

The War Between the States: America's Uncivil War

Chapter 21 – Gettysburg/1863/East/II

Summary:

The Federals and Confederates had crashed together in a series of colossal battles in the Eastern Theater throughout 1862 and the first half of 1863. The Southerners amassed a string of victories that stunned the world. Their crowning success, however, at Chancellorsville, in May, 1863, only weeks before Gettysburg, also produced their greatest loss of the war with the death of Robert E. Lee's most successful lieutenant, Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson. This loss came at a time when the South's already greatly-overmatched supply of resources and manpower were further deteriorating with each passing month due to the Northern blockade and other factors. Meanwhile, Federal industry was hitting its stride like never before, and the U.S. armed forces were growing in size, power, and expertise.

For many reasons—not least to feed his successful but famished Army of Northern Virginia—Lee decided to invade the Federal states for the second time in two years. Lee also wanted to give the Confederacy's own crop producers in Virginia, the so-called "Breadbasket of the Confederacy," an opportunity to bring in their harvests and help feed a hungry South. Finally, despite the South's battle wins, they had not managed to so decisively triumph as to provoke the Northern populace to demand an end to the war. Lee hoped for such a victory as he headed north from Virginia and into Union territory. The main Federal armies in the East gathered to confront him, and the two sides eventually blundered into one another at a small college town in Pennsylvania unknown to the outside world until July 1-3, 1863.

Identification:

1. George Meade
2. George Pickett
3. Joshua Chamberlain
4. Robert Gould Shaw

Completion:

1. Miscommunication between Lee and Cavalry General _____ en route north created problems for the Confederates early in the Gettysburg Campaign.
2. Among the Confederates' problems at Gettysburg was intense disagreement over battle tactics between Generals _____ and _____.
3. _____ was the legendary assault that proved the turning point on the final day of the series of battles at Gettysburg. Generals _____ and _____ commanded the brigades that attacked.
4. _____, _____ and _____ were among the famous locations on the Gettysburg battlefield.
5. Federal generals who played key roles in the successful defense at Gettysburg included _____, _____, and _____.
6. Was President Lincoln generally pleased, displeased, or neutral about his Federal commander's performance at Gettysburg?

7. Governor _____ of the state of _____ spearheaded the formation of a black Federal army regiment. Brilliant black abolitionist _____ helped draw men to the regiment, and two of his own sons enlisted.
8. _____ and _____ were two Federal commanders discussed in this chapter who eschewed the practice of Total War.

Thought Questions:

1. Explain contributing factors to the South's failure to succeed in the Gettysburg Campaign.
2. Describe the Lee-Longstreet Controversy.
3. What would you have done differently (and not done differently) had you been commanding the Confederates at Gettysburg?

4. Discuss some of President Lincoln's key points in the Gettysburg Address, his evident objectives, and ways in which some observers have questioned the logic of the speech, despite its revered place in most American histories.
5. Tell the story of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment.