

History 225

Re: Addendum notes to Gettysburg

Source: E. Thomas, Lee

Lee went into Pennsylvania to fight a battle of annihilation against the Union's Army of the Potomac.

The point again is that Lee believed the Confederacy could not be idle. It had to strike w/ a convincing and devastating victory before the Union's latent strength and greater force could be mobilized against the South. Time was not on the side of the rebellion.

Thomas defends Lee's resistance and final rejection of Longstreet's counter-plan to move the army around Meade's left and south toward Washington D.C. thereby forcing Meade to attack. This would give the Confederates the advantage of choosing the best ground to defend.

Thomas defends Lee on this. In hindsight Longstreet's plans had retrospective merit. But it was not that easy. Could he have moved his army of 70,000 without the Union attacking them as they were on the move. The other problem was that Lee's army could not sit around and wait for the Union to decide to attack. It would in time starve to death after it foraged the surrounding countryside.

Lee was responsible for Gettysburg, but Thomas points out that he had help from Stuart, Ewell, and Longstreet.