To my late workmen at the "Tredegar Iron Works"

On Saturday last I received by the hands of Gatewood Talley information that you had determined by a mutual combination that you would not work for me again until I had discharged my negroes from the Squeezer & Puddle Rolls where they have been working several Years and until the Armory Iron Company had discharged them from the Puddling furnaces and that the Puddlers and heaters required their pay to be increased. I requested Mr Talley to say to you that I regretted that you had given up constant employment at good wages always promptly paid in cash, but that I fully recognised the right of any individual to leave my employment at any time. At the same time I had no idea of relinquishing my right to discharge or employ any one at my pleasure. That I had not designed to put Negroes to puddling at the Tredegar Works but that now I should be compelled by your quitting my employment to do so, and that I had never intended to discharge any of my hands who did their duty. That in reference to the price of Puddling I had advanced the price two or three Years ago when Iron advanced and when Iron fell last Summer I might with propriety have reduced the Wages but had not done so to this day — That the Heaters and Puddlers who complained of low wages could earn with ordinary diligence from $2.00 to $2.75 while the Rollers may earn from $3.00 to $5.00 per Day and that I could not accede to any demand they had made — I see no reason now to change this determination. If I were to yield to your demands I would be giving up the rights guaranteed to me by the constitution and laws of the State in which we live. ——

This I hope you will never expect me to do; and having heard nothing further from You since my reply was conveyed to You on the 22nd Inst. I must infer that You do not intend to work any longer for me. I therefore give You notice that I wish all who occupy my houses to give me possession of them as soon as practicable and I have given directions for Your accounts to be made out. I will waive all claims on account of the usual notice not being given and will in advance of the usual pay day pay each man all that is due to him as soon as he delivers to me the possession of his House. Those who do not occupy my houses will be paid off tomorrow and all I have to add is that You will bear in mind that You have discharged Yourselves — that I gave assurance before hand to two of your number Henry Thomas & Lott Joy that I would never discharge One of You who continued to do his duty to me and now having endeavored to do my duty as your Employer, I wish that You may, One and all of You, never regret that you have given up the employment You had from me.

Your Obdt. Servt.

J. R. Anderson

Tredegar Iron Works
Richmond 26th May 1847