

History 225

Re: Notes on Lee Invasion of the North

Source: E. Thomas, Lee(1995)

Chpt. "We Cannot Afford to Be Idle"

Note: Personal losses,

By 1862 The Lee estates at White House, "Romancoke," and a third house and grounds were all behind Union lines.

Mary Custis Lee, Lee's wife, for a time was caught up in the Union advance and was a "guest" of Union forces until McDowell gave her passage through Union lines to the city of Richmond where she sat out the war. For more than a year while Lee was commanding the Army of Northern Virginia in the Peninsula and at Second Manassas he did not see her or his daughters. He would run across "Rooney" Lee on the field of battle. "Rooney" was an artillery officer under Alexander and he ran into the old man at Antietam.

While the war raged a grandchild of Lee's died. ^{by end a few} Later a daughter, Anne, died as well. So Lee lost family and the family estates during the war. He expected, if he survived the war (he was grazed by a bullet by a Union sniper at 2nd Manassas; thrown from his horse at Chancellorsville and sprained one arm and broke bones in the other. So that when he invaded Maryland in September 1862 he could not sit a horse. He was carried into the Union in an ambulance. He was also beginning to show the first symptoms of heart disease. Lee was 57 when he took the Army of Northern Virginia into Maryland.

Add here that Jefferson Davis's young son died during the war years. He fell from the balcony of the Davis home in Richmond.

Lincoln lost a son as well. Death of Willie to typhoid fever in February 1862.

Mary Lincoln lost brothers and step-brothers who served with the Confederacy.

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1. In the invasion of Maryland you get an insight into Lee's killer instinct. Lee's intention was to annihilate the Army of the Potomac. He had driven McClellan out of the Peninsula, defeated Pope at 2nd Manassas, but would not be satisfied until he obliterated the main eastern Federal force. He came north to do just that and other things in the fall of 1862.

Lee intuited that he had out-psyched McClellan and his superior force. He understood that the morale of the Army of the Potomac was now very fragile and possibly near cracking. Another decisive defeat and Lincoln's eastern army might crack down the middle and be ruined for any future combat.

Lee had a soul mate in this in General Stonewall Jackson. Jackson himself was a killer and believed in destructive war. If Jackson had had his way at the beginning of the conflict he would have made the "Black Flag" the conditions under which to fight this war. (You get a sense from the Burns film that Jackson was a war-lover).

Note: Charles Royster's Destructive War has a good chapter on Jackson and his views about war.

Lee believed that time was as formidable an enemy of the Confederacy as the Union military arm. The longer the war went on the greater the chances of the North with its superior production and greater pool of manpower. That's why after 2nd Manassas Lee felt that he could not repair back to Richmond to rest and refit his army. As he said "We cannot afford to be idle."

So Lee took his army of 55,000 across the Potomac in fall of 1862 despite the fact that he knew his army was ill-prepared for the invasion and his and Jackson's plans for taking the war into the enemy camp. He admitted that his army was not prepared to Davis.

2. What did he expect to accomplish in this invasion:

Remember here from the Gallagher essay what Lee's present-day critics have said about him. Especially, the chastisement aimed at him for "wasting his army" by futile large-scale raids into the North when he should have been husbanding his forces in a defensive mode and letting the enemy come to him.

--he hoped to draw Federal troops out of Virginia by coming North. Virginia civilians, and especially the farmers,

*Stonewall Jackson's
disaster
because
to
this*

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needed a respite from the war. Farmers needed relief to get in the fall crops.

--Let his ragged and starved army feed off the resources of the previously undisturbed Maryland farm lands; replenish his army with Maryland horses,

--drawing Federal forces out of Virginia was essential in reducing the impact they had on the slave populations that fell across the routes of the invading Yankees.

--most important was to confront the Army of the Potomac once again and whoop them in a decisive major battle. Thereby destroying the morale of the Union forces in the East.

--a major victory could be parlayed into political gains with the 1862 elections approaching. If Northerners believed that Lee was invincible they might vote Democratic and make Lincoln's hold on the popular will slip significantly. Even the possibility of forcing the Union to allow the South to go in peace and enjoy her independence.

--another resounding defeat of Union forces would leave the North open to all kinds of possibilities to wage a destructive war on the enemy's home front: See Kegel on this.

--always an outside chance that Whitehall and Paris might move from recognition of belligerency to offer mediation in the war. this would be the first step toward recognition of the Confederacy. (develop how it might go).

In his modest way, Lee in coming North was staking a claim to become the Father of a new country. More than Jefferson Davis, Lee was acutely aware that the war could be lost in either the east or the west; but it could only be won in the East. And it was up to Lee to make it happen. Davis never understood this completely.

When Lee established his headquarters in Frederick he heard from Davis that the president intended to join Lee and the army in Maryland. Lee diplomatically persuaded him not to come as he could not guarantee Davis' security. He knew that Davis would most likely not agree to Lee and Jackson's plans to range freely throughout Maryland and Pennsylvania after destroying the Federal army.

Lee wanted to restore the Lee family name that his father Light Horse Harry Lee had stained during the American Revolution.
{Spent time on this because these same motives were behind Lee's second invasion of the North in 1863 which ended at Gettysburg}

Lee informed J. Davis about all his plans. (unlike Joe Johnston) never only to the extent that he wanted Davis to know - nothing more).

Jmaes Kegel, North with Lee and Jackson (1996)

Kegel's thesis is that the Confederacy's plans for the East, which ultimately led to Gettysburg, was all part of an integrated strategy that was apparent in the Shenandoah Valley campaigns of 1862, Second Manassas, incursion into Maryland in 1862, and finally the invasion of Pennsylvania a year later.

Planning for an invasion and waging of economic warfare against the North Kegel attributed to Stonewall Jackson. Encouraged after Manassas or First Bull Run and mindful of the morale problems in the North, Jackson came up with the idea that the time was ripe for an incursion into the North. To take the war to the Union and not wait for the next Union invasion of the southland.

In mid-October 1861 Jackson proposed to General Smith the following:

- Destroy industrial establishments wherever they were found
- break up the lines of communication between large commercial centers in the North
- Close the coal mines
- Take hold of the narrow neck between Pittsburgh and Lake Erie.

Kegel insists that Jackson pushed these ideas with Lee when Lee became commander of Eastern troops.

After the Shenandoah Campaign he proposed a more detailed plan of two great columns of forces to invade the North. One column would move on Pittsburgh and destroy the Union arsenal there. The other column would cross into Pennsylvania and move and take Harrisburg and winter over until the spring and then move on Philadelphia.

4. King Coal vs. King Cotton

Kegel makes interesting case for the vital need for coal for the Union. For the Union navy that was expanded to enforce the blockade, etc. And for railroads to ship war materials, troops, and the commerce of the Union.

He notes that most of the coal production was in Pennsylvania and, more importantly, most of this anthracite coal was mined in Pennsylvania. All was in striking distance of a Confederate invasion.

Jackson's plan based on economic warfare. Cripple the coal production of the Union and her economic infrastructure and Lincoln would have to sue for peace. Kegel presents an interesting analogue between King Cotton and King Coal.

CHAPTER SHOULD BE REVIEW FOR SPECIFICS

Kegel, p. 2

Point here is the geography that favored the South with the Shenandoah Valley running from SW to NE.

Spring of 1862 the fortunes of war seemed to favor the Union. McClellan was posed to take Richmond. Victories in the West at Shiloh, taking of island No. 10 (when did New Orleans fall?) all pointed to an imminent Union victory in the war.

Note that the Peninsula Campaign preoccupied the course of the war.

With McClellan's defeat in Virginia the Confederacy was now posed to respond with its own counteroffensive. Richmond, Kegel argues, was now ready to unleash Jackson's invasion plans. More importantly, Lee was now head of the Army of Northern Virginia (not Johnston).

[Note might want to see Royster's Destructive War for his analysis of Jackson's idea of "total war".)

Kegel has a series of chapters dealing with the Peninsular Campaign. This placed a hold on any Southern incursion or invasion into the North.

Kegel presents Second Manassas as the beginning of the move north.

Chapter 14 The Invasion Begins

This is the Maryland campaign that ends with Antietam. In just three months Lee had reversed the situation on the ground. Now the initiative was with the Rebs. Forcing McClellan out of Virginia and defeat of Pope raised the hopes of Richmond.

Kegel has copy of Special Orders No. 191 on pp. 168/9

With this Lee had to scramble to concentrate his forces at Sharpsburg. It was Lee's plan to pick the time to attack McClellan when the situation best suited his plans. When he had all his army concentrated on the Maryland side of the Potomac. But w/ the lost orders the initiative passed to Mac.

Lee was counting on Mac's slowness to give him plenty of lead time. He knew the mind of McClellan and was confident that the Union's general's cautiousness would play into his hands.

CFF

Kegel, p. 3

Lee at G'burg w/ 60,000 troops was in a position to carry out Jackson's plans of 1862.

Ewell had divisions at Carlisle within striking distance of Harrisburg and the complex of railroad lines connecting Penna, with New York and w/ Pittsburgh to the west.

The anthracite coal mines in Pa. were to the northeast (See the diagram in Chpt. 4.

A victory at Gettysburg would have opened countless targets of opportunity for Lee during the summer and fall months. Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Washington, industry, railroads, coal fields in Penna. Lee could have foraged at will across the countryside if he had beaten Meade at G'burg.

Bring the hard hand of the war to the Yankees; stir up the peace parties in the North preparatory to the 1864 elections; possibly restir interest in Anglo-French recognition. There were countless opportunities available to Lee.