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History 225

Re: Lecture/Notes w/ Commanders in Blue and Gray

Bio Sketches of Relationships:

1. Lincoln/McClellan

George Brinton McClellan: Dysfunctional personality. Paranoid w/ messianic complex.

Born into an aristocratic family in Phila. in 1827. His father was the city's most preeminent physician. Dr. McClellan was a hard driver; he founded the Jefferson Medical School.

McClellan had the advantage of a first-rate education> He enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania at the age of 14. Two years later he went to West Point where he graduate 2nd in his class of more than 30 in 1846.

Unlike many other officers he did not lose his edge after graduation (langusihing on some army post on the frontier). He invented a cavalry saddle; translated a manual on the bayonet from French into English. He served w/ distinction in the Mexican War. He was one of three junior officers who were sent to observe the Crimean War in the 1850s. He was self-taught in Russian and translated a 300-page Russian book on military tactics into English.

McClellan was the hero of the 1861 campaigns in West Virginia. The irony was that he was never present at any of the three major battles won by the Union that allowed western Virginia to throw off Confederate rule. But since he was the commander of rank in the theatre he was credited with being the savior of the moment.

McClellan's star rises just at the time the Union needed a hero after the terrible reverses at First Manassas and Ball's Bluff.

He takes the pieces of the Union army in the east after these setbacks and forges the Army of the Potomac. His organizational talents were considerable. He whipped the green troops of Bull Run into an army. And they loved him for it. McClellan was a genius at creating an army; the trouble was he could not fight it.

McClellan took over his responsibilities as general in chief of all the Union armies and as Commander of the Army of the Potomac in July 1861. But he did not depart for his campaign against the Confederacy until April 1862! All the the time Lincoln coddled, cajoled, wheedled, needled, nudged, reasoned, and commanded Mac to campaign. Lincoln seemed tempted, as he once said, to borrow the Army of the Potomac and take it south toward Richmond.

All these months of preparation and drill and fine tuning this magnificent military machine seemed all Mac cared about. He was indifferent to his C-in-C's political need to get the war of dead

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center and attack the enemy. McClellan whined about being rushed into a battle when he was not ready. He raised the specter of being outmanned by the Confederates. He always needed more men to match up against the growing might of the Rebels.

Mac's Army of the Potomac strength was always 120,000 to almost 130,000 men against a CSA force only 1/3 as large. But his intelligence told him the Rebels in front of him were massed at 170,000 later he rose the ante to 200,000.

He refused to share w/ Lincoln his plans for engaging the enemy.

He avoided Lincoln. He snubbed him bluntly on one occasion. Lincoln was a "fool," the "Original Gorilla" etc.

McClellan and the Peninsula Campaign. Comment.

McClellan the political general. Mention his Harrison Landing Letter to Lincoln.

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## 2. Lee and Jackson: Success in the East

This partnership while it lasted was eminently successful. Lee and Jackson together--Lee the planner and Jackson the executor of these plans--were able to neutralize the massive Union war machine and by Autumn of '62 drove the Yankee invaders from nearly all of the Old Dominion. Once Lee lost Jackson at Chancellorsville in summer of '63 he was never able to find his like again. (Speculate on this loss in terms of the decline of the CSA).

Jackson remembered for saving the day at First Manassas. Then he rose to the position of an icon in Southern eyes with his Valley Campaign. Lincoln sent in three armies into the Valley to bottle up Jackson and he outmaneuvered and outfought all of them. The importance of the Valley Campaign was to tie down Union troops in their futile efforts to subdue Jackson while they could have been used by McClellan in his Peninsula Campaign.

Jackson and Lee's relationship was largely professional. While they shared a strong mutual respect for each other's talents they were never personally close. Very few people ever got close to Jackson and knew much about his own inner world. Part of the reason may have been because Jackson was a true eccentric.

His religiosity. He would'nt fight on Sunday. He would not read mail or send mail if it was in transit on a Sunday. He sometimes raises a pointed finger in the air to improve his blood circulation. He was found many times sucking on lemons.

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### 3. Grant/Sherman: Union Success in the West

"He stood by me when I was crazy and I stood by him when he was drunk; and now, sir, we stand by each other always."

A bit of an exaggeration but the sentiment was right on target.

The Grant/Sherman partnership in command was the most military partnership in the Civil War on either side. In contrast to the professional partnership of Lee and Jackson, this was a partnership founded on deep trust, intimacy, and collaboration.

The two men could not have been more different. Grant was short, of modest build, with brown hair and a well-trimmed beard. Sherman was gangly and slightly built (Mutt & Jeff team), with reddish hair and a scraggly beard. (and usually not too well turned out)

Grant's almost inhuman cool.

Sherman's was of a nervous disposition, never able to keep still, full of ideas and notions, jerking in one direction and then in the next. While Grant kept his own council; Sherman jumped from topic to topic and never kept secret what he was thinking about.

Intellectually, Grant grasped all problems in their simplicity. Sherman viewed life as a chaos and was manically passionate about order and stability.

Together they were the embodiment of the allegory of the Fox and the hedgehog.

Had they not had each other and bonded so tightly it is possible they would never have on their own achieved very much during the Civil War.

Sherman's record after he resigned his Kentucky Campaign. Grant restored his belief in himself.

There came a time after the battle of Shiloh when Grant was relieved of his command in the West and replaced by Halleck, that Grant was thinking of leaving the Army. Sherman talked him out of it. (Point to McPherson's contingency assertion. Same might be said about Jackson. Would Jackson have made the difference at Gettysburg, etc.)

Shiloh was a revelation to both men. What they learned from this battle was that the Union would have to change its strategy or the war would end in a bloody but futile stalemate.