

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

Lecture 4 – October 1862- June 1863: A Tale of Two Rivers
Lee Victorious on Rappahannock; Grant Advances on Mississippi

A. Review: Aftermath of Antietam

- Mid-term Elections – Republicans retain control of Congress.
- Emancipation Proclamation meets with negative reaction in North and South.
- European powers pull back from plans to grant Confederacy recognition
- Union support - both popular and political - for the war is flagging
- Lincoln replaces both McClellan (with Burnside) in the East and Buell (with Rosecrans) in Tennessee; Grant begins offensive to seize Vicksburg
- Lincoln emphasizes that he expects action – leads to unusual winter campaigns

B. War in the West – Union Enjoys Only Limited Tactical Success

- In October 1862, the new Union Commander Rosecrans leads Army of the Cumberland aggressively against Bragg's Confederate Army of Tennessee.
- Rosecrans narrowly defeats Bragg at Stones River/Murfreesboro in January 1863
- Bragg is forced to retreat. The Confederates abandon Tennessee to Union forces.
- Grant conducts an unsuccessful two-pronged offensive toward Vicksburg in Dec.
- During the winter, Grant is unable to find a way to move south of Vicksburg.
- In April, Porter's gunboats succeed in running 4 miles of Confederate batteries
- Grant is poised to attack Vicksburg from south and east.
- Despite some success, Western campaigns fail to raise Northern morale.

C. Burnside at Fredericksburg – New Union Commander; Same Results

- Burnside reluctant to accept command. A career officer; he knows his limitations.
- Union campaign opens in early Nov. Bold move south catches Lee off guard
 - Burnside reaches Rappahannock River at Fredericksburg on 19 Nov
 - Crossing is delayed 3 weeks by logistical mistakes - no pontoon bridges
 - Lee uses time to fortify heights west of Fredericksburg
- Battle of Fredericksburg, 13 December – Union disaster
 - Burnside orders frontal assaults against strong Confederate defenses
 - Franklin achieves initial Union success on left; but fails to exploit advantage
 - Piecemeal Union attacks on Marye's Heights repulsed with heavy casualties
- Aftermath of Fredericksburg – low point for the Army of the Potomac
- Northern press, public opinion severely critical.
- Army morale hurt by defeat, lack of supplies, discipline slips
- Mud March (20 Jan) – Burnside's final disaster
- Lincoln replaces Burnside with Joe Hooker on 24 Jan.

D. Hooker Takes Command – Shows Initial Promise

- Hooker Career: Strong reputation as a fighter and leader; has personal faults
- Hooker's initial steps reinvigorate the army, improve morale
- Creates Bureau of Military Information (BMI) under Col. George Sharp – first professional intelligence corps
- Lincoln encourages Hooker to focus strategic plan on Lee's army, not Richmond
- 27-29 April: Army of Potomac moves around Confederate left flank, surprising Lee.
- 30 April: Hooker halts in Wilderness near Chancellorsville crossroads

E. Battle of Chancellorsville – Hooker Loses His Nerve; Lee Loses His “Right Arm”

- On 30 April, Lee reacts to Hooker's move; splits his forces; attacks in the Wilderness
- 1 May: Hooker inexplicably halts the advance and retreats into a defensive position
- 2 May: Lee splits his army again. Jackson launches crushing attack on Union right flank.
- Howard's XI Corps collapses, begins Union rout.
- Jackson wounded during ill-advised night reconnaissance between lines.
- On May 3-4, Lee resumes to offensive; drives Union Army across the Rappahannock.
- Chancellorsville aftermath: Lee's great victory overshadowed by Jackson's death
- Lee, Army of Northern Virginia are the institutional focus of Confederate morale.

F. May- June 1863: Political Danger in the North; Strategic Debate in the South

- Lincoln's government faces serious political, military challenges
 - Antiwar sentiment among civilians is growing
 - Copperhead Democrats emboldened to push for armistice, political settlement.
 - New Draft Law; Emancipation Proclamation alienated many Northerners
- Confederate leaders engage in heated exchanges over next strategic military moves
- Many politicians, generals favor shifting some of Lee's troops westward
- Lee convinces Davis to reinforce his army for a second invasion of the North
- Campaign goals are similar to Maryland Campaign of previous fall:
 - Relieve pressure on Richmond
 - Strengthen antiwar sentiment in North, affect off-year state elections
 - Take pressure off southern farmers; forage from Pennsylvania countryside
 - Create civilian panic; pressure Lincoln to shift troops from Western Theater
 - Defeat Union army at time, place of Lee's choosing
- Lee forced to reorganize his army after death of Stonewall Jackson
 - Creates 3 Corps under Longstreet, Ewell, and A.P. Hill
 - Ewell, Hill new to corps command level – both have physical problems
 - Changes dynamics of Lee's leadership team; Creates potential communications, performance issues