

THE FRIENDSHIP AND MUTUAL
CONFEDERATE WAR EXPERIENCES OF
GENERAL CLEMENT A. EVANS AND CAPTAIN EDWARD P. LAWTON

Presented at the Captain Lawton
Family Reunion on June 19, 1976

by

Robert Grier Stephens, Jr.
Member of Congress
10th District of Georgia
Grandson of Clement A. Evans

INTRODUCTION

My grandfather, Clement Anselm Evans, joined the Confederate Army as a private in Savannah in the brigade of General A. R. Lawton. He soon formed a friendship with Captain Edward P. Lawton, the brigade adjutant, and this friendship lasted until the untimely death of Captain Lawton from wounds received at the Battle of Fredericksburg. On May 19, 1864, my grandfather was promoted to brigadier-general and commanded the Lawton-Gordon-Evans Brigade, surrendering at Appomattox.

After the War ended Clement Evans became in 1866 a minister in the Methodist Church and served for 30 years in various churches in Georgia. He said his compelling call to preach came at the terrible battle at Fredricksburg where he lost his friend, his decision being made on his 30th birthday in the Camp of Port Royal, Virginia:

"My call to preach impressed me during the war and the duty was determined on Feb. 25, 1863 - but the matter was concealed from every person but one - that was my wife. I told her and she at once replied that her heart and life were with me in the high calling - It was my purpose to offer myself to the Church as a minister as soon as the war ended, but not before - I felt it to be my first duty to fight the war through."

After retirement from the ministry, he became chairman of Georgia's first Prison Commission and was Commanding General of the United Confederate Veterans.

In order to give life and reality to his association with Captain Lawton, I follow this introduction with a war-time biographical sketch of my grandfather which includes the events which were the mutual experiences he had with Captain Edward P. Lawton.

EVANS AND LAWTON

On November 2, 1859, the Georgia Senate convened in the picturesque Capitol in Milledgeville. The president of the retiring Senate, Theodore LeGrand Guerry, rapped the gavel for order. My grandfather, Clement Anselm Evans, native of Stewart County, aged twenty-six, rose with 131 others to be sworn into office. The oath was administered by Confederate general-to-be Henry L. Benning. Evans took his seat as one of the youngest senators in Georgia history. He was the 13th elected from his district. Mr. Guerry was re-elected president of the Senate and, in accepting, advised the Senators:

"You gentlemen are chosen depositories for the time being of the legislative power of this great State. You are in part the legitimate guardians of its rights, its interests, and its honor."

During this first week the youthful solon attended the

Inaugural Ball on November 5 at Newell's Hall in the capital city and heard the climax of Governor Brown's Inaugural message:

"In the present condition of affairs, I would advise the citizens of Georgia to stand united with National Democracy, so long as they continue to stand by her rights and to protect them in the Union. But should this organization be broken down, and her constitutional rights be denied, and her equality in the Union destroyed, I would then advise her citizens to strike for independence of the Union--and to pledge to each other 'their lives, their fortunes, and their most sacred honor', never to forsake each other till triumphant success shall have crowned their efforts. My fervent prayer to Almighty God is, that this necessity may be averted--wisdom, moderation and justice may control all our National and State Councils--and that the rights of the States, and the Union of the States, may be thus perpetuated".

Except for the forebodings of the impending national crisis which pervaded all Georgia politics, this Senate session passed quietly although it had the distinction of making the Lumpkin Law School a part of the University of Georgia.

The year 1860 found Senator Evans still in the midst of events. This was that cataclysmic national election year that tore asunder old allegiances and coalitions, both state and

national. When the season came for presidential nominations, ancient antagonisms of economic and social origins were so intensely revived that all hope dissolved for concentration on a choice between candidates of only two political parties. For the only time in American history major political forces divided into four segments.

The old line Democrats split basically into two parties, but many joined the Constitutional Union Party which was formed. The Republican Party, created in 1856, nominated Abraham Lincoln. The split of the Democrats, plus the Constitutional Union ticket, gave a majority of the popular vote against Lincoln. But, Lincoln got a majority of electoral college votes. Even though a minority choice as to popular vote, Lincoln was the legal choice since the Constitution provides that a candidate so chosen will be president.

Shortly after Lincoln's election in November, Evans went again to Milledgeville for the legislature. His letters home tell of consternation in Georgia over the election of Lincoln.

Events had moved rapidly after the realization in the South that the Republicans had won a victory in 1860. On December 20, South Carolina promulgated her Secession Ordinance and urged her sister states of the South to follow her example. Many excited Georgians were ready and anxious to join South Carolina and fiery arguments were used to speed Georgia's decision. Retired Congressman Alexander H. Stephens and State

Senator Benjamin Harvey Hill advised caution and sought to stay the seemingly inevitable tide toward secession.

In anticipation of war the young men of Stewart County organized a company in December, 1860. They called themselves the "Stewart Grays." Of this Evans wrote:

"My first commission in the Confederate War was First Lieutenant. The Company was formed in December 1860 while I was away from home in the Senate, and before the secession of the State, and I was elected 1st Lieut. without having known anything about it until after the election."

Upon notice of his election he did not accept, but retained his seat in the legislature until Georgia decided to cast her lot with the others about her and leave the Union.

Evans was not a member of the Session Convention that met in Milledgeville in January and adopted Georgia's secession ordinance. By that ordinance Georgia, by a unanimous ballot, became a free, sovereign and independent republic--the delegates believed.

Action did not lag after the secession of Georgia. In February Southern representatives journeyed to Montgomery, Alabama, to form a temporary Confederate States of America and chose Senator Jefferson Davis of Mississippi and Congressman Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia as president and vice-president, respectively, of the provisional government, the capitol of which was soon moved to Richmond, Virginia.

Clement Evans was as feverish as the times, ambitious to be in the midst of the mainstream but hesitant to jump in because of his family responsibilities. However, that summer in the capacity of an observer, he set out with the local company for Richmond, the vortex of action. It was still swirling with the force from the eruption of the first Battle of Manassas in June, 1861.

Evans attached himself to the "Stewart Grays" as a civilian envoy in July and shared their experiences on the trek to Virginia. Wined, dined, and eulogized by an admiring public, he and the troops trod lightly from Lumpkin and Richland, Georgia. They plodded thence to Cuthbert, took the railroad "cars" to Macon, rattled up to Atlanta and, drawn by the puffing locomotive, steamed northward to Chattanooga on the route burned by Sherman four years later.

As this local chivalry formed ranks to depart from Lumpkin, Sallie Tucker of that village presented the "Grays" with an handmade and home-made flag. She concluded the pretty farewell speech:

"Take this flag, and may it be the first to float in the field and the last to leave it."

He spent several weeks on this trip and upon return to Lumpkin with his first-hand knowledge of the "front", Senator Evans on August 23rd wrote to Governor Brown of Georgia on behalf, ostensibly, of his senatorial constituents to inquire as to prospects for service for other Stewart volunteers besides

the "Grays" and the "Stewart Infantry":

"To his Excellency Joseph E. Brown
Sir,

At the instance of a number of citizens I write to ask information concerning the organization of either infantry or mounted Rifle Companies, and their acceptance for the defence of the Coast of the State; - This County has in the field about 400 men, and three other companies can be organized, one for Virginia (or elsewhere) and two for Georgia. A number of citizens are so situated as to be unable to leave their homes for Virginia but who desire to engage in the service in this State, being anxious to contribute to their utmost, in the present war; One company of light Cavalry, and one of infantry for the latter purpose can be readily raised, and drilled at home until such time as you may direct, without expense to the Government; Can you furnish the Cavalry with breech loading guns, sabres & pistols, and will the infantry armed with double barrel shotguns be accepted: - Your early reply will confer a considerable favor on a number of citizens. . ."

Evans had, no doubt, in the foregoing letter to Governor Brown voiced his own status when he refers to those "citizens . . .so situated as to be unable to leave their homes for Virginia" but "anxious to contribute their utmost, in the present war". This assumption is borne out by his correspon-

dence with his former Senate colleague, Brigadier General Alexander R. Lawton, who had a volunteer brigade of Georgia militia in Savannah. General Lawton was a West Pointer by education, a lawyer by profession and the renowned captor in early July, 1861, of Fort Pulaski, Savannah's chief Federal stronghold. General Lawton replied from "Head Quarters Military District Savannah" on September 2:

"My Dear Sir:

I am truly glad to hear from your note of the 30th inst. that you people are feeling such a deep interest in our coast defence. The great pressure on the War Department from the Northern frontiers of the Confederacy has turned all eyes (and unfortunately arms) in that direction and caused us to be sadly neglected here. But we are doing everything that energy and industry can accomplish with small means--and will hope to be prepared for the advent of our Northern friends.

The Confederacy has no arms at its disposal and the Governor informs me that the State supply is exhausted. I am powerless therefore in that respect. But would receive with pleasure any companies from your section of the State (with such arms as they can furnish themselves) and attach them to Regiments here, or would receive a battalion properly organized and officiered (sic).

Permit me to add that I would be pleased to have you transferred with me from the Senate to the camp, and amid other scenes renew the pleasant association of the past years."

By the Fall Evans could not stand the "war fever" any longer and enlisted as a private in another one of the volunteer companies from Stewart County--the Bartow Guards. This company was named for one of the heroes of the hour, Francis S. Bartow, who sacrificed his life in the first big engagement of the war at Manassas. Evans, as a concession to his conscience and as an explanation to his wife, must have felt this company was not destined for immediate action.

And, indeed, the Bartow Guards was not sent at this time where battles were being fought. In November, it joined Colonel Pleasant J. Phillip's regiment near Savannah which was part of the aforesaid volunteer brigade of General Lawton.

Phillips Regiment was mustered into service on November 13, 1862. The Bartow Guards became Company "E" and was composed initially of twelve months' volunteers. Soon, thereafter, as regulations required, the troops elected officers. Clement A. Evans was elected major, his commission being dated November 18th. He was twenty-eight years old. The adjutant of the brigade was Captain Edward P. Lawton of Savannah who became a fast friend of Major Evans.

Evans had enlisted supposedly for twelve months. It was widely believed in 1861, and even through the whole year of 1862, that the war would be of short duration. However, for practical purposes the Confederate Congress enacted a Conscription Act in April 1862, which, among its features, extended enlistments to three years. This was the first law of its kind in American history. The future was considerably altered for many when the realization sank in that this war was not going to be like Indian fights when the local militia stood watch nor was this war going to be all glory.

In the Spring of 1862, the brigade of General Lawton was reorganized. Six regiments were formally assigned and overhauled for the three-year tour of duty, being given numerical designations they retained for the duration of hostilities: the 13th Georgia, the 26th Georgia, the 31st Georgia, the 38th Georgia, the 60th Georgia, and the 61st Georgia. All of them had their origins from volunteer companies comparable to the "Bartow Guards" which had become Company E, 31st Georgia Regiment.

As a part of this revamping, Major Evans was elected colonel to command the 31st Georgia Regiment, his commission ranking him as of May 13, 1862.

About this time, everyone was electrified by the news that the Yankee general, George McClellan, moving up the James Peninsula, was almost on top of Richmond and the Confederate capital was in imminent danger. In the last few days of

May, 1862, Governor Brown read with regret the communication that required him to send Lawton's Brigade to Virginia just as he had its predecessors.

Colonel Evans and his friend, Captain Edward Lawton, shared common experiences for the next months. We know what their trip to Virginia was like because they had similar experiences described by Private G. W. Nichols of the 61st Georgia Regiment, Lawton's Brigade. Private Nichols graphically tells of their trip in his book on the history of the 61st Regiment. Nichols says rations for several days were cooked, equipment was packed, tents were struck, and the troops, for better mode of transportation, mounted open train cars which afforded them scant protection from cold rains. These same drenching rains had already made the roads of the Virginia Peninsula quagmires to engulf the wagon and artillery wheels of Joseph E. Johnston's retreating army and had made the Chickahominy a swollen torrent which threatened that part of McClellan's army thrown on the south bank nearest Richmond. Naturally the undue exposure caused much suffering among the soldiers from Georgia. Several luckless fellows succumbed without ever striking a blow for their native State. Nichols laments the unpleasantness of the inclement weather by the statement that, though not addicted to strong drink, he shiveringly lined up when drinks were passed out to his regiment:

"I decided I wanted a good drink for my benefit. So I backed out of my place in the line and went further down the line, and when Capt. Tillman got there I drank again. It took the 'shakes' out of me and warmed me up, and I felt much better."

Lawton's Brigade arrived in Richmond, Virginia, on or about the 4th or 5th of June, 1862, just a few days after the Battle of Seven Pines of May 31, 1862, where General Joseph E. Johnston was severely wounded. This caused the vacancy which was filled by the appointment of Robert E. Lee as Commander of the Army of Northern Virginia. The Brigade was assigned to join the division of Stonewall Jackson who was still in the Shenandoah concluding the famous Valley Campaign of Virginia in November, 1861. Almost all of Virginia west of the mountains was in the hands of the enemy. Jackson began operations in the dead of Winter, 1862, but partly due to the discontent of new men he suspended his action until better weather. His movements, however, had forced the enemy to withdraw to an extent and had broken up their plans to attack him.

The Spring campaign had begun in Virginia around the 1st of March, 1862. Jackson had renewed activities in the Valley, seriously impairing McClellan's plan to advance on Richmond.

On June 11th, General Lee wrote his chief lieutenant:

"Your recent successes (at Cross Keys and Port Republic) have been the cause of the liveliest joy in

this army as well as in the country. The admiration excited by your skill and boldness has been constantly mingled with solicitude for your situation. The practicability of reinforcing you has been the subject of gravest consideration. It has been determined to do so at the expense of weakening this army. Brigadier-General Lawton with six regiments from Georgia is on his way to you, and Brigadier-General Whiting with eight veteran regiments leaves here today."

Lawton's re-enforcements, therefore, were sent to aid Jackson who had been beset on all sides. They arrived, in fact, before the date Lee wrote this letter. The brigade went to Staunton beyond the Blue Ridge by train, and Private Nichols said, to their astonishment, the troop train went straight through the mountains by tunnel. At Staunton the reinforcements alighted and began their first long march on Virginia soil - an experience too often repeated in the future. Halt was called on June 10 at Port Republic where the troops of Jackson had made history in a battle on the day before.

These new soldiers experienced for the first time the horrors of a battle-field with its awful sight of the maimed and unburied dead men and mutilated horses and artillery animals. Port Republic had been the climax of the First Valley campaign. In the course of three months, by swift marches (676 miles in 48 marching days), sudden assaults and skillful retreats, Jackson had rendered ineffective the numer-

ically superior forces of Banks, Fremont and McDowell and had so aroused the fears of the authorities at Washington that these badly broken and confused forces were recalled and disposed to defend that city. McDowell's force of 40,000 men was thus prevented from moving on Richmond to join with McClellan and Jackson had carried out admirably his part of the Confederate's plans to "employ the Invaders in the valley . . . by keeping so near the enemy so as to prevent him from making any considerable detachment to re-enforce McClellan. . . ."

After several days of rest at Port Republic, Jackson scored another striking success by a masterly retreat toward Lee, who was practically besieged by McClellan near Richmond.

Lawton's Brigade paused for a few days with the rest of the brigade near Port Republic, after which the troops were put in motion for Richmond. It was one of Jackson's typical driving marches and the troops went so fast that wagon trains could not keep up with them. Many of the raw soldiers of Lawton's Brigade were hampered by excessive baggage. Private Nichols relates details of this "shake down" march of Lawton's Brigade:

"On this march we rested one Sunday and had religious service near our camp, where the famous General Stonewall Jackson met to worship God. It was the first time some of us had ever seen him. We started very early next morning and marched very hard till late in the afternoon. We stopped to camp and cook rations. Our tents were all left behind. The clouds began to collect and thunder very heavily,

and the rain began to pour down in torrents, with a heavy gale of wind. It rained for nearly two hours, and we all got as wet as we could be. Our fires were about all out. I've Summerlin, of Company D, wrapped in his blankets, was lying down with the water ponded around him. He raised up a little and said, 'Boys, it rains very well tonight.' It created a big laugh. When it quit raining we renewed our fires, dried off the best we could, and finished our cooking.

We started about day next morning on a forced march, with full creeks and branches to cross. The roads were so cut up with the wagons and artillery until we could hardly get along. Some of the boys would bog so deep into mud till when they got out their shoes would remain often ten and twelve inches below the surface. Every man had to carry his own haversack, knapsack, gun and cartridge-box. Some of the boys had white sheets, and I believe a few had feather pillows. Jackson's old soldiers, who had been following Jackson in his campaigns, made sport of us.

They would ask us what command we were wagoning for, and what train that was. Some of 'our boys' cursed out the war, others shed tears (for there were a lot of young boys in the brigade), and said but little, while others, I suppose, prayed. We were being initiated and taking the first degree in

war. We had been mustered into the Confederate service eight months, and had learned but little about the rough life of a soldier."

Jackson had so cleverly screened his activities that he had his troops within sixteen miles of Richmond without the enemy being aware of his intentions. The troops, exhausted by the grueling march (over 120 miles in 8 days), encamped at Ashland on June 25 being preceded a day or two by Jackson who rode on hard in utmost secrecy into Richmond to consult with Lee.

The Confederate leaders decided in a conference of June 23 to attack McClellan, and Jackson was to move his command up on the 26th of June. His attack was to be the signal for a general offensive. Rain continued to fall and the roads became worse. Although Jackson moved his men on the morning of the 26th, they had a trying march and the men fell exhausted both physically and mentally by the strain of days and nights of sleepless action. Jackson failed to order the attack as scheduled, the only justification given being the utter exhaustion of the general, too.

Whatever happened, the Confederate attack starting the Seven Days Battle about Richmond (June 26-July 2, 1862) was begun without Jackson's initiation. Therefore, it was not until the second day of the battle that Lawton's men got their baptism of fire after General Fitz-John Porter, the Union commander in Lee's immediate front, took up a strongly entrenched position at Gaines' Mill on June 27th.

Shortly after midday the Confederates moved in and began to attack. Jackson and Ewell were sent around to the enemy's right at Old Cold Harbor and Lawton's Brigade came up in the rear of Jackson's veterans. They heard firing to their front as they came up on the double quick and without a moments breathing spell Lawton's men were hurled in a charge against a withering fire from the enemy. They advanced about a hundred yards but were stopped by the heavy fire. After a brief halt the brigade again swept forward. This time they gained the enemy's fortifications on the right, capturing several field pieces and prisoners. The charge of Lawton's Brigade was thus a success and Lawton's men were complimented by Jackson for their part in the action. This charge was the first major action in which Evans participated and also the engagement in which he received his first wound. Later he wrote about the encounter (although he had the wrong day):

"I was wounded (shot in the leg) at Cold Harbor, June 28, 1862, while leading my regiment in Jackson's famous flank attack which turned the Federal right. There I lost in killed and wounded 200 men in the space of one hour. Lawton's Brigade did fine service in that charge."

The battle of Cold Harbor was a complete Confederate victory and Porter was forced to retreat.

After the Seven Days' Battle around Richmond, Stonewall Jackson, with Lawton's Brigade, was sent to Gordonsville,

Virginia. They were to oppose the operation of a consolidated army of the Union forces which had previously been disjointed by Jackson's campaign in the Valley during May and June. This new Federal army was placed under a veteran of the West, Major-General John Pope.

In the latter part of July, 1862, Lawton's Brigade of Georgians was taken out of Jackson's "foot cavalry" and transferred to the division of Major-General Richard S. Ewell. This change occurred, most likely, after Evans had gone home to Georgia on sick leave. Weakened by exposure of the long marches and the strenuous fighting of the past month, and suffering from the irritation of the leg-wound, Evans' system was susceptible to disease. Men in his regiment were falling out day after day with malaria and typhoid contracted in the fever-infested Chickahominy lowlands and marshes. Evans was struck by a chill soon after reaching Gordonsville and fell seriously ill with typhoid fever. When he was sufficiently recovered, the doctors recommended a leave for him and he struck out for Lumpkin, Georgia.

Shortly after Evans left the army at Gordonsville, Jackson with his own troops and Ewell's division executed another brilliant attack upon the Federals. In fact, Jackson took Pope so completely by surprise in the rear and flank that Pope's supply train was taken and Pope himself almost captured. Jackson then fell back to the old battlefield of Manassas and awaited the rest of the army under Lee and Long-

street. On August 30 Pope attacked Jackson, who had been reinforced by Longstreet, and after a hot fight Pope was forced to fall back. This was the Second Battle of Manassas or Bull Run.

On the day before the battle the Confederates had been engaged in a spirited brush against the enemy at Grovetown and General Ewell was seriously wounded.

His successor was Alexander R. Lawton, who had held the rank of brigadier for sixteen months--longer than any other general in the army. Colonel Marcellus Douglas of the Thirteenth Georgia Regiment, and senior colonel, was placed in command of the brigade.

After Bull Run, Pope continued his retreat until he entered Washington, and Virginia was practically free of invaders. Lee, realizing that the Southern Army was in the best of condition and flushed with victory, decided upon a course which helps portray his genius as a general. He turned Confederate faces northward. With high spirits they crossed the Potomac into Union territory singing, "Maryland, My Maryland." McClellan, despite rumors that he was killed, was very much alive. But, he was afraid to attack the exposed Confederate capital of Richmond because his own capital, Washington, was being threatened. Lincoln was also apprehensive and recalled McClellan to expel the invaders. In this invasion of the North, Lee hoped among other factors, to give the loyal Southerners in Maryland an opportunity to throw off the Federal

yoke and join wholeheartedly with the Southern cause.

As a first move to invasion, Jackson was detailed to take Harper's Ferry. This he did. Then, by typical marches, he arrived just in the nick of time at Sharpsburg where the Confederate advance was halted by McClellan on the 17th of September, 1862. Lee was strongly entrenched at Antietam Creek and repulsed attack after attack of the Union forces.

The Battle of Sharpsburg was up to that time one of the bloodiest of the war and many of Lawton's Brigade fell in the defense of their position on Jackson's left. The brigade had been with Jackson at the siege of Harper's Ferry and had had a long march to Sharpsburg. In the carnage of the battle young Colonel Marcellus Douglas, University of Georgia graduate, recent candidate for Congress and acting-commander of Lawton's Brigade, was killed. Colonel E. N. Atkinson of the Twenty-Six Georgia Regiment took command.

On the day following the battle both forces rested in the positions of the previous day and neither offered attack. The night of the 18th, however, Lee deemed it wise to get back into Virginia and under cover of darkness he quietly withdrew in order to cross the Potomac at Shepardstown Ford. Lawton's Brigade under the direction of Jackson guarded the rear. At Sharpsburg, General Lawton, temporarily in higher command, was badly wounded and rendered unable to exercise command.

Lee's army after Sharpsburg retreated into the Shenandoah Valley, and Ewell's Division, including Lawton's Brigade,

remained there with Jackson, while the rest of the army went on nearer Richmond. A period of rest gave the army time to recuperate and at this point the corps system was introduced into the whole Confederate Army. The Army of Northern Virginia was divided into two corps, one under Jackson and the other under General James Longstreet of Georgia.

As previously observed, from August up to about the first week of September, 1862, Colonel Evans was at home under the careful nursing of his wife. When sufficiently recovered to return to active duty, he started back to the Army.

On the 20th of October, 1862, due to the absence of Colonel Atkinson, Evans became senior colonel in command of the brigade of the injured Lawton, a post Evans held until Atkinson came back a short while before the Battle of Fredericksburg in December.

His wife, Allie, wrote this doleful letter of October 26th from Lumpkin, Georgia. She longed for delivery of an anticipated baby and expresses impatience. She calculated that the baby was not due for several weeks and this would delay her coming to Virginia.

"Lumpkin Oct. 26, 1862

My dear darling husband.

This is a cold, windy, cloudy, Sunday morning. I wish my dear darling was here to spend the day with me. How pleasantly it would pass. As it is how long the day will be. I know it is so cold there where you are. I wonder if you are comfort-

able. I know you are not. How can you be with no house to stay in, no good warm bed to sleep in and no wife to talk with you. I have got so much to tell you so much to talk to you about. I dont think I would get through in six months. My tongue would never grow tired. . . I am afraid our parting will be longer than we calculated on. It is now the last of October and I am not sick yet. If it is my baby wont be old enough to start to see you the first of January as we expected. It would be running too much risk to go when it was only six weeks old both to me and the baby. I hope it wont be that long before I get sick. I am so tired of waiting for it. I try not to have the blues and to be as cheerful as possible. But if my darling was only here it would be right. What will I do for you darling. How can I get along without you. I know you cannot be here so what is the use of wishing it."

What a surprise was in store for Allie! The very next day a baby boy was born, to be named after several months passed for Evans' friend, Captain Edward P. Lawton.

By the date this last letter arrived, McClellan in late October, 1862, had crossed the Potomac to attack Lee. Before McClellan could contact his enemy, however, the government replaced him by Ambrose E. Burnside. General Burnside's intentions to advance directly on Richmond through Fredericksburg

were divined by General Lee in the latter part of November. In order to meet this advance, Lee sent Longstreet to Fredericksburg where his corps arrived on the 21st of November. Shortly thereafter Lee called Jackson and his corps from the Valley to come on to Fredericksburg. Again the experiences of Colonel Evans and Captain Lawton were shared when General Lee drew up his forces behind the town of Fredericksburg and fortified the heights.

The Confederate lines on the south side of the Rappahannock River faced toward Washington. The troops were stretched from North to South along a ridge overlooking Fredericksburg. General R. H. Anderson held the Southern left nearest the river. General James Longstreet held the Confederate center. Stonewall Jackson and his corps of some 30,000 at Hamilton's Crossing defended the right wing where Ewell's Division, which included Lawton's Brigade, was placed on the far right of the Confederate infantry. They were buttressed by "the gallant" Major John Pelham's horse artillery of the command of General "Jeb" Stuart on the extreme right.

The Battle of Fredericksburg was terrible.

Federal General Sumner, on November 21st, from the north Rappahannock bank on the Stafford Heights, warned civilians of Fredericksburg several days in advance that if their "stiff-necked" resistance did not cease and the city capitulate that "sixteen hours will be permitted to elapse for the removal from the city of women and children, the sick and wounded and

aged. . . which period having expired I shall proceed to shell the town."

An eye-witness, General Longstreet, reported that the Confederates, too, predicted a scathing cannonade:

". . . We advised the people who were still in the town to prepare to leave. . . The evacuation of the place by distressed women and helpless men was a painful sight. . . Many were forced to seek shelter in the woods and brave the icy November nights to escape the approaching assault from the Federal army.

The Federals with angry desperation, turned their whole available force of artillery on the little city, and sent down from the heights a perfect storm of shot and shell, crushing the houses with a cyclone of fiery metal. . . The town caught fire in several places, shells crashed and burst, and solid shot rained like hail."

On the 11th and 12th of December, Burnside crossed the Rappahannock River. On the 13th he began the attack. The fight started by a charge against the Confederate right where Evans and Lawton were posted. Federal General William Franklin launched the assault.

According to General Longstreet:

"Franklin's 40,000 men, reinforced by two divisions, were in front of Jackson's 30,000. The flags of the Federals fluttered gayly, the polished arms shone

brightly in the sunlight, and the beautiful uniforms of the buoyant troops gave to the scene the air of a holiday occasion rather than the spectacle of a great army about to be thrown into the tumult of battle. From my place. . .I could see almost every soldier Franklin had, and a special array it was. But off in the distance was Jackson's ragged infantry, and beyond was Stuart's battered cavalry, with their soiled hats and yellow butternut suits, a striking contrast to the handsomely equipped troops of the Federals."

The attack was beaten off after great loss of life in the lines of the exposed troops of the Union. Lawton's Brigade swept in a counter-charge in pursuit but was scored heavily by strategically disposed batteries on the road to the Federal rear. The rest of the Federal efforts were then directed to the center and left of the Confederates and for the remainder of the battle Lawton's Brigade was not actively engaged.

After Franklin's flank attack, Burnside, mistaking the Confederate center as its most vulnerable spot, hurled attack after attack at what was, in fact, the most invulnerable point of the Confederate defense at Mary's Heights. A sunken road, revetted by a stone fence, was the juncture of death. Lee's "warhorse", General Longstreet, again most vividly described this encounter:

"A sixth time they charged and were driven back, when night came to end the dreadful carnage, and the

Federals withdrew, leaving the battlefield literally heaped with the bodies of their dead. Before the well-directed fire of Cobb's Brigade, the Federals had fallen like the steady dripping of rain from the eaves of a house. Our musketry alone killed and wounded at least 5000; and these, with the slaughter by the artillery, left over 7000 killed and wounded before the foot of Marye's Hill. The dead were piled sometimes three deep, and when morning broke, the spectacle that we saw upon the battlefield was one of the most depressing I ever witnessed."

On the Federal side Major-General Darius Couch told of the horrors of Fredericksburg:

". . . I climbed the steeple of the court house, and from above the haze and smoke got a clear view of the field. Howard, who was with me, says I exclaimed 'Oh, great God! see how our men, our poor fellows, are falling.' I remember that the whole plain was covered with men, prostrate and dropping, the live men running here and there, and in front closing upon each other, and the wounded coming back. . . There was no cheering on the part of the men, but a stubborn determination to obey orders and do their duty. . . As they charged the artillery fire would break their formation and they would get mixed; then they would close up, go forward, receive the withering infantry fire, and those who were

able would run to the houses and fight as best they could; and then the next brigade coming up in succession would do its duty and melt like snow coming down on warm ground."

General Couch wrote, too, of another source of suffering:

"That night was bitter cold and a fearful one for the front line hugging the hollows in the ground, and for the wounded who could not be reached. It was a night of dreadful suffering. Many died of wounds and exposure, and as fast as men died they stiffened in the wintry air, and on the front line were rolled forward for protection to the living. Frozen men were placed for dumb sentries."

Burnside was finally repulsed all along the line with heavy losses and did not renew the attack on the 14th. On the night of the 15th of December he retreated across the Rappahannock and hostilities for 1862 were over.

In the aforementioned counter-charge on the Confederate right, Colonel E. N. Atkinson in command of Lawton's Brigade was wounded and captured by the enemy. Again Evans was senior colonel of the brigade. This time he served in the capacity of a brigadier-general until April of the following year.

A few days after the Battle of Fredericksburg, Clement Evans wrote his wife from camp near Port Royal, Virginia:

"My dearest darling

I am truly glad to see by your letter of the 24 dec. that your anxiety for me is satisfied by hearing

that I am safe. I know you must have suffered during those long days from the time you heard of the battle until you heard of myself. You write desponding and cheerless, my darling--I hope you will banish gloominess from your thoughts, and look to the bright side of the present and future. . .I know you are in trouble about coming out here and bringing the "little one", for fear the exposure may not be well for him--I am not there to comfort you, in your loneliness and many things cause you to be sad, which you would not notice if I was there--But my dear, ought you not to be grateful that I am spared to you? How many poor wives are sorrowing now for their husbands slain in battle! Think of Mrs. Lawton whose husband was wounded, taken by the Yankees, carried away, and she had no tidings of him, whether dead or alive, untill the 31st of Dec--and even then only know that he was in hospital at Alexandria wounded--Mrs. Captain Miles is here at a farm house nursing her husband who is shot through the body-- Let us not give over to the spirit of mumuring and discontent, but thank our Maker that we are spared for each other. . . ."

Soon after that letter Allie Evans began her trip to Virginia and while Clement was impatiently waiting and Allie was busily traveling, camp routine and command functions nevertheless went on most regularly. It was also then that

Evans, commander of the brigade, received the sad communique that his friend, Captain Edward P. Lawton of Savannah, had died. He was mentioned in the letter of January 3, and had been a close associate and participant in all hardships since the formation of the brigade. "Ned" Lawton, assistant adjutant-general of the brigade, had been wounded at Fredericksburg and fallen into enemy hands. He died in a Northern hospital camp. It was a loss deeply felt by all the officers because of the popularity of this young man. This esteem was attested in the Official Report of the battle and by a letter and resolution of January 11, which the officers of the brigade addressed to the editors of both the Savannah Republican and the Savannah Morning News.

Colonel Evans made the official report dated Dec. 19, 1862, and makes this praise of Captain Lawton:

"I cannot forbear to mention in terms of unqualified praise the heroism of Capt. E. P. Lawton, assistant adjutant general of the brigade, from the beginning of the advance until near the close of the fight, when he received a dangerous wound and was unavoidably left in the open plain where he fell. Cheering on the men, leading this regiment, or restoring the line of another, encouraging officers, he was everywhere along the whole line the bravest among the brave. Just as the four

regiments emerged from the neck of the woods referred to, his horse was shot under him, and in falling so far disabled him that thousands less ardent or determined would have felt justified in leaving the field, but, limping on, he rejoined the line again in their advance toward the battery, but soon received the wound with which he fell."

In Evans' manuscript collection there is a copy of the text of the resolution sent to the newspapers:

"Whereas intelligence has reached us that Capt. E. P. Lawton Late A. A. Genl in this Brigade. . . is now no more, and whereas he had endeared himself to the whole Brigade as a gentleman by the kind and courteous demeanor which marked his intercourse with us official as well as personal, and as a Soldier by the undaunted valour which he displayed in every battle in which he participated from the actions around Richmond. . . to that of Fredericksburg. . . where in the language of the official report 'he was seen cheering on the men, leading this Regiment, restoring the line of another, encouraging officers, he was everywhere along the whole line the bravest of the brave': Be it therefore resolved
1st That in the death of Captain Lawton the South has lost a champion worthy of her cause, Georgia a son of whom she might justly feel proud, and this Brigade an officer

highly appreciated for his distinguished efficiency.
2nd Resolved that whilst we deeply deplore his death,
and will ever proudly cherish his memory, we tender
to his bereaved family our heartfelt sympathies and
will supplicate for them that consolation which 'He
who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb' alone can bestow.
3rd Resolved, That in token of our regard for our
lamented brother officer, we will wear for the
appointed time, the usual badge of mourning."

This memory lasted many years for in a diary of 1903,
Evans entered for Sunday, December 13th:

"Anniversary of the bloody battle of Fredericks-
burg 1862 in which I was engaged. My friend. . .
E. P. Lawton adjt Genl of brigade was mortally wounded
in my presence. I was commanding the brigade in a
charge. In honor of this noble officer, I gave his
name Lawton to my boy then not quite two months old."

With the mortal wound of Captain Edward P. Lawton at
Fredericksburg, his close friendship with my grandfather
ended. But, the memory of that affection and the respect
for his brave friend has been perpetuated with honor through
my family.

LAWTON BRYAN EVANS, that baby who surprised my
grandmother after her letter of October 26, 1862, and

namesake of Captain Edward P. Lawton, was born in Lumpkin, Georgia. He was graduated when Emory was at Oxford and then attended the University of Georgia, receiving his M. A. in 1881. He was given an honorary LLD from Emory University in Atlanta in later life. At 20 he came to Augusta, Georgia, as superintendent of the newly consolidated city and Richmond County public school systems. For 52 years he held this job. When Nicholas Murray Butler, president of Columbia University in New York, came to Augusta in 1932 for Dr. Evans' 50th Anniversary as school chief, he presented him an award known as the Distinguished Service Medal of Columbia. This was the only non-graduate ever to be given this honor by Columbia. Lawton Evans' History of Georgia textbooks for grammar schools and high schools were used in the public schools for many years and his numerous books for young people included: AMERICA FIRST, HEROES OF TROY, HEROES OF ISRAEL, THE PATHFINDER, and WITH WHIP AND SPUR. He was made an honorary Phi Beta Kappa member by the University of Georgia when the chapter in Athens was chartered. He married Florence Campbell of Augusta and they had three children. The eldest was named Lawton B. Evans, Jr. He was killed in August, 1918, while in training to be a World War I air pilot.

Following this distinguished line, we named our younger son, now 21, Lawton Evans Stephens.