

**Confederate Invasions – The Union In Peril
The Antietam and Gettysburg Campaigns
Class Notes**

Lecture 2 – Maryland Campaign Background

A. Confederate Reversal of Fortune – Lee’s Seven Days Campaign

- Lee Takes Command: Joe Johnston wounded at Seven Pines on 31 May
- Lee background: West Point; Mexican War hero; Virginian; offered Union command; leads Virginia Militia; military adviser to Davis
- Interim 1-26 June: McClellan inches closer to Richmond; while Lee reorganizes and renames Army of Northern Virginia
- Seven Days Battles: Lee moves first. Take the offensive on 26 June. In five battles, his army suffers 20,000 casualties. But he halts Union offensive (16,000 Union casualties). Army of Potomac is driven back to James River at Harrison Landing.
- McClellan is “out-generaled” by Lee and discredited in the eyes of his superiors, including Lincoln. His caution and retreat in the face of Lee’s audacity snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.
- 23 Jul – 3 Aug: Halleck replaces McClellan as general-in-chief; orders McClellan to withdraw his army and return to Washington
- June-Aug – John Pope organizes Army of Virginia (40,000 men)

B. Confederate Strategic Objectives: Take the Offensive - Two Invasions of North

- Recruit soldiers in border states of Kentucky & Maryland
- Seek tactical military victories
- Take the war into northern territory; create panic; gather food & fodder
- Exploit weakening northern public support for the war
- Influence November mid-term elections in North. Help Peace Democrats
- Gain foreign recognition – England & France need Southern cotton for their textile mills

C. Kentucky Campaign: August – October 1862

- Two Confederate armies under Braxton Bragg & E. Kirby Smith invade Kentucky
- Battle of Perryville – Union commander Buell defeats Confederate Bragg
- No Confederate objectives are achieved

D. Second Manassas: 28 - 30 August 1862

- Confederates route Pope’s army – another failed Union commander
- Utter confusion in Washington. Remnants of two defeated armies fill the town.
- How will Lee exploit victory?

E. Maryland Campaign: 3 – 20 September: Lee’s Bold Move to End War

- Lee convinces Davis to keep the initiative by an invasion of northern territory
- Lee’s army is weakened by casualties & poorly equipped. But, morale is high.
- Confederate invasion causes panic in north – a national emergency
- Lincoln reluctantly turns again to McClellan to take charge; move against Lee
- Emancipation: Lincoln seeks to use Presidential war powers to end slavery in states under rebellion. Viewed as a necessity of war to deny slave labor to the rebels. Cabinet urges caution, delay pending Union military victory.

F. Opening Military Moves - A Campaign of Three’s

- Special Order 191: Lee’s audacious plan to eliminate threat to his rear. Lee divides his army into 4 parts in enemy territory
- McClellan moves quickly to consolidate, reequip & resupply Army of Potomac.
- Jackson begins Harpers Ferry Mini-Campaign 10-14 September
- Union garrison of almost 12,000 troops threatens Lee’s rear
- Strategic location is indefensible due to surrounding heights
- Jackson approaches from three sides; seizes heights; places artillery
- 14 September: Jackson’s artillery begins shelling Harpers Ferry

G. Intelligence Coup: On 13 Sep. lost copy of Lee’s Special Order 191 delivered to McClellan in Frederick. McClellan has Lee’s plan! He does virtually nothing to exploit this opportunity for 18 hours.

H. Battle of South Mountain – 14 September 1862

- Lee seeks to delay Union approach until Jackson can seize Harpers Ferry
- Three passes are “chock points” that offer the only Union access to Lee’s army
- Lee has less than 10,000 men to hold against 3 Union Corps (30,000 men)
- Confederates hold all day; fall back after dark. McClellan fails to pursue
- Evening of 14 Sep. is critical moment. Lee’s army is open to destruction.

I. Harper’s Ferry Surrenders on 15 September

- Almost 12,000 Union troops - largest U.S. surrender in history until WWII
- Huge number of supplies captured (13,000 rifles, 200 wagons, 73 artillery pieces)
- Jackson begins moving men north in late afternoon of 15th.

J. McClellan Advances Slowly - Union Opportunity Missed

- 15 September – Moves Union Army to east bank of Antietam Creek
- 16 September – Content with scouting; preparing to attack
- Lee uses critical time to complete Harpers Ferry capture, reunite his army
- McClellan, Intelligence Chief Pinkerton consistently inflate enemy troop strength.