

To the North Anna River: Grant and Lee, May 13--25, 1864

Gordon C. Rhea



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With To the North Anna River, the third book in his outstanding five-book series, Gordon C. Rhea continues his spectacular narrative of the initial campaign between Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee in the spring of 1864. May 13 through 25, a phase oddly ignored by historians, was critical in the clash between the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia. During those thirteen days -- an interlude bracketed by horrific battles that riveted the public's attention -- a game of guile and endurance between Grant and Lee escalated to a suspenseful draw on Virginia's North Anna River.

From the bloodstained fields of the Mule Shoe to the North Anna River, with Meadow Bridge, Myers Hill, Harris Farm, Jericho Mills, Ox Ford, and Doswell Farm in between, grueling night marches, desperate attacks, and thundering cavalry charges became the norm for both Grant's and Lee's men. But the real story of May 13--25 lay in the two generals' efforts to outfox each other, and Rhea charts their every step and misstep. Realizing that his bludgeoning tactics at the Bloody Angle were ineffective, Grant resorted to a fast-paced assault on Lee's vulnerable points. Lee, outnumbered two to one, abandoned the offensive and concentrated on anticipating Grant's maneuvers and shifting quickly enough to repel them. It was an amazingly equal match of wits that produced a gripping, high-stakes bout of warfare -- a test, ultimately, of improvisation for Lee and of perseverance for Grant.

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