service, and I trust it will not be deemed an interference on my part to urge as emphatically as I can his promotion.¹³

After the encounter with Kilpatrick, Johnson organized the Maryland Line even more efficiently. On March 23, 1864, the Confederate War Department established two camps in Virginia to train Maryland volunteers. "Camp Maryland," under the command of Gen. Elzey was at the city of Staunton. "Camp Howard," commanded by Bradley T. Johnson was located in the old retreat near Hanover Junction. The War Department also permitted Maryland men serving in other Confederate companies to

¹²Ibid., 119.

¹³O. R., XXXIII, 201.

transfer to the Maryland units.¹⁴ The Maryland Line was finally able to recruit and train new volunteers to supplement its ranks.

In May of that year, Bradley Johnson placed Col. Ridgely Brown in charge of the Maryland Line while he went on a scouting mission down the Peninsula. During his absence, Brown located a Federal movement under Major-General Philip Sheridan. Sheridan's army had progressed to a position near Beaver Dam Station and, by May 9, was in the process of destroying the Virginia Central Railroad. With only ninety men, Brown attacked Sheridan's skirmishes; but because of the overwhelming odds, he was forced to retreat. However, Brown was able to prevent Sheridan's army from advancing farther.

This important maneuver enabled Gen. J. E. B. Stuart to transfer his cavalry to Yellow Tavern and place himself between Sheridan and Richmond. On May 10, Bradley Johnson returned to Hanover Junction and reported that Sheridan's force, 3,000 strong, was at Negro Foot in the western part of Hanover County.¹⁵ In reply to this information, Stuart on May 11 engaged Sheridan at Ashland and drove them back without appreciable loss. Sheridan's column was only momentarily checked. It continued its march toward Richmond the following day. That evening, Bradley Johnson reported that Stuart had fought the enemy at Sheppard's, on the Telegraph Road near Yellow Tavern.¹⁶ In this last encounter, Stuart fell

¹⁴Ibid., Ser. IV, Vol. III, 248.

¹⁵Ibid., Ser. I, Pt. 2, 914.

¹⁶Ibid., 923.

wounded. His command retired to Woolrick's Shop on the Chickahominy. Sheridan's army then continued to force its way down the Peninsula, while Grant and Lee fought bloody battles in the Wilderness near the Rapidan River.

By the end of May, Lee's army had fallen back to the North Anna River while Grant simultaneously crossed the Pamunkey at Dabney's Ferry.¹⁷ Meanwhile, on May 21, Johnson received orders to report temporarily to Maj. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee. It was to him that he consequently reported Grant's movements across the Pamunkey River. Fitzhugh Lee directed that Johnson go to the assistance of Colonel Lawrence S. Baker, who was in the process of driving off Union soldiers who had crossed the river. On May 27, in the fight known as Pollard's Farm, Johnson attempted to attack the Union party in the rear. Baker was to hold the Federal line while Johnson maneuvered on a side road to the right. Unfortunately, the plan misfired. The Maryland and North Carolina were forced into a costly retreat. Seventy of 250 Confederates were reported either killed or missing in action.¹⁸

Johnson's horse was killed under him and his saber was shot from his side. According to Johnson, some of the finest men from the Maryland Line lost their lives that day. One of them was Alexander Young, son of a former Comptroller of the Treasury under James Buchanan's administration. The loss of Maryland's elite did not end at the battle of Pollard's Farm. A few days later in June,

¹⁷Johnson, CMH, 120.

¹⁸Ibid., 121.

a Federal cavalry force drove the Maryland Line out of Hanover Court House and back to the Virginia Central Railroad, north of Ashland. In this hard-fought battle, which raged from hilltop to hilltop, Col. Ridgely Brown lost his life. Bradley Johnson reported that "Ridgely Brown was shot through the middle of the forehead and died without speaking a word. He was the bravest, the purest, the gentlest man from Maryland who died for liberty in that four years war."¹⁹

On June 12, in a battle at Trevilian's, the Maryland Line made up for the disappointing losses at Pollard's Farm and Hanover Court House. Maryland cavalry, along with other Confederate units, clashed with 13,000 Federals under Sheridan.²⁰ In the midst of the battle, the Maryland Line repelled a charge made by Gen. George A. Custer and ended up by dividing Custer's forces. By the end of the conflict, the Marylanders could lay claim to have captured over 100 enemy troops. Johnson's exploits, and those of his Maryland Line, again did not go unnoticed. On June 25, he received the commission of brigadier general and was appointed commander once more of the cavalry brigade formerly led by the late Gen. William E. Jones. To this command Johnson also added the 1st Maryland Cavalry and the Baltimore Light Artillery.

Throughout the preceding winter, Johnson had been working on a secret plan to kidnap President Abraham Lincoln. His idea was to organize a band of 200 select men and horses that would

¹⁹Ibid., 122.

²⁰Ibid., 123.

proceed by way of the Blue Ridge Mountains and slip into the Washington area. They would then proceed to the Soldiers Home, Lincoln's summer retreat, which was almost twenty miles outside of Washington. A small group of five men would seize Lincoln and take him to Virginia. The rest of Johnson's force would escape through western Maryland and cross the border at either Shepherdstown or Williamsport.²¹

As Johnson's forces would be operating in the same vicinity as those of Gen. Jubal A. Early's, Johnson decided to consult Early on his plans. Early had received orders from Robert E. Lee to expel the Union Gen. David Hunter's forces from Lynchburg. Having driven Hunter along the Kanawha River toward West Virginia, Early also conceived the idea of invading Washington.²² Hence, Early proposed that he and Johnson join forces and together make the northern invasion. The plan to kidnap Lincoln was dismissed in lieu of this new operation. The main objective of the invasion was expanded to include two other missions: the release of the Confederate prisoners at Point Lookout, and the possible capture of the city of Washington.

Early directed Johnson to move his force to Staunton and to watch Federal movements in the Shenandoah Valley until he arrived. Near the end of June, Early joined Johnson and they began the movement northward from Staunton to Winchester.²³

²¹Ibid., 124.

²²Donald, Civil War, 436.

²³Bradley T. Johnson, "My Ride Around Baltimore in 1864," Southern Historical Society Papers, XXX, 215. Hereafter cited as Johnson, "Baltimore".

On arriving at the latter place, Early divided his forces and sent Johnson to cut the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad at Kearneysville. From there Johnson proceeded to unite with John McCausland's cavalry and John C. Breckinridge's corps at Martinsburg. Before reaching Martinsburg, however, Johnson encountered at Leetown a heavy force of Union Infantry under Gen. Mulligan. After several hours of hard fighting, Mulligan withdrew and Johnson pushed on toward Shepherdstown.

By July 5, Johnson's brigade had crossed the Potomac and was bivouacked near Boonsboro. Johnson left a large force of infantry in the rear at Maryland Heights, assuming that Early's advancing infantry would offer them protection. From Boonsboro, Johnson traveled down the National Road, and passed through Middletown on his way to Frederick. By July 7, Johnson was in front of Frederick. At this point he wished to capture the entire city, thinking it a reasonable task owing to his intimate knowledge of the area. Johnson also counted on taking around 1,000 prisoners and numerous supplies. General Robert Ransom, commanding Early's cavalry, opposed the plan. He thought that "General Johnson was too enthusiastic and sanguine to get home, and that he would be cut to pieces."²⁴

Johnson therefore received orders to withdraw from the area around Frederick and to establish headquarters at Hagan's Tavern on Hagan's Mountain. The next day, July 8, Johnson and his forces lay in a drizzling rain on top of the mountain. That night Johnson

²⁴Johnson, GMH, 125.

received orders to report to Early who had, by that time, arrived just south of Middletown. Upon meeting with Early, Johnson learned that while Early was engaged in battle below Frederick, Johnson was to ride around Baltimore. On this mission, Johnson was to cut the railroads and telegraphs north of the city, thereby severing communication between Washington and Baltimore. After this, Johnson was to strike Point Lookout, a Federal prison in southern Maryland, on July 12, and to release all Confederate prisoners of war. Johnson would be responsible for taking the 12,000 prisoners and marching them to Washington, where he would reunite with the forces of Early. It was hoped that the prisoners thus armed and equipped would aid Early's northern campaign.²⁵

This mission, earlier formulated by Gen. Lee, proved impossible for man and horse. It presented the problem of having to travel over 300 miles in the short span of four days. This did not allow time for eating or sleeping, much less the work involved in destroying bridges and telegraph offices. Yet Johnson, soldier that he was, consented to the scheme without complaint.

Therefore, on the morning of July 9, 1864, Johnson began his historic "Ride Around Baltimore". Simultaneously on that same day, Early met the Union forces of Gen. Lew Wallace in the battle of Monocacy. Johnson's only commitment in this engagement was to protect Early's left flank. Johnson accomplished this task and then continued his raid. Wallace's Union forces were hastily organized and suffered a defeat at the hands of Early. Wallace did gain

²⁵Johnson, "Baltimore," 216.

valuable time so that Federal reinforcements could hasten to the defense of Washington. This killed any hoped of a Confederate seizure of the Capital.²⁶

In the meantime, after leaving Early at Monocacy, Johnson passed through the cities of New Windsor, Liberty and Westminster. Early in the morning July 10, he reached Reisterstown. While in New Windsor, an incident occurred that was a prelude to other events during the ride and also to the burning of Chambersburg in July. Historian Richard L. Duncan states:

Johnson's move northward caused great consternation in that area. At New Windsor, every store was closed, and barred, while the streets became deserted. On Johnson's arrival, shopkeepers were forced to open their stores and to sell boots, shoes and clothing to the Confederates. Before leaving, a railroad bridge and a warehouse were set on fire, but with the approach of the Union forces, the southerners quickly moved on, and the fires were extinguished. After occupying the town, a messenger from Johnson ordered Gilmer to demand 1,500 suits of clothing, boots and shoes as a ransom. But the mayor was unable to get the council together before Johnson's arrival, and Gilmer persuaded the General to forget the matter.²⁷

It appears that, by the summer of 1864, Bradley Johnson was beginning to change his opinions concerning interference in civilian affairs. No doubt the terrible lack of food and supplies in the Confederate army was driving honorable men like Bradley Johnson to extract such needs from places other than military arsenals. The Civil War was the first modern war in the sense that war did become a total enterprise. Union generals like Grant and

²⁶Donald, Civil War, 436.

²⁷Richard L. Duncan, "Maryland's Reaction to Early's Raid in 1864", Maryland Historical Magazine, LXIV, 264.

Sherman used this concept in a broad military strategy. To Bradley Johnson and other Confederates, however, intervention in civilian areas was more limited and more dependent on the situation, whether civilian or military. By 1864, to Johnson and others of his rank, war had ceased to be a mere chess game between armies. Honor would have to exist side by side with the expediencies of survival.

On Sunday, July 10, Bradley Johnson reached Cockeysville. There he burned several strategic bridges. He also sent Col. Harry Gilmor on an expedition to Gunpowder River to strike the railroad that joined with the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore line.²⁸ Gilmor executed this assignment on July 11, and also captured several northbound Baltimore trains. One of several persons bagged in this raid was the Union Gen. William B. Franklin.

After lunching at Cockeysville in the pastoral home of John Merryman, Johnson pushed into the Green Spring Valley of Baltimore County. While there, he ordered Lt. Blackstone of the Maryland Cavalry to burn the home of Governor Augustus Bradford. This was to be done in retaliation for the burning of the home of Virginia Governor John Letcher. Earlier in the spring, Gen. Hunter had destroyed Letcher's home at Lexington. Bradford at that time was in Baltimore City, but his family was at home. On the morning of July 11, soldiers arrived at the Bradford home and informed Mrs. Bradford of what was to take place. The family was allowed to save

²⁸Johnson, "Baltimore," 217.

a few personal belongings. The entire house was then set afire. Unfortunately, all the private papers of Bradford were destroyed, as well as his personal library. According to an account written in the American and Commercial Advertiser, the order to burn the house was carried out reluctantly:

Two or three of the gang said they executed the orders with great reluctance as they were acquainted with the Governor's son in the Rebel Army and did not like to injure his family's property, but the orders of their superiors had to be obeyed. All the jewelry and valuables that they could conveniently carry off were stolen by the gang . . .²⁹

Bradley Johnson considered this act an equitable method of retaliation. By the time he arrived at Chambersburg, Johnson would have to decide what limits he would establish in the destruction of personal property.

While Bradford's house was burning, Johnson spent the night at the "Caves," the home of John N. Carroll. Around midnight, scouts reported to Johnson that all the available transportation of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was concentrated at Locust Point. They also stated that the XIX Corps of Grant's army, under Gen. William H. Emory was in the stream at Locust Point preparing to advance to Washington.³⁰ Johnson at once relayed this information to Early and continued on to Owings Mills. There Johnson's soldiers enjoyed a brief respite from the hard marching by tasting the luxury of ice cream. Some of the mountaineers who had never tried this delicacy

²⁹American and Commercial Advertiser, June 14, 1861-1869. reel #6-263, July 12, 1864.

³⁰Johnson, "Baltimore," 220.

thought it was "beer"--but a little too cold, so they put it in their canteens to melt!³¹

While Johnson had been riding around Baltimore, Early, after the battle of Monocacy had marched upon Washington. The encounter with Wallace had delayed his forward movement. It was not until late in the afternoon of July 11 that Early arrived near the city. After appraising the situation, Early, saw that Washington was heavily fortified. A staunch Unionist, John W. Garrett, President of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, had displayed great energy in strengthening the works of the city. Any lingering doubts about the prospects of a successful attack were confirmed when Early learned of the advance of two Union corps detached from Grant's army. With his army depleted, and with the knowledge of a threatening countermove by Grant, Early decided to retreat. Washington was too well defended to risk engaging his forces in a situation that was highly tenuous.

Incognizant of these developments, Johnson continued his march at a rapid pace through Howard and Montgomery counties. From there he continued to Beltsville, where he repulsed a division of Federal cavalry on return from a recent raid in lower Virginia. By that time it was Tuesday, July 12, and Johnson was due to arrive at Point Lookout that night.³² Point Lookout lies in St. Mary's County, the southernmost area in the state. It was a physical impossibility to reach this region in the time appointed, but Johnson decided to make

³¹Ibid., 220.

³²Ibid., 222.

the most of what time remained. He set out for Upper Marlboro, but a courier from Early intercepted him en route. Early sent orders for Johnson to abandon the enterprise and to report to him in Silver Spring. Johnson turned his column and proceeded to the Silver Spring area via the Washington road. As Johnson's units moved through the area, they burned the home of U. S. Postmaster General Montgomery Blair.³³ Despite this act of destruction, Johnson did have enough consideration to safeguard the property of the Agricultural College on the Washington road. Dr. Johns, a professor from the college soon arrived at Johnson's headquarters. Johns had earlier received word that Johnson wished to find a way for his army to pass through the college area. He pointed out a road that would ensure minimal property damage to the campus grounds.³⁴ Johnson's interest in this matter again points to his humanitarian inclinations, despite the previous acts of destruction.

After reporting to Early, Johnson received orders to protect the rear of the army with William Jackson's cavalry brigade. Together the Confederate forces began a retreat that commenced in Rockville and ended on July 14 in Poolesville. Johnson's long ride around Baltimore had, in the end, been a fruitless mission. Yet the sheer valor of the ride cannot be overlooked. Henry C. Mettam, one of Johnson's men, recalled that "This ride from July 9 to July 13, was probably the longest ride taken during the war. For 120 hours we

³³Duncan, "Maryland's Reaction to Early's Raid in 1864," 268.

³⁴O. R., XXXVII, Pt. 2, 307.

never dismounted except to unsaddle and feed once every 24 hours, and of course we ate what we could pick up on the roadside and slept in our saddles."³⁵

It was a mission that few generals would have attempted in so short a time, and one that required the very limits of human endurance. It is a credit to Johnson that he not only strove to meet the demands placed upon him, but also that he relinquished his own scheme of kidnaping Lincoln. No doubt Johnson must have felt extremely frustrated to have his original plan thwarted by Early. On top of that, Johnson must have felt doubly frustrated to have his mission to Point Lookout suspended after four days of hard riding around Baltimore. Throughout the entire time, however, Johnson displayed impeccable military qualities: devotion to duty, flexibility in strategy, physical perseverance and strict obedience to orders.

Despite the isolated incidences of property destruction, Johnson's activities in Early's 1864 raid were lessons in military conduct and discipline. It was, on the whole, the most outstanding point in Johnson's career as a soldier. The last year of the war would test his military abilities to the fullest.

³⁵Henry C. Mettam, "Civil War Memoirs, First Maryland Cavalry, C.S.A.," Maryland Historical Magazine, LVIII, 151.

CHAPTER IV: The Test of Endurance:
Chambersburg and Moorefield

By the end of July, Gens. Early and Bradley T. Johnson had crossed the Potomac River and reached the Valley of Virginia. The Confederate army journeyed to Winchester, and from there to Martinsburg.¹ After returning to the area, Early learned that Federal Gen. David Hunter had burned several private homes in the Valley, including the residences of Alexander R. Boteler, Andrew Hunter and Edmund Lee. In retaliation against this destruction, Early ordered a raid on Chambersburg, Pa. Early appointed two Cavalry brigades under Bradley T. Johnson and John McCausland to proceed to the town and to demand a large sum of Union currency as a ransom payment.²

On July 28, Bradley Johnson reported to McCausland, and upon his order, crossed the Potomac at daylight at McCoy's Ferry.³ From there the Confederate cavalry rode to Clear Spring, where they encountered a force of 400 Union troops. Major Harry Gilmor and the 1st Maryland Cavalry, along with the 2nd Battalion, were able to drive the enemy five miles toward Hagerstown. There the Confederate forces destroyed a trainload of supplies.⁴ From Hagerstown, Johnson and McCausland progressed to Mercersburg, Pa. On July 30, the

¹Mettam, "Civil War Memoirs," 159.

²Harold R. Manakee, Maryland in the Civil War, (Baltimore, 1961), 81.

³O. R., XXVII, 354.

⁴Manakee, Maryland in the Civil War, 81.

Confederate cavalry arrived in Chambersburg.

Upon reaching the outskirts of the town that night, Johnson and his brigade came under fire from a field piece in the town. Daylight disclosed, however, the weakness of the enemy position, and the Confederate brigades prepared to seize the town. A little after 5:30 a. m., the Southern force consisting of six companies of the Maryland Battalion and the Virginia cavalry, entered and took possession of the town. Several versions of what occurred thereafter have beclouded the true facts.

According to Johnson, McCausland immediately sought out the proper civil authorities to demand the ransom money. The ransom consisted of \$100,000 in gold and \$500,000 in greenbacks. In default of payment, McCausland possessed orders from Early to burn the town. The town authorities had fled, so McCausland ordered that a general town meeting be called.⁵ The townspeople were reluctant to come to any meeting, and declined to produce the money demanded of them. After a space of three hours had elapsed, McCausland ordered the court house be burned. Five minutes after that, the town was blazing from at least twenty different points.⁶

In a later report (August 10), Johnson described what happened next. He stated that while the town was in flames, a quartermaster and a field officer demanded ransom money from individuals in their homes. They threatened to set fire to the private dwellings unless the money was paid. Johnson estimated that these

⁵Johnson, CMH, 129.

⁶Ibid.

ransoms varied from \$150 to \$750, according to the size and value of the homes.⁷ He added that drunken soldiers throughout the day paraded through the streets in every possible disguise. These soldiers pillaged and plundered the wares of the town. Johnson himself expressed disgust and disgrace at these actions: "Thus the grand spectacle of a national retaliation was reduced to a miserable huckstering for greenbacks."⁸

It is clear that while Johnson acquiesced in the principle of retaliation, he did not approve of the methods employed in its modus operandi. The affair at Chambersburg proved to Johnson to be the extreme bete noire of wartime power. It showed to what lengths the involvement in civilian affairs could go to deteriorate the morals of an army.

Other accounts describe with more vehemence the action taken by Johnson and McCausland. The itinerary of the Department of the Susquehanna states that in contradiction to Johnson's report, the Confederates did not wait three hours but at 7:00 a. m. set fires in about fifty different places.⁹ It also reported that the residences of the commanding Union general fell victim to the flames, as well as that of the commissary of subsistence. On the whole, the Department of the Susquehanna estimated losses of \$1,500,000 in private-property damage.¹⁰

⁷O. R., XXVII, 354.

⁸ibid.

⁹O. R., XLII, 336.

¹⁰Ibid.

Two other reports were submitted by Union Generals. That of Maj. Gen. Darius N. Couch corresponded to the actions described in the itinerary. He stated that the Confederate forces, numbering around 2,600 men, formed a line of battle on the fair grounds overlooking Chambersburg. He asserted that after firing two or three shots, the Confederates entered the town at around 5:30 a. m. with about 500 mounted and dismounted men.¹¹ Couch affirmed that both McCausland and Johnson were present during these operations. Once the Confederates were in town, Couch reported that Maj. Gilmore (under command from Johnson) arrested some of the principle citizens, as the chief town burgess was absent. The citizens received notice that \$100,000 in gold, or \$500,000 in currency, were required to save the town. This statement differs from that of Johnson, who had reported earlier that both gold and greenbacks were demanded. The citizens told Gilmore that there was probably not even \$50,000 in currency at that time in the city.

At this point, questions may be raised as to the legitimacy of Early's demand. Early could have very easily made the amount of ransom so exorbitant that the citizens of Chambersburg would never be able to pay it. If this is true, then Early used the demand of a ransom payment as a deceptive cloak for his real desires to burn the town. Given the burnings of Confederate homes that occurred in Virginia, Early no doubt had in mind the eventual destruction of Chambersburg. Whether or not Johnson and McCausland were aware of

¹¹Ibid, 333.

this underlying motive is another issue in dispute. The rapidity with which the town was burned seems to indicate that this type of revenge, if not previously discussed, was at least present in the minds of the Confederate soldiers. Couch made an interesting statement that alluded to this fact. He claimed that a deserter from a Virginia regiment which rode with Johnson and McCausland crossed over to Union lines. There the deserter informed Couch that it was understood by Confederate troops from the moment Pennsylvania's soil was touched that all buildings were to be burned.¹²

The evidence also indicates that a small group in the cavalry brigades hoped to fulfill both objectives. Not only did these soldiers burn the city buildings, but they also demanded ransom payments from the citizens. Couch supported the above observations by stating that Gilmer's reply to the moneyless townspeople was: "The town must be burnt".¹³

Couch added that fires were kindled all over the town in about fifty different places. Some of the citizens were not aware of the proceedings until they saw smoke coming from their homes. Couch summed up his report by stating: "Some of the officers and men refused or were persuaded not to carry out their barbarous orders and assisted people in fleeing from the flames, but generally an inhuman and savage ferocity characterized their actions."¹⁴

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

It can be surmised that Johnson was not one of these dissenting soldiers. McCausland filed no report that Johnson ever rebelled against him, or at any time either before or after complained vehemently against the proceedings. Johnson, a year earlier in his ride around Baltimore, had taken part in similar residential burnings. As mentioned earlier, Johnson no doubt approved of burning as a justifiable method of revenge for the Union destruction of Confederate homes. Yet he disapproved of the way McCausland allowed the entire operation to get out of hand.

Another report by an eyewitness observer came from Sgt. Will S. Kochersperger, a Union cavalryman. Kochersperger claimed that he was present in Chambersburg both before and after the arrival of Confederate troops. He stated that the order for the ransom money was read to him by McCausland, rather than by Gilmer. After hearing the demand, Kochersperger received directions to get the municipal authorities together to act accordingly. Like Couch, Kochersperger asserted that the ransom could be paid in either gold or greenbacks. He also understood that, if the ransom was not paid, the town would be subject to wide-scale burnings. Kochersperger, unlike Couch, supported Johnson's report that the time allowed for this decision was around three hours.

Kochersperger also gave a favorable report on the actions of Johnson during this time. He stated that, after talking to one of the leading townspeople, he returned to the Confederate headquarters at the Franklin Hotel. Bradley T. Johnson was standing on the hotel porch with McCausland. Kochersperger reported that he

informed McCausland of the citizens' refusal to pay the ransom. Upon hearing this, Johnson appealed to his superior to relent or at least give the citizens more time. McCausland did not heed Johnson's advice and, at 9:00 a. m., ordered the town burned. Johnson must have made a second appeal, for Kochersperger reported that he overheard McCausland tell Johnson that Gen. William Averell was only four miles from town with a force of 2,000 Federal cavalry. McCausland continued to tell Johnson that he would burn the town and to leave the area by the same route in which they arrived. By this time, according to Kochersperger, two-thirds of the rebel forces were drunk; and in a matter of minutes, the entire town was on fire.¹⁵

A less accurate report was made on August 10, 1864, by the Frederick Examiner, a Union newspaper. Although three-fourths of the article consists of heated prose, it does support Bradley Johnson's contention that morals in the Confederate Cavalry brigades had reached an all-time low. "The rebel forces . . . under the immediate command of that uncivilized ruffian, McCausland, who, it is affirmed, was conveyed from the town in a beastly state of intoxication after the work of destruction was satisfactorily consummated . . ."¹⁶

The article gave the impression that a large percentage of the Confederate soldiers were also drunk. In keeping with other

¹⁵Ibid., 334.

¹⁶"The Burning of Chambersburg," The Frederick Examiner, Aug. 10, 1864.

criticisms leveled at this action, the Examiner branded the burning of Chambersburg as "a violation of the usages of civilized warfare".¹⁷ The tone of the article indicated that the Chambersburg incident was an outrageous affront to the sensitivities of Northern civilians.

Fortunately, Bradley T. Johnson escaped from the major blame thrown on this act of warfare. He was, though, a major participant in the Chambersburg affair and cannot avoid the scandal usually associated with it. It was an incident that would plague Johnson for the rest of his life.

On July 31, the forces of McCausland and Johnson abandoned a burning Chambersburg and headed toward Hancock. Again at Hancock, McCausland repeated the actions he had taken at Chambersburg. At 1:00 p. m. that day, McCausland demanded of the town authorities a ransom of \$30,000 and \$5,000 worth of cooked rations.¹⁸ It is clear at this point that McCausland was being ludicrous in his demands. Johnson asserted that the population of the town was 700 people without any substantial finances. In view of McCausland's mood, Johnson advised the citizens to collect as much money as possible, for fear of the consequences.

The tension of the situation dispersed upon the arrival of a Union army under the command of Brig. Gen. Benjamin F. Kelley. This force had been pursuing McCausland from Chambersburg and McConnelsburg, and it finally caught up with him at Hancock. McCausland must have been suffering from a case of pyromania; for

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸O. R., XXVII, 354.

in his report, dated July 31, 1864, Kelley asserted that McCausland intended to burn the city of Carlisle and also the Pennsylvania railroad.¹⁹ Kelley's presence forced McCausland to abandon his designs on Hancock. The Confederate troops moved on to Bevansville, where they unsaddled and fed. From there McCausland and Johnson traveled down the National Turnpike toward Cumberland.

On August 1, 1864 a fight ensued two miles east of Cumberland between the McCausland-Johnson forces and those of Kelley. At 3:30 p. m. the battle began and lasted off and on over four hours. Johnson felt that the Southern position in an unknown country necessitated a retreat. Upon his advice, the Confederate forces withdrew to a point on the Potomac near Old Town. The Confederates left 8 dead and 30 wounded in the hands of the Union Army, as well as two caissons, several carriages and a large quantity of ammunition.²⁰ The Union Army had only one man killed and one slightly wounded; in spite of the length of the engagement.

On Tuesday morning, August 2, Johnson and McCausland reached Old Town. Union forces under Col. Israel Stough occupied a point near the town between the Canal (Green Spring Run) and the Potomac. Johnson immediately assaulted the Union forces with the 27th Virginia Battalion, the 8th Virginia Cavalry and the 21st, 36th and 37th Maryland Battalions.²¹ The attack received support from two pieces

¹⁹O. R., XXXVII, Pt. 2, 533.

²⁰O. R., XLIII, Pt. 1, 86.

²¹O. R., XXXVII, Pt. 2, 355.

of artillery. As a result, Stough and his forces retreated across the Potomac and took a new position behind a railroad embankment. There Stough received good protection from a block house on his right, four iron-lined train cars, and a battery of three guns.²² This protection, however, was not used to its best advantage. After a severe fight, the engine attached to the rest of the cars became disabled when a shot pierced its boiler. Other artillery shots drove the rest of the Union men from the railroad embankment.

Johnson's men advanced upon the block house and demanded a surrender from Col. Stough. Under these circumstances, Stough's forces, the 153 Ohio (with 80 men and officers) conceded defeat.²³ In this battle, the Union army lost 2 killed, 3 wounded, and 10 reported missing. Johnson's casualties were heavier. The Confederates had 25 men killed and nearly 50 wounded in the encounter. It was a long battle, lasting almost six and a half hours.²⁴ Again Johnson had demonstrated his ability to do battle vigorously with the enemy.

The next day, Johnson's and McCausland's forces moved to Springfield, where they camped on the South Branch of the Potomac. For a day in Hampshire County, West Virginia, the men rested and relaxed. Relaxation, however, did not prevent them from burning the Wire Bridge at Springfield. The Confederates at this time hoped that they would be joined in a few days by the forces of Gen. Robert Ransom. Once reinforced, they intended first to retake the city of Cumberland and

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴O. R., XLIII, Pt. 1, 86.

then to destroy the railroad west of there.²⁵

These plans never materialized. At daylight on August 4, McCausland and Johnson moved to New Creek. On arriving there, Johnson received orders from McCausland to occupy a hill on the left, post artillery and open an enclosed work which was in the front of the army.²⁶ Upon surveillance of the hill, which contained several hundred Federals on its slopes, Johnson decided to relinquish the idea of attack. In his report, Johnson pointed out the lack of responsibility that McCausland exercised in this incident. Johnson claimed that McCausland ordered him to place artillery in a position that was utterly inaccessible. Moreover, the two Confederate guns contained only enough ammunition for eleven rounds. Furthermore, McCausland had ordered Johnson to take the position without himself reconnoitering it beforehand. Johnson reported that McCausland's information system was poor all the way around. The Union enemy turned out to be none other than Gen. Kelley with all the forces he had at Cumberland. The sporadic attacks attempted on the slopes consequently disintegrated with every rebuttal made by Kelley's forces. The decision finally was made to move on to Moorefield. Once again Johnson and McCausland left part of their dead and wounded in enemy lands. To Johnson, the operations at New Creek were part of a long series of grievances he would level in time against John McCausland.

In regard to the battle at New Creek, Gen. Kelley felt that

²⁵Ibid., XXXVII, Pt. 2, 578.

²⁶Ibid., XLIII, Pt. 1, 4.

his forces had definitely disrupted the Confederate plans. In his report (dated August 5, 1864), Kelley expressed the opinion that if the Confederates had not suffered a defeat they would have marched farther into West Virginia.²⁷ Kelley reported very little damage to the railroad west of New Creek, and very little east of Back Creek.

This was the second time in the space of a year that Johnson's accomplishments fell victim to the bungling military tactics of superior officers. In each case--with Early in Baltimore and with McCausland in Pennsylvania--Johnson consistently obeyed orders with precision and thoroughness. His individual maneuvers were a constant aid to the Confederate campaigns. It was the fate of this Maryland officer that his competence failed to offset the unfortunate incidents that attended his military career. The affair at Moorefield, which followed the battle of New Creek, was the epitome of this unfair evaluation of Johnson's ability.

On Friday, August 5, Johnson and McCausland established camp at Moorefield in Hardy County. On Sunday, August 7, at 2:00 a. m., Johnson received orders from McCausland to saddle up his troops and send a scout out on the Romney Road. McCausland had received a report stating that the Union general, William Averell, had passed through the town of Romney with three brigades of cavalry.²⁸ Therefore, Johnson sent the 1st and 2nd Maryland Cavalry, under the Col. Harry Gilmor, to reconnoiter along the Romney road. Johnson himself

²⁷Ibid., 702.

²⁸Ibid., 4.

sent to each regiment a courier transmitting McCausland's instructions. The orders were carried out by every officer. According to Johnson, "This was the first, last and only intimation I ever received from General McCausland of the proximity of the enemy and the only order I ever received from him on the subject."²⁹

Johnson stated that at no time did he ever suspect the possibility of an immediate attack. At daylight the next day, events occurred in rapid succession. Averell surprised Gilmor's picket on the Romney road and captured the reserve.³⁰ From there a squadron of Federal cavalry rode through the camps of the 1st and 2nd Maryland regiments. As the regiments were small, they dispersed easily under the Federal charge. At the same time, another Federal squadron attacked Johnson's main headquarters, which at that time was in the McNeill house. Johnson had just enough time to gallop to the 8th Virginia Cavalry and inform it of the attack. The 8th Virginia had no time for a counter-attack but was able to make an escape. Johnson hoped to get to the river with his remaining forces and there to find McCausland in battle readiness. Yet McCausland was not there. Johnson discovered that, during the entire time, McCausland had been asleep in Moorefield. McCausland was completely separated from his main camp by at least three miles. When McCausland finally reached his command, his command had disintegrated. As a result of his ineptitude, both he and Capt. Gibson fell wounded and into the hands

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Johnson, CMH, 130.

of the Federals. The two prisoners were left at Moorefield.³¹ Johnson and his remaining forces continued to evade the pursuing Federals and were able in time to reach the safety of the Shenandoah Valley. On the whole, Johnson noted that he lost six men in action, and another 300 were reported missing in action. It was Johnson's opinion that, had the circumstances been equitable, the Federal attack would never have succeeded.

In his official dispatch to Kelley, Gen. William W. Averell described in full the results of the battle. He stated that the Federals managed to capture four pieces of artillery, 420 Confederate prisoners, 400 horses, three battleflags and a quantity of small arms.³² He reported that Johnson fell into Federal hands with his colors, but later escaped, as did McCausland, who fled to the mountains. Averell's troops pursued Bradley Johnson toward Wardensville, Howard's Lick and for twenty-five miles up the South Branch. Averell concluded by stating that they finally gave up the chase owing to the growing burden of prisoners and captured property. The Federals reported only 7 killed and 21 wounded.³³

The disaster at Moorefield at first brought the wrath of the Confederate War Department upon the head of Bradley T. Johnson. Virginia sentiments were initially predisposed to hold the Marylander responsible for the actions. In a letter dated August 11, 1864, Robert E. Lee expressed his feelings on the matter to Jefferson Davis:

³¹O. R., XLIII, Pt. 1, 4.

³²Ibid., 734.

³³Ibid.

"General Early reports that General Bradley Johnson's brigade had been surprised in camp near Moorefield and routed, losing four guns. I have directed that if General Johnson is to blame, he must be relieved from command."³⁴

A similar letter also went the next day to Secretary of War James A. Seddon. To these charges, Johnson was justifiably outraged. He sought a court of inquiry, but Early ignored his demands.³⁵ The most Early could say about the events at Moorefield was: "This affair had a very damaging effect upon my cavalry for the rest of the campaign."³⁶

Early, like other high ranking Virginia officers, failed to perceive the depths of the problems in McCausland's command. Denied a court of inquiry, Bradley Johnson had no other recourse than to present a violent denunciation of McCausland's actions in Moorefield and in Chambersburg. In this report, Johnson described in detail the actions taken by both himself and McCausland in response to the threat of a Federal attack. Johnson charged that McCausland made no real effort to put his troops in position to repel the attack, and that "no fighting was done by him near the river".³⁷ In the remaining half of the report, Johnson allowed his disgust at the entire series of circumstances from Chambersburg to Moorefield to break loose.

Every crime in the catalogue of infamy has been committed I believe except murder and rape. Highway robbery

³⁴O. R., XLIII, Pt. 2, 1172.

³⁵Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, III, 573.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷O. R., XLIII, Pt. 1, 5.

of watches and pocket books was of ordinary occurrence . . . pillage and sack of private dwellings took place hourly . . . As the natural consequences, lawlessness in Pennsylvania and Maryland reproduced itself in Virginia and in Hardy County near Moorefield. I believe a higher tone of morals and discipline may be infused in any Confederate soldier which will restrain him from disgracing himself and his countrymen by such deeds. Had there been less plunder, there would have been more fighting at Moorefield on Sunday, August 7. I tried and was seconded by almost every officer of my command, but in vain, to preserve the discipline of this brigade, but it was impossible, not only the license afforded was too great but actual example gave them excuse and justification.³⁸

The events at Chambersburg and Moorefield were the nadir of Bradley Johnson's military career. It was a disturbing epitaph to the heroic accomplishments that had colored Johnson's ride around Baltimore. Involved was not only the disgrace of military defeat at Moorefield, but the entire sordid atmosphere that pervaded the spirits of Johnson's command. To a man of impeccable morals like Johnson, the burning of Chambersburg and other atrocities was a brutal awakening to the more seamy aspects of war. A more sensitive man may have, at that point, relinquished his command. Certainly Johnson, as a Marylander, owed nothing to the cause of the Confederacy. Yet and above all, Johnson was a man of principle. In accordance with his devotion to the Confederacy, and especially to his own Maryland brigade, Johnson continued his command. After the battle of Moorefield, his cavalry brigade returned to Early's main army. In August of that summer, Johnson and the Maryland Line prepared to aid Early in operations in the Shenandoah Valley.

³⁸Ibid.

CHAPTER V: The Valley Campaign With Early

After the disaster at Moorefield, Johnson's and McCausland's brigades assisted Early in his defense of the Shenandoah Valley. That August, Grant had sent Gen. Philip Sheridan to destroy Early's forces and to initiate a wide scale path of devastation in the Valley. Bushwackers and Confederate guerillas in the area had previously harassed Union forces through irregular robberies and murders.¹ These incidents, along with the overall Union war aim to destroy the Army of Northern Virginia, prompted Sheridan's appearance in the Shenandoah Valley. As part of the defense strategy against Sheridan, Johnson's brigade late that summer and fall participated in about fifteen engagements. These included the major battles of Winchester and Cedar Creek.

On August 7, Bradley Johnson and his remaining body of cavalry were in a position near Middletown, where the Confederate forces fought an intense skirmish against the Union forces of Gen. David Clendenin.² Johnson, employing around 1,000 men, was able to force Clendenin back on his flanks. Clendenin retreated to Frederick and then joined Col. Charles Gilpin on the Hagerstown pike. Around 4:00 that afternoon, the Union forces again engaged those of Johnson. This time the Union troops disabled one of Johnson's guns, and the Confederates withdrew to the cover of the mountain. The next day, August 8, Clendenin attempted to entice Johnson to come down from the

¹Donald, Civil War, 437.

²O. R., XXXVII, Pt. 2, 194.

mountain by feigning a retreat. This was not successful. The Union forces lost interest in the pursuit and began marching toward New Market.

After this encounter, Johnson and his cavalry moved along the Liberty Road with the intention of going to Baltimore. Before August 10, however, a Union force under Gen. Lew Wallace drove them back to a position near Cockeysville.³ Wallace's forces had established a defense system around Baltimore City, whose residents by this time were greatly alarmed by Johnson's actions. Seeing that an advance upon Baltimore would be hazardous, Johnson rejoined McCausland and William L. Jackson on the back road around Three Top Mountain. There, on August 13, the Confederate forces fortified their lines of defense.⁴

Four days later, the Confederates began following the Union advance down the lower Valley. Behind the trail of the Union army, the Confederates found the remains of burning barns and wheat fields. Sheridan was following Sherman in his method of civilian destruction. The Confederates pursued the Federals to Kernstown, where they drove in Union skirmishes and discovered that the main part of the enemy cavalry was posted on Bower's Hill.⁵ Johnson's cavalry, in cooperation with Jackson and McCausland, managed to drive the enemy from the hill.

Two days later, on August 19, the Confederates moved at an early hour to a point near Bunker Hill. In the meantime, Gen.

³Ibid., 198.

⁴O. R., XLIII, Pt. 1, 569.

⁵Ibid.

Lunsford Lomax and Johnson advanced to the area around Martinsburg and established a defense line along the Opequon Creek.⁶ On August 21, Johnson, Lomax and Jackson moved to Leetown and then toward Charles-town. There Johnson's forces, using artillery support, skirmished with the enemy and then camped about two and a half miles from the city. In the two days that they remained in that position, part of Johnson's cavalry came into conflict with a Union cavalry regiment. The one serious result was that Union soldiers were able to drive Johnson's men to a position on the other side of Kearneysville.⁷

The remainder of August was peaceful save for one incident. In the latter part of the month, Johnson's men participated in severe fighting near Kabletown with a large Federal force.⁸ Despite stiff resistance, Johnson and his men yielded to the strength of the enemy. Union forces soon turned the battle into a rout and proceeded up the Valley Pike, burning wagons as they went. This encounter did not discourage Johnson and his men from pursuing the Federals in two other conflicts before the battle of Winchester.

On September 4, Johnson engaged the enemy at Bunker Hill, ten miles east of Winchester.⁹ Six days later, at Darkesville, he again met Federal forces. In a fierce battle commencing at 8 a. m., the

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., XLIII, Pt. 1, 468.

⁸John Purifoy, "General Robert E. Lee, the Peerless Soldier." Confederate Veteran, (1926), 341.

⁹Ibid., (1912), 482.

Confederates forced Col. James M. Schoonmaker's units to retire.¹⁰

Until the battle of Winchester, Johnson and the rest of Early's command stationed themselves around the vicinity of the city. Other than participating in the battles mentioned, Johnson's regiments passed the time attempting to increase their supply of horses, cattle, medical stores and foodstuffs. Johnson was aided in these endeavors by "a brigade of wild southwestern Virginia horsemen as brave and as undisciplined as the Virginia Rangers."¹¹

Having increased the supplied of his army during this time, Johnson's main responsibility in September was to maintain his position. Meanwhile, Early had the major part of his army around Opequon Creek near Winchester. Johnson had bivouacked about three miles north of Winchester on the Valley Pike and had established picket posts from the Valley Pike to the Berryville Pike east of Winchester.¹² Johnson reported that at this time Sheridan lay eight to fifteen miles away with a force of 45,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry. Johnson stated that every morning a force of Yankee cavalry attacked his pickets. Johnson would then have to come to their aid and drive the enemy back.¹³

During this particular activity in the Valley, Johnson recalled, he ate the standard Confederate breakfast. It consisted of a couple of strips of bacon, a pot of rye coffee and sorghum syrup. A chip

¹⁰O. R., XLIII, Pt. 2, 66.

¹¹Johnson, "The Tarheels Thin Gray Line." Southern Historical Society Papers, XXVII, 170.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

served for a plate and a tin cup for a tea cup. Johnson admitted that after a week of this the diet "became monotonous."¹⁴

On September 19, Johnson and his forces took part in the battle of Winchester (or Opequon Creek). Johnson reported that at daybreak one of his cavalymen informed him that three divisions of the Union army were advancing with a heavy contingent of artillery. Supply trains, caissons and cavalry accompanied the infantry on the Berryville road. General Early at that time was in the vicinity of Stephenson's Depot. Johnston, Bradley Johnson and other scattered forces had been left alone to protect Winchester. Johnson's regiments immediately prepared for battle and proceeded to assist Johnston and his North Carolina units. Two miles away, the North Carolinians had met a Federal assault and were in the process of repelling the attack. Johnson arrived in time to save the efforts of the "Tarheels." Johnson's cavalry struck the Federal brigades and drove them back to their original infantry lines on the crest of a hill. The Federals then rallied and checked the Confederate advance. However, Johnson's endeavors were not in vain. His actions permitted the North Carolina cavalry to rejoin the infantry and to form lines at right angles to the pike west of Winchester.¹⁵

For the rest of the day, the Carolinians resisted the Federal attacks with courage and perseverance. In the meantime, Johnson's command received orders to advance to a position on Ramseur's left.

¹⁴Ibid., 171.

¹⁵Ibid., 173.

There they were to hold the ground around Red Bud Creek until the forces of Gordon and Robert Rodes arrived.¹⁶ Johnson remained there for the rest of the engagement. During the battle half of his cavalry dismounted and aided the infantry. On the whole, Johnson's regiments held their position until late in the evening. Upon receiving orders to retreat (Early feared a Federal encirclement), Johnson complied in good order. Johnson's and Jackson's brigades were the last ones to leave the field and covered the flank of the retreating army.¹⁷

The defeat at Winchester was a stunning setback for the Confederacy. In addition to 3,921 casualties inflicted in Early's army, the Federals captured five pieces of artillery, a number of caissons, and 4,000 small arms.¹⁸ In this battle, the Federals reported that Bradley Johnson and Gen. Fitzhugh Lee both received wounds. If a Federal bullet struck Johnson, it was not a serious infliction. Johnson made no mention of it in his history of the Maryland Line, nor did any of his early biographers remark on this incident. It is surprising that by the autumn of 1864 Johnson had emerged from all of his battles virtually unscathed. He was not the type of officer to retreat to the side lines and order his men to do the fighting for him. In every conflict, Johnson was an active participant with his men. His prowess, combined with a little luck, enabled this distinctive general to escape the fate of many who had fought with him.

By September 24, Early's depleted army had moved to a position

¹⁶Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, III, 578.

¹⁷O. R., XLIII, Pt. 1, 612.

¹⁸Ibid., Pt. 2, 118.

near Forest Hill, on the outskirts of Harrisonburg. There the Confederates clashed with Gen. William H. Powell's forces, which broke the Confederate line. Johnson's cavalry was one of the units driven in confusion beyond the city. Powell continued to push them to within four miles of Harrisonburg. The Union forces killed 18 Confederates, took 18 prisoners and confiscated 14 wagons and a large amount of ammunition.¹⁹

On October 6, Gen. Lunsford Lomax received information that Federals were shifting from their position around Harrisonburg. Early directed that Lomax send a portion of his command to follow the enemy movements through the Luray Valley. Lomax in turn ordered Imboden's brigade to give pursuit. Lomax took Jackson's and Johnson's brigades and, the next morning, moved to Keezletown. There Lomax learned that a small force of Federals were about two miles above Mount Jackson. This contingent, later reinforced, advanced steadily toward Lomax's left.²⁰

Meanwhile, Johnson's brigade had moved to Woodstock. When a Union force reached the open field near the town, it charged Johnson's brigade. Johnson was unable to counterattack, and the Federals soon drove the Confederates from their position. Lomax failed to stem the Union tide and decided to retreat to a more tenable position. By the end of the conflict, Lomax had lost four pieces of artillery and several horses. Lomax reported that the engagement at Mount Jackson

¹⁹Ibid., Pt. 1, 506.

²⁰Ibid., 612.

was lost not by the fault of any single officer or brigade. He stated that he possessed only 800 men and that the Federals struck him with a division in front and a brigade on his left. Lomax added:

The officers and men cannot be blamed for giving way when charged in such heavy force, having no arms to resist a charge mounted, not a sabre or pistol being in the command. The officers and men did all they could to save the artillery pieces after their horses gave out, unlimbering and firing until the enemy reached them.²¹

After the battles of Fisher's Hill, Forest Hill and Mount Jackson, the Federal forces practically controlled the lower part of the Shenandoah Valley. On October 19, the tenuous battle of Cedar Creek--which turned from a Federal rout to a Federal victory--put the seal of success on Sheridan's Valley campaign. After that, Sheridan continued to devastate the area. Beyond this type of activity, however, no major conflict occurred thereafter between Early and Sheridan.²² In the first part of December, Lomax rejoined Early seventeen miles above New Market. Johnson received command of Rodes's old division and led this unit until he left the area.

Johnson's activity during Early's campaign in the Valley was in keeping with his previous military records. Despite the overall Confederate losses in the area, Johnson's brigade performed as well as time and circumstances allowed.

One development, however, marred Johnson's assignment with Early. Reminiscent of a similar incident two years earlier in 1862, Early saw fit to abolish the "Maryland Line" and to reassign its soldiers

²¹Ibid.

²²Donald, Civil War, 437.

to other brigades. Warnings of what might happen occurred as early as September 14, when Gen. Samuel Cooper of the Department of Western Virginia rearranged units. In that alteration, Johnson received the 8th and 21st Virginia Cavalry Regiments and the 36th and 37th Virginia Cavalry Battalions.²³ On October 19, Early removed the Maryland Battalion from Johnson's command as well as the 37th Virginia. In their places he added the 22nd and 34th Virginia Cavalry Battalions. Early claimed that this shift in battalions strengthened his weakened forces. It is clear that no personal animosity between Early and Johnson was the cause of this redistribution. Confederate Secretary of War, James A. Seddon substantiated this conclusion:

The reduction of the cavalry commands and the events of the late campaign have probably rendered necessary some such reorganization as has been adopted, and I must presume that on a nearer view, the commanding general has acted judiciously in selecting this particular body of forces for distribution.²⁴

Later in February, 1865, Gen. Cooper reiterated to Gen. Robert E. Lee the military necessity of this action. He stated that the lack of discipline evidenced by the disaster at Moorefield necessitated this change in troops. Cooper also emphasized to Lee that this redistribution was in no way a reflection upon any single officer. It seems that even by February, 1865, Lee retained some doubts as to Johnson's military competence.

As usual, the realignment caused unhappiness and bitterness among the Marylanders. The esprit de corps that Johnson had developed

²³O. R., XLIII, Pt. 2, 870.

²⁴Ibid., 924.

to such a high degree among his men was shattered once more in the face of military expediency. News of this dissatisfaction was so great that it eventually reached the attention of President Jefferson Davis. In a letter of December 1, 1864, A. T. Caperton informed the President:

Great dissatisfaction exists upon the part of officers and men who belonged to the late brigade commanded by General Bradley T. Johnson. Its dismemberment under such circumstances will be interpreted by the country and army as a reflection upon the officers and men of the brigade and do them an injustice which they will not have it in their power to repair.²⁵

The disintegration of his "Maryland Line" was a great disappointment to Johnson. As a dedicated officer, he had trained his troops to fight in the Confederacy with a valor and honor that recalled the service rendered by their ancestors in the American Revolution. Johnson thus hoped that his battalion would perpetuate the reputation earned by Maryland as "the Old Line State." This the battalion was able to achieve throughout its duration in the Confederacy. This last realignment, however, was to herald the exit of Johnson as commander of the Maryland Line.

On November 28, Johnson received orders to leave his division and to report to General W. M. Gardner, commanding the prison post at Salisbury, North Carolina. There, on December 17, 1864, Johnson assumed command of the post.²⁶ The next six months at Salisbury would prove to be the saddest aspect of the war for Johnson and others who served there with him.

What remained of the Maryland Line attached itself to Davidson's brigade. Throughout the winter of 1864-1865, the Maryland Line

²⁵O. R., XLVI, Pt. 2, 1199.

²⁶O. R., Ser. II, Vol. VII, 1240.

served in Lomax's Cavalry division. As the fall heralded the end of Johnson's association with the Maryland Line, the spring also heralded the collapse of the Confederacy.

CHAPTER VI: The Salisbury Prison

In mid-December, 1864, Johnson reported to the post at Salisbury. The site of a large prison, Salisbury was also a major military depot for the Confederacy. It was an exchange point for supplies sent southward from Richmond and those sent northward before Sherman's advance. The town also contained several military hospitals, an ordnance plant, and a state district headquarters for the Commissary of Subsistence.¹ The Federal prison, the focal point of the town, had originally been a vacant cotton factory. By a deed signed in November, 1861, the old factory and adjacent buildings were turned over to the Confederate government. For the next four years, the cotton factory served as a prison for various types of criminals. Confederates under sentence of court martial, those arrested for disloyalty, deserters from the Federal army, and prisoners of war lived within its confines.²

Various sources indicate that prison conditions before Johnson's arrival were tolerable. Willard Glazier, a Federal prisoner who arrived late in February, 1864, testified that "for months, Salisbury was the most endurable prison I had seen; there were 600 inmates. They were exercised in the open air, comparatively well fed, and kindly treated."³

¹John G. Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina (Chapel Hill, 1963), 356.

²A. W. Mangum, History of the Salisbury N.C. Prison (Washington, D. C.: (Southern History Association Publications,) 1899), III, 307.

³Willard W. Glazier, The Capture, The Prison Pen, and the Escape (Hartford, 1868), 304.

A newspaper correspondent who later escaped wrote about the atmosphere of relaxation within the prison. The prisoners had the privilege of purchasing a variety of articles from outsiders. At one time the kitchen mess had as many as seventy-five dozen eggs on hand. The buildings afforded ample shelter, and an old well supplied fresh water.⁴

In October, 1864, nearly 5,000 prisoners were at Salisbury. Two months later, over 10,000 Union soldiers were crammed into a compound consisting of only six acres. What had previously been adequate lodging for the prisoners now appeared to be a miniature replica of the evils of Andersonville.⁵ In this type of environment, Johnson began his new duties. It was his fate that the post command should fall on his shoulders during the worst period of Salisbury's prison history. This was a new type of responsibility for a man who had been accustomed to performing in a purely military role. In view of the circumstances at Salisbury, Johnson performed his duties well. Yet the energy and passion that Johnson had demonstrated in earlier military roles never surfaced during his stay in Salisbury. Johnson at no time relinquished his responsibilities to his charges, yet his heart was not in this type of Confederate service.

The circumstances at Salisbury were complex and deplorable. No doubt the depressing conditions within the prison were enough to damper the enthusiasm of any commander. Heartrending accounts of prisoners of war and Confederate guards point to an atmosphere of

⁴Mangum, History of the Salisbury Prison, III, 314.

⁵William B. Hesseltine, Civil War Prisons: A Study in War Psychology (Columbus, O., 1930), 169.

despondency that enveloped the entire town. Junius H. Brown, a correspondent for the New York Tribune, wrote about the sleeping quarters at Salisbury. He stated that "A dirtier, smokier, drearier and more unwholesome place I had never seen than the room in which we were placed . . . Vermin swarmed everywhere, they tortured us while we tried to sleep on our coarse blankets, and kept us in torment when awake. No light of any kind was furnished us; and there we sat night after night in the thick darkness, inhaling the foul vapors and the acrid smoke longing for the morning."⁶

Albert D. Richardson, another Federal prisoner, described the sanitary conditions within the hospitals. He claimed that the medical authorities lacked brooms to keep the floors clean. They could not even obtain cold water to wash the hands and the faces of the sick and dying. The hospital lacked straw for bedding, and the patients were compelled to lie huddled on "the cold, naked, filthy floors without even that degree of warmth and cleanliness usually afforded to brutes."⁷

George W. Booth, a Confederate soldier in Johnson's command and a former member of the Maryland Line, stated that the prisoners' daily life on a whole consisted of a hand-to-mouth existence. Food and fuel were adequate. The men daily received wood in sufficient quantities for warmth and cooking uses. The prisoners regularly received one pound of good bread, one pint of soup and small issues

⁶Junius H. Browne, Four Years in Secessia (Chicago, 1865), 317.

⁷Albert A. Richardson, The Secret Service, The Field, The Dungeon, and the Escape (Hartford, 1865), 415.

of meat or sorghum syrup. Yet Booth stated that the clothing situation was deplorable. The Confederate government was unable to issue proper attire for the prisoners. Out of circumstances, the men wore the same clothes for six to nine months.⁸ Major Abner R. Small, a Union officer confined at Salisbury, summed up the hopelessness of the men that Johnson observed every day: "I saw men wander back and forth, their heads bowed, their eyes searching the ground for a stray bone or morsel of food dropped from some weaker hand. I saw men with clasped fingers and streaming eyes praying for their dear ones at home, into whose loving eyes they would never look again. I saw men in delirium beat themselves and curse God. And I saw shuddering as I looked, the dead cart on its morning rounds and in it, God's images tiered up like sticks of wood."⁹

Official military reports confirmed these personal descriptions. The atrocities and physical abuse of the men ranged from "mugging," or robberies between the prisoners, to actual violence and shooting on the part of the Confederate guards. The details of prison life at Salisbury are too lengthy to cite here, but portions of these accounts serve as the background against which Johnson maintained his responsibilities.

The conditions never reached the proportions of those at Andersonville, but they nevertheless drew concerned statements from state officials and the Confederate government. On February 1, 1865,

⁸O. R., Ser. II, VIII, 178.

⁹Abner Small, The Road to Richmond, (Berkeley, Calif., 1939), 167.

having heard of bad conditions inside the prison, Governor Zebulon Vance of North Carolina wrote Johnson a letter. Vance offered him any material supplies that would alleviate the scarcity of food and clothing. Johnson at that time was absent from the post because of the illness of his wife in Richmond. Captain George W. Booth, mentioned earlier, commanded the post in Johnson's absence and replied to Vance's letter.

Booth had previously received instructions from the Secretary of War to report on the prison's conditions. Booth made three separate inspections. He emphasized that circumstances at the prison were due to actions taken by the Confederate government before Johnson's arrival.

On February 11, Johnson returned to the post and replied to Governor Vance's letter. In this response, Johnson demonstrated his concern for the prisoners and his attempts to remedy the existing conditions. He stated that "no one can feel more acutely than I do the conditions of the prisoners of war here."¹⁰

Johnson also gave details of prison conditions that supplemented the report of the second inspection made by Booth. Johnson reported that Gen. John Winder had originally proposed removing the prisoners to a better place before Christmas. This idea the government later abandoned. To compound the problem, the government made no attempt to erect new buildings for the prisoners at Salisbury. As a result, Johnson reported, the men resorted to living in holes dug

¹⁰O. R., Ser. II, VIII, 178.

in the ground. In this letter, Johnson asked the governor to supply him with 200 tents to provide better shelter. While in Richmond, Johnson also reported to Vance, he had procured from the Federal government 3,500 blankets for the prisoners.

In assessing the limitations at Salisbury and of the Confederacy as a whole, Johnson concluded that true alleviation of the suffering could come only through prisoner exchange. The history of Johnson's duration at Salisbury is the story of his efforts to effect this type of military negotiation. Accordingly, Johnson stated to Vance that despite the new amount of supplies, nothing would really improve the deplorable conditions except prisoner exchange. Johnson had learned previously that Gen. U. S. Grant was willing to receive 3,000 Federal prisoners a week. Proposals for prisoner exchange had been set forth previously to the Union government. Grant's opposition to prisoner exchange, plus the refusal of the Confederacy to stop discrimination against colored prisoners, had previously halted all attempts at exchange. Finally, in January, 1865, Grant consented to a new round of exchanges.¹¹ Johnson told Vance that if the prisoners were not exchanged soon, Federal prisoners from other Southern states would be arriving in North Carolina. The additional men would swell the already overtaxed prisons and thus make the problem of supplies even more crucial. Johnson emphasized that the maintenance of Federal prisoners was a terrible burden on the resources of the Confederate government. Johnson also pointed out that Confederate prisoners

¹¹Donald and Randall, The Civil War, 336.

once exchanged could resupply the army and continue the war effort. To Johnson, the issue of prisoner exchange was the only alternative to remedying prison conditions and aiding the Confederacy's war machine. He concluded his letter to Vance by stating: "I press this upon you, for if these people are not turned over to their own authorities, they will be pressed back into North Carolina, which will have to subsist three armies; the Confederate, the Federal, and the neutral, more terrible than either."¹²

Accordingly, during February 18-20, Johnson received orders to transfer his prisoners to Wilmington, N. C., for exchange. All sick men and Federal civilians were to be sent to Richmond.¹³ At first, Federal authorities in Wilmington refused to exchange the prisoners. On February 23, however, Grant renewed his previous orders. After that date, all who were well enough were removed. The sick were carried on the trains and the hospitals were emptied of all who could travel. Johnson accompanied the prisoners as far as Greensboro. A great many of the 2,800 men who started the journey were unable to make it all the way. Besides the stragglers, 200 were left at Lexington and 500 were abandoned the next day on the road. Only 1,800 men actually completed the march to Greensboro.¹⁴ After their arrival, 500 men were imprisoned and later sent to Charlotte to escape to Stoneman's army.

¹²O. R., Ser. II, VIII, 212.

¹³Ibid., 269.

¹⁴Mangum, History of the Salisbury Prison, III, 334.

A few weeks later in March, Bradley T. Johnson learned that his command unit at Salisbury was in serious threat of attack. On March 30, intelligence sources reported that Gen. George Stoneman with a Federal force of 4,000 men was near Lenoir, N. C.¹⁵ Stoneman and his force were at the Salisbury city limits a few days later; and, on April 12, Stoneman attacked the town. Johnson, absent from Salisbury, had left the defense of the city in the hands of Brig. Gen. W. M. Gardner, who had only 800 men (mostly of Irish descent) to combat the invaders.¹⁶ Stoneman's army had no trouble in shattering this resistance. The Federal commander commenced firing on the west end of town early in the day and continued until the following morning. The small band of Confederates gradually retreated in the face of overwhelming artillery fire and troop numbers.¹⁷ After taking the town, Stoneman placed guards at various points in the city to prevent any unnecessary pillaging.

Earlier that month, Grant had received Gen. Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House, Va. Several days later on April 19, Bradley T. Johnson received a dispatch from Joseph E. Johnston. Johnson was to forward to Stoneman a letter from Federal Gen. William Sherman. Sherman had announced an armistice and was directing the consequent movements of Stoneman. Johnson then returned to Salisbury and delivered the communications to Stoneman. Johnson's operations in the Union held area from that time on were in keeping with Archer

¹⁵O. R., XXXV, Pt. 3, 718.

¹⁶Barrett, Civil War in North Carolina, 357.

¹⁷Christian Reid, "A Cavalier of the South," Confederate Veteran, XIII (1905), 503.

Anderson's request that he preserve the most perfect military order. Toward the end of April, Johnson began to tie up his military affairs in Salisbury. On April 30, he received a letter from Kinloch Falconer, an assistant adjutant-general in the Confederate Army of Tennessee. Falconer informed Johnson that a Federal officer from Greensboro would arrive the next day to carry out the terms of the military convention.¹⁸ Falconer also ordered Johnson to have the quarters and the muster rolls ready. Accordingly, on May 1, Bradley T. Johnson officially surrendered to Union Gen. John M. Schofield.¹⁹ The last phase of his military career had ended unceremoniously at Salisbury.

Johnson's overall role as commander of the Salisbury prison had been favorable. The archives at Raleigh and Richmond testify to the humanity and concern demonstrated by Johnson to his charges while at Salisbury.²⁰ Union Gen. John M. Schofield also substantiated this appraisal by observing: "General Johnson made every effort to ameliorate the condition of our prisoners, he did what he could do in the face of the authorities to whom he was responsible and acted in the most humane and kindly way."²¹

Reports of Federal prisoners, while vindictive toward Confederate

¹⁸O. R., XXXXVII, Pt. 3, 858.

¹⁹Bradley T. Johnson, Application Papers for Membership in the Maryland Historical Society, 1881, (Louis H. Dielman Biographical File, Library,) Baltimore, Md.

²⁰George W. Booth, "Biographical Sketch of Bradley T. Johnson," Confederate Military History (Atlanta, 1899), II, 181.

²¹O. R., Ser. II, VIII, 662.

guards, never accuse Johnson of any personal misconduct. The caliber of Johnson's ability was recognized by one of the Union prisoners when Johnson first arrived. "On Sunday December 18, we learned that Gen. Bradley T. Johnson of Maryland had arrived and on the following day would supersede Major Gee as Commandant of the prison. Johnson was a soldier who knows how business should be done, and would doubtless put a stop to this loose arrangement."²²

If any blame can be placed at all for the conditions that existed at Salisbury, it certainly did not lay with Johnson. The limitations of Confederate resources, and the unscrupulous actions of subordinate officers at the Salisbury prison, account for the harshness there. Booth's earlier reports found fault in three major areas: the administrative deficiencies of Major John Gee (the commander who preceded Johnson), the bad location and structure of the prison itself, and the failings of the quartermaster's department which was in charge of furnishing basic supplies to the prison. If Johnson's role at Salisbury appears limited, it is because he himself envisioned no other solution to these evils than that of prisoner exchange. The difficulties at Salisbury were insurmountable even to a commander of Johnson's imagination.

There exists a story about Johnson when he was at the Salisbury prison that points out the concern he felt toward the men. Apparently at some point when the prisoners were close to starvation, Johnson stopped a train bound for the Army of Northern Virginia.

²²Richardson, The Secret Service, 430.

Johnson removed provisions and distributed them to the Federal prisoners.²³ In addition, Johnson never ceased to ask that Federal prisoners be released on parole.

The humiliations at Chambersburg and Moorefield had not lessened Johnson's desire to uphold standards of decency that he wished to maintain in military and civilian sectors. Although his assignment to the Salisbury prison denied Johnson the chance to reap further military glory, it was nevertheless a fitting end to his participation in the Civil War drama. In the long run, Johnson had truly upheld the honor of the "Old Line State." What more dignity can a military officer achieve than coming to the aid of his enemy? In this respect, Johnson rose above the petty contentions of war and showed an unselfish devotion to the welfare of the common soldier.

²³Louis H. Dielman Biographical Catalogue, Library Maryland Historical Society, (Baltimore, Md.).

CHAPTER VII: Johnson's Political Philosophy

Bradley T. Johnson developed a highly legal argument for the validity of Southern secession. Being a lawyer, he tended to approve the Southern cause from this standpoint rather than from the traditional "defense of slavery" school. Coming from Frederick, Md., a Union town, these views contradicted the prevailing ones in that area. Although Frederick County did possess a slave population, this population did not compare in size or intensity with those in the more southern counties of Calvert, St. Mary's, Charles and Anne Arundel. From the beginning of the war, the city had Federal sympathies. It will be recalled that in 1861 Governor Hicks moved the state convention to Frederick to avoid the heated atmosphere around Annapolis.

Certainly Johnson did not live in a town that was either agricultural or extremely pro-Southern in its attitudes. In addition, the Johnson family did not own any slaves, and Johnson did not come from a long line of ancestors who were large tobacco planters. He grew up in a cosmopolitan atmosphere; his education and profession by no means molded him towards an acceptance of Southern culture. It would seem that, on the contrary, his years spent at Princeton and Harvard would have developed in him an attachment for the Northern life-style. However, Johnson became one of the most ardent defenders of the South. Even after the war he remained hostile to Northern ways of thinking and acting. No incident in his life marks this rejection of Northern social values. His reflections on the subject developed

from his understanding of constitutional law and the structure of a federal system.

Johnson's evaluation of the secession crisis sprang from his overall conception of the nature of the Federal system. He firmly believed in the Lockean theories of government. Like Locke, Johnson felt that all government rested on the consent of the governed. It was the right of the people to change or alter that government at any time. Johnson felt that ultimate authority lay with the State, the protector of individual groups, rather than with the central government.¹ The State at no time should abandon its final jurisdiction in this matter. The purpose in creating the federal government was not only to strengthen the bond of union between the several sovereign states, but to create a common denominator by which differences could be solved. Johnson used this argument to support his contention that the ultimate responsibility for resolving the current sectional differences lay with the respective people, not the government. The States, if need be, could resolve their differences by war.²

With this in mind, Johnson viewed secession not as a movement to defend the institution of slavery but as a movement to preserve the original powers enjoyed by the several states. To Johnson, the Union had infringed upon the basic rights of the Southern people. In accordance with Lockean theory, the South reserved the right to rebel against unlawful authority. He considered "unlawful authority" at that

¹Confederate Veteran, V (1897), 507.

²Bradley T. Johnson, Can States Be Compelled to Pay Their Debts? (Baltimore, 1886), 636.

time to be laws that the abolitionists and Northern capitalists wished to impose upon the South. Secession then was an inalienable right to return the processes of government into the hands of a particular political group.

Like many others of his generation, Johnson viewed Southern secession as a peaceful movement. The South did not want war, but only wished to co-exist separately with the Northern states. Johnson viewed the cause of the Civil War as a result of Northern aggression. The South's response was one of self-defense. "The cause of the Confederate States was the cause of civil liberty under constitutional forms on this continent. Those who supported it in arms acted up to the best lights they had, and maintained their faith and belief at the risk of life and fortune."³

Johnson could not see where secession was an aberration of civic duty. The movement was in accordance with the aims and aspirations of the spirit of 1776. "Like their Revolutionary forefathers, the South on withdrawing from the Union established a government based on the common American conceptions of liberty and equality."⁴

Rather than being a destructive action, secession to men of Johnson's thinking was a constructive act. The Confederate constitution reinvigorated the liberties of its Federal counterpart. It returned to the States the rights they had originally possessed in the founding of the country.

³Bradley T. Johnson, An Address Delivered Before the Society of the Army and Navy of the Confederate States in the State of Maryland. (Baltimore, 1886), 1.

⁴Bradley T. Johnson, "Why The Confederacy Had No Supreme Court," Southern Historical Society Papers, IV (1900), 81.

Although Johnson was not an agrarian, one of his heroes was Thomas Jefferson. To Johnson, the controversy that centered around the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions was similar to the 1861 conflict. Jefferson had put into writing the philosophy that Johnson wished to apply to the cause of the Confederacy. Jefferson had stated that, in the case of an infringement of states rights by a common agent (e.g., the federal government), each state must be the judge of the wrong done her, and of the mode and measure of redress.⁵ Johnson, like Jefferson, viewed this as the cornerstone of the democratic faith. The South all along had supported this concept of the democratic vista. It was the North, beginning with the demise of the old Jeffersonian Republican party, that had gone astray. Johnson viewed as destructors of the old regime such personages as John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, Millard Fillmore and John Marshall.⁶ These strong defenders of an all encompassing nationalism had questioned the independent sovereignty of the separate states.

To Johnson, Marylanders had always maintained the love of liberty and freedom of conscience. Johnson's book, The Foundation of Maryland, substantiates this analysis of the Maryland character. He stressed that from the very beginning Marylanders settled their colony with the objective of perpetuating the old English liberties. Maryland was to be the haven of all persecuted persons. There the foundations of the English birthright would grow and be available

⁵Ibid., 88.

⁶Ibid.

for all who came to her shores. This birthright included such privileges as freedom of person, security of property, liberty of conscience, the right of habeas corpus, trial by jury, self-taxation and local jurisdiction in all lawmaking procedures.⁷ The Calverts, Cecil, George, Leonard and Charles settled Maryland with these ideals as their guidelines. The privileges of the English birthright became part of the culture and legal code of the Maryland people.

Johnson asserted that of all these privileges, the conscience of man was the most important. It was this dedication to a freedom of choice in all affairs that both inspired the American Revolution and guided the actions of Marylanders in the Civil War. The frenzied response of Maryland's men to the marching of Northern troops through the streets of Baltimore was a defense of these liberties. Despite Maryland's unwillingness to leave the Union, its people asked that their political integrity be respected. What Marylanders desired was freedom of choice in their political status, not military submission enforced by Lincoln. This to Johnson was "love of country and of friends, regard for truth and justice, toleration of differences of opinion. For five generations this had been the directing influence of their lives."⁸

Hence, the Marylanders who went south to fight in the Confederacy were defending the liberties that had been the pillars of the Maryland political system. The theories by which Johnson justified

⁷ Bradley T. Johnson, The Foundation of Maryland, (Baltimore, 1883), 9.

⁸ Johnson, "Maryland," Confederate Military History, II (Atlanta, 1889), 9.

Southern secession were natural articles of faith to the Maryland people. The 20,000 Maryland men who went south to fight in the Confederacy were only defending the principles upon which their ancestors had founded their state. It never occurred to Johnson that in Frederick, a Union stronghold, he might face social ostracism and eviction. To him there was only one choice. His writings reflect the opinion that other Marylanders who joined the Confederacy also made a commitment which contradicted local feelings.

Johnson blamed the failure of his state to join the Confederacy on the conservatism of its leaders. He viewed Governor Hicks especially as a political opportunist. Johnson stated that Hicks saw more chance for political advance with Maryland as a Union state than as a Confederate one. "Governor Hicks was no fool. He was a shrewd, sharp, positive man . . . In the Southern Confederacy Maryland must, in his opinion, play a subordinate role, and he, himself, fall back into the political obscurity from which he had been recently raised."⁹

Johnson felt that had Hicks taken the initiative in the other direction, the Marylanders, "afire at the threat of invasion of Virginia," would have immediately joined the Confederacy.¹⁰ As it was, Hicks's political ambitions and the conservatism of the state's legislature kept Maryland within the Union.

To Johnson, a non-slaveowner, the issue of slavery was a moral weapon employed by the North to gain political power. Johnson referred to the North as a "free mobocracy" which envied the

⁹Ibid., 16.

¹⁰Ibid.

"slave democracy" of the South.¹¹ The North realized the political power that the South wielded and used all of its influence to destroy this institution. From this aspect, Johnson maintained that the South was not interested in economic gain but in civic rights to defend her parochial institutions. In accordance with his constitutional theory, he insisted that the South waged war to preserve its political integrity against the growing power of a northern bureaucracy. To Johnson, in short, the issue went far beyond the vestiges of economics or sociology. The South was involved in an acute power struggle that threatened the core of its political existence.

Johnson extended his argument even further. Like many historians who would come after him, he saw the underlying political differences of the Civil War as a conflict between two competitive societies. He felt that slavery was a red flag waved in front of two bulls. The real picadillo, or irritation, was the quest for money and power between two competing civilizations. Each side envied the particular advantages of the other. This competition was heightened by the insecurity of the times, during which the United States was expanding its territorial domains. It was an era of financial and political gain. Ever since the invention of the cotton gin, Johnson observed, the South had proceeded along the road of prosperity. Like the North, it fully expected to share in the profits of the new territories. The unique aspects of Southern civilization, however, created a society that differed from the North in many respects. Agrarianism, love of chivalry, veneration of womanhood, high military

¹¹Bradley T. Johnson, "An Address Delivered to the Ladies of the Confederate Memorial Society," Confederate Veteran, V (1897) 507.

capabilities and the institution of slavery had isolated it gradually from Northern life-styles. More importantly, its social system was not as well adapted to the enterprising demands of the times.

The North, on the other hand, had developed a strong philosophy of materialism. This philosophy led Northerners to believe that the highest duty of man was to accumulate power and money in a modern civilization.¹² Thus the pervading sentiment of that society came to be the pursuit of wealth and the development of the art of supreme selfishness. Johnson concluded that the philosophies of the two societies were on a collision course.

The agrarian, charitable and militaristic South clashed with the urban, self-seeking and industrial North. The South, unwilling to accept the realistic reaction of the North to the changing times, defended its own quest for power by a staunch defense of the type of society it possessed. Johnson explained the Civil War in light of several social differences. In 1860, the North's attack upon the South was "an unjust and useless war of invasion and rapine, of plunder and murder, not for patriotism nor high motives, but to gratify ambition and lust of power."¹³ Contrarily, "the resistance made by the South was not merely an attempt to preserve political institutions, but to perpetuate a social organization inherited through a thousand generations the sanctity of marriage, the inviolability of the family, the faith in truth, honor, virtue, the

¹²Bradley T. Johnson, "An Address Delivered at the Dedication of the Confederate Monument at Fredericksburg, Virginia," (Baltimore, June 10, 1891), 4.

¹³Ibid., 2.

protection of the homes. Historically, the position of the South was impregnable."¹⁴ Thus the power conflict boiled down to a struggle as to which type of society would ultimately direct the political values of a majority of Americans.

Johnson's opinion of the postwar South was one of respect and veneration. The cause of the Southern states never diminished in worthiness in his eyes, despite defeat. On the contrary, Johnson asserted that the defeat of the Confederacy only enhanced the true nobleness of the South's ideals. He also felt that the North had never evinced any overwhelming victory. The conclusion of the war consisted rather of a compact made between soldiers of the two armies. The South, in concluding the conflict, merely pledged its honor to obey the laws of the Union and to cease armed resistance.

The Union, likewise, made the equally solemn pledge that its former enemies would never be molested, disturbed or injured.¹⁵ Johnson never could admit that the path he chose might have been wrong. Instead, he asserted that "evil dies, good lives and the time will come when all the world will realize that the failure of the Confederacy was a great misfortune to humanity and will be the source of unnumbered woes to liberty."¹⁶

After the war, Johnson expressed no real bitterness toward the North. He accepted defeat with good grace and maintained contacts

¹⁴Confederate Veteran, V (1897) 509.

¹⁵Bradley T. Johnson, Address Before the Association of Confederate Soldiers and Sailors of Maryland, (Baltimore, 1874), 7.

¹⁶Bradley T. Johnson, "Dedication of the South's Museum," Southern Historical Society Papers, XXIII (1896), 364.

with many Confederate veterans. He did feel that the North handled the process of Reconstruction poorly. Not only had the Union emancipated the "childlike Negroes", but it also failed to utilize the best resources of Southern manhood.

Johnson's viewpoints on the Negro race were similar to many of his contemporary Confederate veterans. He looked upon the Negro as a child with only limited possibilities. He therefore saw the former institution of slavery as a civilizing factor in the education of the Negro. Slavery protected the black man and cared for him in all physical respects. Johnson thought that the emancipation of the Negro was the worst thing that could have occurred to the black race. The Negro turned loose in a white man's land would be subject to all the cruelties of race competition. The Negro was in no way prepared for this competition and should have remained under the Christianizing wing of slavery. "The Negro, a child of fourteen, has been turned loose to compete with the full grown man of the white race . . . As it is, against his will, without his assistance, he has been turned loose in America to do the best he can in the contest with the strongest race that ever lived."¹⁷

Johnson felt that the North should have appointed the natural leaders of the South to state and local political positions. He believed that with the former Confederate generals as officers in the states, the citizens of the respective states would have obeyed laws with greater respect and facilitation. Despite the drawbacks of Reconstruction society, Johnson advised his former

¹⁷Confederate Veteran, V (1897) 509.

comrades to perform their duties as loyal citizens. He firmly believed that one day the cause of secession would become acceptable in the eyes of the world. Until that day, the Confederate veteran should cherish his views with dignity and silent honor. Johnson reminded his colleagues that defeat did not imply negation of the right of secession. It meant, rather, that as long as Northern opinion prevailed, the Confederacy could never exist as a separate political entity.

Johnson did hope that the Federal legislators would amend the Constitution in accordance with the reforming spirit set forth by such dissenters as himself. He stated in one postwar address that every citizen should have a full, fair and equal opportunity for happiness in life. In accordance with this philosophy, the government had no right to interfere in a person's liberty of thought and freedom of conscience. The government was not to change a person's form of labor or method of exchanging goods. Finally, Johnson emphasized that no class or political party could appropriate the fruits of the labor of the other sections or classes without just compensation.¹⁸

It is easy to read into these proposed reforms the very soul of the secession movement. What Johnson wanted essentially was a condonement of the Southern cause and the legalization of its underlying principles for future application.

What Johnson failed to enumerate was to what extent and under

¹⁸Johnson, Dedication of Monument at Fredericksburg, 5.

what circumstances the government could apply these reforms. Johnson overlooked the more important issues at hand. The Union needed a workable system of checks and balances in the economic and political spheres that would suit each social system. Despite his legal knowledge, Johnson tended more toward romantic defenses than to visionary solutions.

While Johnson never accepted the victorious philosophy of the North (he still termed it "a contractors war to secure the men in power, and permanent control of the government"),¹⁹ he nevertheless respected the Union soldier. He felt no malice and no desire to rekindle the passions of the Civil War. A soldier, to Johnson, deserved the highest praise and recognition. He stated: "I accord to the Union men of Maryland the highest patriotism and the noblest courage in defense of their opinions."²⁰

In addition, and above all, Johnson was a romantic. He joined the Confederacy with a devotion to high ideals and a fervent response to the call of duty. He worshipped all the noble characteristics of Southern culture. He loved and honored women and accorded them a superior role in the Civil War drama. He detested the deplorable aspects of war and emphasized only the side of combat that was chivalric, heroic and memorable. His prose was flowery and full of references to the aesthetic side of life. To Johnson, the Civil War

¹⁹Exercise Book. Manuscript Collections, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore.

²⁰Bradley T. Johnson, Address Delivered Before the Society of the Army and Navy of the Confederate States in the State of Maryland at Maryland Hall (Baltimore, 1886), 7.

was another mission in the life of Don Quixote. The South had had its impossible dream, and Johnson and other veterans like him would celebrate the glory of it until their deaths.

Despite his experiences at Chambersburg and Moorefield, Johnson was not disillusioned by the war. He retained neither deep bitterness nor horror at the experiences he encountered. Yet for all of his romanticism, he was realistic. Like Lincoln, he felt malice toward none. He still retained a firm belief in the principles for which he fought, and he never felt that his efforts had been in vain. After the war, he continued to fulfill his duties as a loyal citizen. Whether in the Confederacy or in the Union, he lived up to his inherent responsibilities and obligations.

Finally, as noted earlier, Johnson was a deep humanitarian. Man for all his failings was to be honored and accorded his rightful place. Johnson accepted life and human weaknesses in all their burdensome aspects. He himself adequately summed it up when he stated: "I reprobate all recrimination and recalling of the bitter words and harsh actions of the war. War is a rough business and deals in rough ways. All its bitter memories ought to be buried and only those noble deeds remembered which are a credit to manhood . . ."²¹

The South had truly fostered a noble son.

²¹Ibid.

Conclusion

To make concluding remarks on the history of a man's life is a difficult job for any historian. It is especially difficult when the subject penned no diary or memoirs. Fortunately, Bradley T. Johnson left behind a large amount of literary work that gives some insight into the life of this extraordinary person. The resulting biography, however, is by no means complete. Large gaps exist in his formative years, his antebellum struggles, and in the war years themselves. While Johnson gave an accurate description of the history of the Maryland Line, he did not disclose the type of relationship he had with his men or his reactions to a wartime environment. He spoke verbosely of his political and philosophical reasons for joining the Confederacy; yet the reader hears nothing of everyday army life. The writer must conclude that Johnson was a very private and personal man.

Johnson had no inhibition about writing; in fact, he possessed a talent for description that far surpassed the ordinary attempts of most of his colleagues. Yet despite his abundance of publications, he never felt inclined to write about himself. This reticency toward indulging in any kind of self-analysis may have stemmed from the type of thinker that Johnson was. He was an abstract idealist. He envisioned the North and the South in terms of black and white categories.

His writings reveal that he never bothered to progress

beyond the surface appearance of things. His report on the actions that occurred at Chambersburg and Moorefield substantiate this. He wrote of the deteriorating morals of the army and attributed this to the ineffectual discipline of General John McCausland. Yet Johnson never stopped to ponder the psychological effects of total warfare. Johnson was never one to parce reality or look for hidden meanings. He accepted the current belief among Southerners that all Yankees were money-grubbing warmongers. This seems to be too elementary a conclusion for a man who had obtained most of his higher education in Northern universities.

One factor that played an important role in Johnson's career was his wife. Johnson met Jane Claudia Saunders at an early age and was engaged to her for six years. Miss Saunders' actions throughout the war give the reader the impression that not only was she a person of high integrity but that she also possessed a will and a mind of her own.

When Johnson was only twenty-two, he passed the North Carolina bar exam and married Jane Saunders. At such a tender age, the passions of love and of the times may well have dimmed any Northern recollections. No doubt Johnson came to love and cherish the South through the eyes of his wife. His proclaimed devotion to her indicates that his political feelings may well have followed the path of his romantic ones. Jane Claudia Johnson, it is clear, was devoted to the Confederacy. Her father was an eminent statesman in North Carolina politics and supported movements that would be an asset to the Southern

cause. With such influential inlaws, and Johnson's own personal feelings upon the subject, it is easy to deduce Johnson's complete commitment to the Confederacy.

The years before the war form the most complex era in Johnson's life. After the war, one gets a fairly clear picture of the man. Johnson was thirty-six when the war ended. He returned first to Virginia and then to Baltimore to continue his law practice. His postwar activities were normal for a soldier like himself. The organization of various Confederate veteran societies, and the publication of works that concerned the war, were typical of a man of Johnson's caliber and interests. Yet here again, as in his life before the war, the researcher acquires only a glimpse into the personal life of the man.

It is debateable whether Johnson ever felt completely at home in either Richmond or Baltimore. It is significant that he never returned to Frederick, the home of his youth. His Confederate associations were probably too strong for the Union sympathizers in the town. On the other hand, it is strange that he never remained in Richmond. By all accounts, Johnson and his wife both were a success in the city. From his speeches, one receives the impression that Johnson liked Richmond. Native roots, however, ran deep, and Johnson probably felt restless to return to the state of his birth. On the surface, it appears that Johnson's devotion to the Maryland Line was indicative of his devotion to Maryland as a whole. In an age where state loyalties played prominent roles in men's lives, this is a substantial reason for Johnson's decision to leave Virginia.

His ultimate return to Virginia in the years that immediately preceded his death are easily explained. Following the death of his wife, lonely and probably nostalgic for his old battle grounds, Johnson sought a place for retirement. The "Woodlands" at Amelia Court House was the pastoral retreat that Johnson desired. There, in the autumn of his years, he was able to reminisce on the incidents of the past and to keep up his correspondence.

By any account, Johnson was a superb soldier and a fine officer. Never at any time is there any record of his losing control of either himself or his men. He demonstrated time and again the essential quality of exacting self-discipline in the face of enemy assaults. Despite his own opinions, Johnson consistently obeyed orders. There seems to be no incidents where Johnson ever flagrantly disobeyed a command, or took it upon his own to deviate from a plan of attack. This is not to say that Johnson was inflexible. His plan to capture Lincoln was daring and out of the ordinary. He was able to think fast on his feet. This was ably demonstrated at Moorefield, when he narrowly escaped capture. His very decision to leave Frederick abruptly and to organize a Maryland command points to a person who was not bound by social conventions or established living habits. Johnson's flexibility also revealed itself in the case of his assignment to the Salisbury prison. Any other officer might have protested vehemently upon having to leave his men and the scene of battle. Johnson, however, accepted this decision with good grace and took a sincere interest in the well-being of his prisoners.

He no doubt felt slighted at never receiving a higher promotion than brigadier-general. This was probably attributable to inter-army snobbery. After all, Johnson had never received any formal military training, nor had he served in any type of military capacity. Yet despite this liability, he wore about him all the refinement and sophistication of the urban upper class. While Johnson was never pretentious on this point, it no doubt rubbed against the sensibilities of Virginia middle-class soldiers. Moreover, Johnson was a Marylander, and that state had renounced the offers of the Confederacy. It is reasonable to assume that a considerable amount of jealousy existed in the higher echelons of Lee's officers. Johnson and his band of Marylanders proved themselves worthy of, and even superior to, many of their Southern colleagues. This was a hard fact to accept, and Johnson's long-delayed promotions reflected this.

On the whole, this snubbery never detracted from Johnson's qualities as a soldier. He possessed great physical stamina. His ride around Baltimore, his campaigns under Early, Jackson and Joseph E. Johnston, show a man who was willing to go to the limits of human endurance for the cause in which he believed.

Above all, Johnson was revered and respected by both officers and subordinates. Comments from various sources indicate that Johnson acquired an outstanding military reputation. One of the greatest of Southern generals, "Stonewall" Jackson, twice recommended him for promotion. Lee thought highly of Johnson, and it was he who suggested to Gen. Early that Johnson be assigned to the raid on Point Lookout.

It is significant, too, that John McCausland, a general whom Johnson despised, never voiced any complaints against Johnson.

It was a fine quality of Johnson's that he cared for the welfare of the enemy. As noted earlier, he went out of his way to see to the comfort of his Salisbury prisoners. He was not a rough or brutal man by nature, and his kindness and consideration toward others were qualities he maintained throughout his life. Personal reminiscences of Union soldiers at Salisbury never condemned Johnson for any cruelty or hardship that existed at the prison.

If anything can be said about Johnson in conclusion, it is that he was a typical Marylander in the Confederate States Army. He loved the Confederacy, but he was extremely devoted to his native state. As a true state patriot, he was typical of many Southerners who defended their provincial loyalties. Johnson venerated what he believed Maryland represented. In honoring these ideals when war came, Johnson decided that he must cast his lot with the Confederacy. He firmly believed that his "Maryland Line" would perpetuate the Maryland military tradition and character. To this dream he was deeply devoted, and this devotion he maintained to the end. Johnson set standards for himself and for his state that he never relinquished. This is the essence of the character of the man. William George Jordan has said that "happiness is a life lived in harmony with high ideals."

Nothing better summarizes the life of this Marylander who decided to go south.

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BRADLEY T JOHNSON, BRIGADIER-GENERAL, C.S.A.

Lydia Habliston Davis

Abstract

"Bradley T. Johnson, Brigadier-General, C.S.A." is a military biography of a Marylander who joined the Confederate States Army in the Civil War. The study concentrates on Johnson's immediate ante-bellum years and his involvement in the war drama. Drawn from manuscript collections, biographies and the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, it attempts to describe the development of Johnson's Southern sympathies and his consequent participation in the war. The chapters follow Johnson through the beginning of the 1861 riots in Baltimore to the 1865 horrors at the Salisbury, North Carolina military prison.

The biography also explores Johnson's qualities as a family man, writer and lawyer. Johnson was a very talented individual. After the war he devoted his energies to the publication of books and articles on aspects of Maryland and Civil War history. Besides a busy law practice, he found time to be one of the founders of the Confederate Veterans Home in Pikesville, Md.

The Maryland ideals of truth, honor and courage were ones that Johnson admired, and he saw these exemplified in his beloved "Maryland Line" that became a valuable part of the Confederate army. The spirit behind the war, and the courage of the men who fought with him, were ideals that Johnson tried to maintain. This is the essence of Johnson's decision to go South, and the pattern by which he led his men in battle.