

A Southerner's View of Gettysburg

Edited Notes

Athens Civil War Roundtable

April 10, 2013

These are edited notes used to prepare for a presentation given at our Civil War Roundtable. The purpose of my presentation was to take a look at the Battle of Gettysburg from the Southern perspective, particularly as that perspective was articulated by one of the most prominent Southern historians, Douglas Southall Freeman. I tried to not speak verbatim from these notes, and probably skipped over some sections because of time constraints. To better understand the changing dynamics of the battle from day-to-day it might be useful to review the excellent animated maps found at my Civil War Trust link.

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The opinions expressed herein are derived from the writings of D. S. Freeman and do not necessarily reflect those of the presenter, or of the Civil War Roundtable, its members, officers, or employees. Neither should anything be taken as absolute fact but instead is presented to stimulate an honest exchange of further opinions.

Gettysburg may or may not have been the most important battle of the Civil War (and that will part of our discussion next month) but it is almost certainly one of the most studied and debated battles in the history of the entire world. As shown on the list of suggested books related to this program, several books have been published about all or parts of the battle, and believe me that was only a partial listing. During at least on two of my own visits to Gettysburg there have been tours from West Point, and I don't suppose the cadets are brought to Gettysburg just for the scenery or numerous gift shops.

While most of the basic facts are fairly well known there is a wide range of opinions about various decisions, efforts, and circumstances that may or may not have affected the results of the battle. And there is no way we can adequately cover even the basic facets in such a short time. For instance Bill Walker and I once took a two day tour and seminar just about the second day's battle alone. Obviously I won't be trying to venture too far into the details over the next 50 or so minutes

Most of us are probably familiar with the major factors from the Union side: Warren's observations from atop of Little Round Top and the way Meade and Hancock moved troops from point to point to buttress the Federal defenses as needed, and this is why we Yankees tend to say that the North won Gettysburg.

But on the other hand there were and are many Southerners who claimed and still claim the South lost Gettysburg. In other words despite the numerical odds against them Lee's army came very close to winning and if a few things had gone differently the Federals would have been swept from the field in defeat. Indeed even as they were retreating most of the Confederate soldiers believed they had won Gettysburg but running out of ammunition compelled them to leave the field.

I don't intend, and indeed can't, settle these questions. But what I propose to do instead is to share the point of view of one distinguished Southern writer, and certainly a Lee sympathizer, as he seemed to be looking over Lee's shoulder some 73 years after the fact.

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Douglas Southall Freeman was born May 16, 1886, the son of a Confederate officer, in Lynchburg, Virginia. He graduated with an A.B. from Richmond College in 1904 before earning a Ph.D. in history from Johns Hopkins in 1908. In 1911 he obtained a cache of long-lost wartime correspondence between Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis. In 1915 he became the editor of the *Richmond News Leader*, a position he held for 34 years.

At the age of 67 years Freeman died of a heart attack June 13, 1953, at Westbourne, Virginia.

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Freeman's two most important Civil War publications:

R. E. Lee: A Biography.

4 Volumes published between 1934 and 1936 that were winners of the *Pulitzer Prize*.

Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command

3 Volumes published between 1942 and 1944. These led to close friendships with George Marshall and Dwight D. Eisenhower

Thomas Buell has said of Freeman's writings: "His writings popularized Lee more than anything else ever written. ... [H]research was often exacting and discriminating, although in some

instances his citations are so nebulous that they provide shaky foundations for some of his more earnest assertions.”

James M. McPherson has noted that that: “Freeman portrayed a Lee almost without blemishes or warts.”

While we may or may not entirely agree with Freeman’s perspective looking at this battle gives us a chance to examine the offensive side of the battle, and almost always the offensive side is going to be the more interesting.

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Reasons for invading the North:

Food & Forage

Maintaining the initiative

Lee’s sense that time was running out for the Confederacy

Hoping that he would be able to have his army well into Northern territory before Hooker – who was still the Union commander -- realized what was happening, Lee’s plans for moving his army into central Pennsylvania were based upon basic elements of speed and deception. At this time Lee had three infantry corps. Lee dispatched **Ewell** to move west of the Blue Ridge and then north toward Pennsylvania via Winchester, Virginia. In order to deceive Hooker, **A.P. Hill** lingered in the Frederick area. **Longstreet** moved to take a blocking position east of the Blue Ridge before following Hill while **Stuart** and his cavalry had the primary mission of screening Longstreet’s position before moving on up to protect Ewell.

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Lee’s Overall Strategy: “I shall throw an overwhelming force on their advance, crush it, follow up the success, drive one corps back on another, and by successive repulses and surprises before they can concentrate create a panic and virtually destroy the army.”

Lee was always aware of the numerical odds against him, and usually tried to concentrate his forces so that he would have the numerical advantage at that particular point. This statement, purportedly made a couple days in late June to Isaac Trimble, sounds much like his success a couple months earlier at Chancellorsville, and reflected Lee's desire to be able to find and defeat isolated corps from the Northern Army.

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Lee's command style was to seek or to create opportunities for his subordinates to exploit. Once such opportunities were identified it would be up to his subordinate commanders to use their discretion about the manner by which they would take advantage of such opportunities. Lee was not a hands-on commander; instead he gave broad, general orders to his subordinates with the expectation that they in turn would come up with the specific tactics to employ to achieve the assigned mission.

On Day One Lee had every reason to believe he had an excellent opportunity to put his overall strategy into place. Two Federal Corps, the 11th to the north of Gettysburg and the 1st to the west of Gettysburg seemed to be ripe for the picking. Furthermore Lee knew that time was of the essence since there were reports that additional Federal corps were on the way. He knew that it would be virtually impossible for his smaller army to defeat the Federal army if it were at full strength. Furthermore Lee knew from his own personal observations that certain terrain features were important and that it was essential quickly to seize control of those commanding pieces of terrain.

For future reference please note that at the beginning of Day One Longstreet was still in Chambersburg, 26 miles to the west.

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At full strength the Federals had seven infantry corps. However two of those corps, the 11th and the 1st, have been badly damaged as a result of the first day while two other corps, are still in the process of arriving and being deployed. At this point we can see the relative positions as Dan Sickles is moving his 3rd Corps forward to create a salient that was not discovered by the Confederate high command until later in the day. At this point Lee's plan was to attack

either flank of the Federal line; Longstreet with help from Hill attacking from the south while Ewell attacked from the north.

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The general situation prior to the famous Pickett charge, the Federal line has lengthened with the addition of Sykes' 5th Corps into the line as well as the addition of Sedgwick's 6th Corps. Also please note that the Federals still hold Cemetery Hill to the north meaning that Ewell has not succeeded in his attack from the north.

On the Confederate side, as a result of their advances during Day Two their lines, especially Longstreet's, have moved closer to Cemetery Ridge.

Now that we've had a brief review of these three days of the battle at Gettysburg, let's have a look at why Freeman thought the South lost at Gettysburg. There will be five basic criticisms that Freeman presented in chronological order, rather than in importance.

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Freeman's First Reason: The absence of Jeb Stuart

To fully appreciate the significance of this reason we need to look at the back story.

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Brandy Station

June 9, 1863

The first and largest true cavalry combat of the war. Under cover of a morning haze the Union horsemen crossed the Rappahannock River to achieve surprise against Stuart's scattered cavalry. Although the Confederate cavalry recovered sufficiently to compel the Federals to withdraw at the end of the day Stuart was humiliated and strongly criticized by the Southern press.

During this period of the Eastern campaign the Rappahannock River served as an informal dividing line between the Union Army of the Potomac, still commanded by Joe Hooker, and the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, commanded for the past year by Robert E. Lee. The seven Federal infantry corps

were encamped in a loose cluster west of Washington DC stretching further west 30 miles and to the north. On the other hand in order to avoid stripping any one area of forage the Confederates were spread even further from Fredericksburg toward the Blue Ridge Mountain range.

Following the battle of Chancellorsville in early May, 1863 both sides sensed that there would be further campaigning later that summer. In fact Lee was already beginning to implement his plans to invade Pennsylvania while Hooker was anxious to find out what was happening. Thus Hooker dispatched almost his entire cavalry across the Rappahannock to try to find out what was happening. As a result the cavalry battle of Brandy Station erupted, in effect the beginning of the Gettysburg campaign.

While Stuart had once almost been deified for his audacious, romantic ride a year earlier around McClellan as the latter approached Richmond, Stuart was now subjected to severe criticism, even ridicule, for being caught off guard at Brandy Station. It mattered not that the Union horsemen had not been able to halt, let alone detect, Lee's movements; nor did it matter that Stuart's horsemen had retained their positions in and around Brandy Station, and had fought long and hard to preserve such positions. Newspapers, particularly Southern press, were scathing in their comments about Stuart not acting efficiently as Lee's eyes and ears, criticism that cut the publicity conscious Stuart to the quick.

Stuart was looking to repeat his famous ride around McClellan's rear. Accordingly instead of following Lee's intention that Stuart take a direct route to get to Ewell's right Stuart, with three of his five best brigades, took a more circuitous route that took eight days and failed to arrive at Gettysburg until sometime late on Day Two.

Freeman does fault Lee for not making better use of four other cavalry brigades, two independent brigades that were little more than raiders and two others left by Stuart to guard the passes through the Blue Ridge.

Nevertheless for much of the Gettysburg campaign Lee complained he was without his eyes and ears upon which he was so dependent.

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Freeman's Second Reason: Ewell's Failure to Take Cemetery Hill – Day One

Ewell was another well-connected Virginian, having grown up near Manassas. Before being seriously wounded at Second Manassas, Ewell had been Jackson's senior subordinate, a role that he fulfilled with distinction under Stonewall's detailed and specific instructions. Prior to Gettysburg the newly married Ewell returned to active service walking on a wooden leg. Prior losing a good portion of his leg, Ewell liked to lead from the front; but after returning from his convalescence, while still able to ride his horse, albeit with difficulty, he found it more comfortable to ride in a buggy. Capable of extraordinary profanity, he was perhaps Lee's most eccentric general, and for that, coupled by his gentle, compassionate nature, was loved by his rank-and-file.

Lee ordered that it was "only necessary to press 'those people' in order to secure possession of the heights, if possible"

Upon Lee's arrival at the battleground during July 1, Day One, he was pleased that Ewell and Hill had inflicted great damage to the Federal 11th Corps to the north of Gettysburg and to the 1st Corps to the west of the village. Lee could also observe streams of survivors escaping through the village and making their way to the high ground east and to the south of the village. Lee also knew the battle would continue as other Federal troops would arrive and that in all probability these new troops would assume positions along the ridge line that extended to the south, a ridge line we now know as Cemetery Ridge.

Lee's trained eye immediately told him of the importance of seizing Cemetery Hill to the north of the ridge since that position would dominate the ridge line where the Federals were likely to establish their defenses. Furthermore Cemetery Hill would control access to the Baltimore Pike, a possible escape route if the Federals could be defeated and forced to leave the battlefield.

Ewell took Lee's phrase quote if practicable close quote literally and determined that it was not practicable to take the hill because of the lateness of the day coupled with the fatigue of his soldiers who had been marching all day. Freeman, and other critics, say that Lee, as a Southern gentleman, was merely being polite in the use of that term, and that Lee fully intended Ewell to take Cemetery Hill.

In particular Freeman claims that Ewell simply was not accustomed to Lee's looser form of command that was in contrast to Ewell's former commander, Stonewall Jackson, whose orders were more explicit, more forceful, and more detailed.

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Freeman's Third Reason: The extent of the Confederate Line and its resultant thinness.

This is a classic illustration of the advantage of the Federals' interior lines vs the Confederates' exterior lines that were five miles long. Not only are the interior lines more compact allowing for denser formations but communications are much easier. Furthermore, as became important especially during the second day, it was much easier for units along the interior lines to move from place to place as the situation required.

On the other hand, the exterior lines did afford one advantage of the opportunity to concentrate artillery fire upon areas such as the top of the fish hook, Cemetery Hill. Whether the Confederates took advantage of this opportunity would become an issue during Days Two and Three.

Freeman's Fourth Reason: The state of mind of the responsible Confederate commanders.

Lee's Order of Battle at Chancellorsville – May 1-4, 1863

I Corps –

McLaws' Division – Maj Gen Lafayette McLaws

Anderson's Division – Maj Gen R.H. Anderson

II Corps – Stonewall Jackson

Early's Division – Maj Gen Jubal Early

Trimble's Division – Brig Gen R. E. Colston

Lee's Order of Battle at Gettysburg – July 1-3, 1863

I Corps – Lt Gen James Longstreet

McLaws' Division – Maj Gen Lafayette McLaws

Pickett's Division – **Maj Gen George Pickett**

Hood's Division – **Maj Gen John Bell Hood**

II Corps – **Lt Gen Richard Ewell**

Early's Division – Maj Gen Jubal Early

Johnson's Division – **Maj Gen Edward Johnson**

Rode's Division – **Maj Gen R. E. Rodes**

III Corps – Lt Gen **Ambrose Powell Hill**

Anderson's Division – **Maj Gen R. H. Anderson**

Heth's Division – Maj **Gen Henry Heth**

Pender's Division – **William D. Pender**

It's not clear whether this reorganization was done strictly because of Stonewall's death, or if it was done to create a more effective command structure, but in any event Lee's Army went from a two corps, four division structure to a three corps, nine division structure. Some of the brigades in Longstreet's corps were transferred out in order to create the two other corps. All of this created several commanders with new responsibilities including at least two new corps commanders, Ewell and Hill, and six new division commanders.

We've already met one of the new corps commanders, Richard Ewell. The other new corps commander was the relatively young A. P. Hill, the son of a Culpeper, Virginia, merchant, and who had married the sister of the Kentucky raider, John Hunt Morgan. Hill suffered from fragile health due in part to an advanced case of gonorrhea, contracted while a cadet at West Point. He had served for fifteen years in the Regular Army before resigning to join the Confederacy. His character was contradictory in many ways: Gentle and gracious on one hand but impetuous and prickly on the other. His record in the Civil War was marked with inconsistencies: He had served with distinction during Seven Days, at Cedar Mountain, at Antietam (where he had arrived in the nick of time after a grueling 17 mile march from Harper's Ferry), and at Chambersburg where he

had served briefly as Jackson's first replacement before himself being wounded. On the other hand he had also suffered serious lapses at Second Manassas and at Fredericksburg. Some believed he may have gained his corps command mostly by virtue of being a Virginian.

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Longstreet's lack of qualification as leader of the column of attack.

--Late on the Friday afternoon of August 29, 1862, at Second Bull Run, Lee suggested three times to Longstreet to launch a counterattack against Pope's exposed left flank. But each time Longstreet demurred, indicating he did not think the time was ripe for such an attack.

--Having "demurred" three times to Lee's suggestion to attack, Longstreet countered with a suggestion of a brigade sized reconnaissance in force in preparation for an early morning attack. That night Longstreet, acting upon information given to him and acting without Lee's knowledge or consent, withdrew the reconnoitering brigade, even though Lee had separately stated he did not want to relinquish the ground gained by the reconnaissance.

--The next day around 4:00 p.m. as the Union assault was floundering in disarray against Jackson, Longstreet finally decided the time was ripe to commit his entire command of 25,000 soldiers against Pope's fragmented lines, implementing one of Lee's favorite tactics, the hammer and anvil, with Longstreet providing the hammer this time and Jackson the anvil.

--Freeman contends this instance occurring almost a year before Gettysburg gave Longstreet an inflated estimation of his influence over Lee.

-- But at the same time Lee's overconfidence was almost of sufficient importance to be regarded as a separate reason for the Confederate defeat.

In essence Freeman and others contend that Longstreet began to think he could control Lee's thinking as a result of Longstreet's success at Second Manassas. Pete Longstreet, Lee's Old Warhorse, is usually at the epicenter of the numerous Gettysburg controversies. Some consider him to be one of the Confederate heroes of Day Two while several others, including Freeman, blame him for much of the Southern failure at Gettysburg.

By all accounts Longstreet had become an advocate of defensive warfare as the chief tactic for the South. Time doesn't permit a full treatment for Longstreet's reasons but suffice to say that the successes at Second Manassas and Fredericksburg played a large part in his thinking. Several years after Lee's death Longstreet claimed that he and Lee agreed they would not engage in any offensive engagements battles during the invasion into Pennsylvania but would instead try to force the Federals to attack when it would be to the advantage of the Confederates.

Upon arriving at the Battlefield Longstreet felt the best tactic was to move around the Federal left, or around the south, where the Confederates would be between the Union army and Washington thus forcing Meade to attack. Lee disagreed having determined that he was going to attack early the next day before all the Federal forces could arrive. Their disagreement is summarized in the following discussion

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Lee: "... the enemy is there, and I am going to attack him there."

Longstreet: "General, if the enemy is there tomorrow, it is because he wants you to attack him, which is a good reason, in my judgment, for not doing so."

According to Longstreet's many critics, including Freeman, Longstreet became disgruntled, began to pout and drag his feet when Lee refused to follow Longstreet's advice and insisted in going against the Federal front.

The starting time for the attack has never been clearly established but without a doubt several factors intervened to delay the start for several hours. Four of the factors causing the delay included the time it took for Lee's scouting parties to return (and don't forget that Lee's normal means of scouting, that is to say Stuart and his cavalry were still missing), two, the delay in bringing up one of Longstreet's brigades, having to reroute the approach to the launch point in order to avoid being detected by the signal tower on top of Little Round Top, and fourth the discovery of Sickles's salient that faced along Emmetsburg Road.

According to Freeman if Longstreet had begun his attack early in the morning as planned the Federals would not have had all their troops in place along Cemetery Ridge and the Confederates assuredly could have taken Round Top. According to Freeman, and other critics, it was Lee's misfortune that Stonewall's death left Lee with a defensive inclined general when an offensive general was needed to lead the column of attack.

But Freeman was also critical of Lee for virtually surrendering to Longstreet, and to the way that Longstreet was dragging his feet. Freeman says that Lee should have been stern with Longstreet when it became apparent that Longstreet was dragging his feet. Freeman says that quote: It is scarcely too much to say that on July Two the Army of Northern Virginia was without a commander close

quote. Freeman emphasized that the basic problem was that Lee simply was overconfident.

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Ewell either did not comprehend the task assigned to him for July 2 or else he was simply unable to co-ordinate the attacks of his three divisions.

As noted earlier Lee's plan for Day Two was to attack Meade's left and right flanks at the same time. Ewell was supposed to start his Day Two attack against Cemetery Hill when he heard the cannons from Longstreet's attack. However only one of Ewell's three divisions was satisfactorily deployed against the lightly defended hill, in part because of the difficulty of getting around Gettysburg. As a result Cemetery Hill was kind of a no-man's land at the end of the day and the Confederates were not in position to compel the Federals from evacuating from Cemetery Ridge that night to avoid artillery fire from the hill.

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Freeman's Fifth Reason: The General Lack by the Reorganized Army of Co-ordination in Attack

In addition to those already mentioned in Freeman's Fourth Reason:

**Anderson's failure to support Wilcox when the latter's brigade almost breached to Federal lines on July 2.

**Longstreet's failure to timely deploy Pickett when Ewell attacked on July 3. By the time Longstreet did launch his attack Ewell's corps was half-crippled.

**The failure to reinforce the Pickett/Pettigrew advance when it reached the Federal's position on July 3.

**The failure of a coordinated artillery attack on July 3.

Freeman calls this grouping the most fundamental of reasons. Since some of Freeman's Fifth Reason still involves Day Two, let's have a further look at the plan for that day. At about three thirty the afternoon of Day Two Lee changed his battle plan from a simultaneous frontal attack to that of an attack *en echelon*, or piece by piece. Lee's new plan of attack was to commence brigade by brigade starting with those in Longstreet's corps on the extreme right. After that the brigades in Hill's corps were to begin their attacks, again continuing right to left. It was necessary for each of Lee's subordinates to start the next

brigade attack on his own initiative after the brigade on the right had reached a certain point.

Lee apparently thought an *en echelon* attack was the best way to take care of the Sickles salient but it was also designed to lure Meade to overreact by shifting units to meet the immediate point of attack.

In the beginning Lee's new plan seemed to be working although to be sure there was a setback early in the attack when an exploding shell cost John Bell Hood, one of Longstreet's division commanders, the use of his left arm. Longstreet's brigades advanced about as well as could be expected; additionally Meade, with Hancock's help, was shifting troops to meet the threat to *his* left resulting among other things the famous repulse of Confederates at Little Round Top. At the same time this shifting of units was beginning to create sections in the Federal defenses that were severely undermanned.

The first three brigades in Hill's corps picked up the baton and also did well advancing almost to the top of Cemetery Ridge. But the next brigade failed to respond to a call for help from Rans Wright, the commander of one of the brigades almost at the top of the ridge. It is not clear which commander failed to respond, the division commander, Richard Anderson, or even if it was Hill, the corps commander. Dorsey Pender, the commander of the division on Hill's far left, was riding over toward Hill and Anderson to see what was the hold up when he was mortally wounded. Pender was considered one of the Confederates' rising stars, and Lee said that his army would have won Day Two if Pender could have remained in his saddle for another half hour, implying that Pender could have kept the *en echelon* attack moving. In any event the Confederates' Day Two attack bogged down without the anticipated reinforcements. This is what Freeman meant by the lack of cooperation on July 2.

Looking now at Day Three when I first learned about Pickett's Charge I assumed that it was borne out of desperation, that somehow the Confederates had not fared well during the first two days, especially during the second day. However, nothing could be further from the truth and from the battlefield statistics we can see how dominate the Confederates were by the end of the second day.

Three of the seven Federal corps, now including Sickles' 3rd Corps, were shattered. Of the 51 infantry brigades in Meade's army, almost half had been so badly damaged that they were no longer reliable for combat. 24 brigades had been shattered and two had been routed on consecutive days. Of the 19 Federal artillery batteries engaged in the line south of the copse, six were so badly crippled that they were effectively out of the battle for the remainder of any further combat.

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For Day Three Lee now was shifting back to a frontal assault against the center of the Federal defenses – identified by a copse of trees -- to be launched while Ewell seized Culp Hill. Lee figured that since his attacks against Meade's flanks had caused Meade to shift troops to either end, the Federal middle would be the weakest part of the Federal line.

There were 21 Confederate brigades available between Longstreet's corps and Hill's corps. But Longstreet claimed that two of his divisions, or 8 brigades, were too damaged from the previous day's action to resume the attack. Accordingly the primary attack force was cobbled together with nine brigades containing approximately 13,000 men. Three brigades came from Longstreet's newly arrived third division, led by George Pickett. The other six brigades came from Hill's corps, four brigades coming from Heth's division but were led Johnston Pettigrew, substituting for the injured Heth. The two other brigades came from Pender's Light Division to be led by Isaac Trimble substituting for the injured Pender. This left Hill with only four brigades in Anderson's division remaining under his direct command.

The challenge of the attack was famously expressed by Rans Wright who said "... it is mostly a question of supports. It is not as hard to get there as it looks. I was there yesterday with my brigade. The real difficulty is to stay there after you get there – for the whole infernal Yankee army is up there in a bunch." Longstreet was supposed to be in overall command of this attack force that was to commence in conjunction with Ewell attacking Culp Hill following a massive artillery barrage. Unfortunately for the Confederates early in the morning of July 3 the Federals beat Ewell to the punch and by mid-morning managed to seize

control of Culp Hill, meaning that Ewell was not able to contribute to the attack in any meaningful way.

And while the artillery cannonade was so loud it could be heard more than a hundred miles away, it was poorly planned or coordinated resulting in little damage to the Federal positions. The Confederate artillery planners failed to utilize as many as 56 Rebel tubes. Lee himself had decided to shift the targets from the Federal infantry to the Union artillery but among other things the Confederates failed to target 58 guns along Cemetery Ridge south of the copse of trees. Furthermore the confederates failed to take advantage of their enfilade positions to blast the Union guns off Cemetery Hill,

Longstreet wanted nothing to do with Lee's plan, and stalled as long as possible before virtually abrogating his responsibilities. The so-called Pickett charge was late in getting underway – Ewell's attack had faltered long ago -- and while the Confederate line marched in a magnificent, parade ground fashion the soldiers took terrible casualties -- at first from Federal artillery (remember those 58 guns south of the copse) but later from Federal infantry as well. Nevertheless the Confederates continued to close up to their center, aiming toward the copse of trees. Some of the troops succeeded in reaching close to their objective, even capturing a couple Federal guns, before Union reserves began to counterattack. The officers and soldiers in the first Confederate wave kept turning around looking in vain for a second line of attack that they thought would be decisive. Without help, either from the balance of brigades in Longstreet's corps or from Hill's corps, the Confederate attack faltered causing the survivors to trudge back to their original positions. And this is what Freeman was saying when he cited the failure to reinforce the Pickett/Pettigrew advance as it reached the Union lines on July 3.

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Lee's Only Comment: Generally Lee took full responsibility for the defeat at Gettysburg. But as expressed to Imboden shortly after midnight on the morning of July 4: "... I never saw troops behave more magnificently than Pickett's division of Virginia's did today, in that grand charge against the enemy. And if they were supported as they were meant to have been – but for some reason, not yet fully explained to me, were not – we would have held the position & the day would have been ours."

I've never seen any of the Gettysburg movies but I would suppose one of the most poignant moments would have been after midnight on July 4 when Lee returned to his headquarters after personally advising his corps commanders of his plans for retreat. He had been up since four a. m. and had seen his beloved army fail. He never elaborated on his statement but given the circumstances by saying "if they were supported as they were meant to have been" he probably meant the failure to deploy a second line of attack when it became evident that Pickett and Pettigrew were reaching the Federal lines. He may also have thought that his artillery would have given more support but Lee was also too much of a realist to have expected too much from a branch that had always been consistently outgunned by the Northern guns. Whatever, Lee – always the gentleman willing to accept responsibility for his command, no matter how disappointing -- must have thought that by coming so close it would have taken but a little more effort to have achieved a total breakthrough that would have caused the entire Federal line to collapse and start running.

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Freeman's Summary: "Because It Caused a Massive Command Reorganization, the Death of Stonewall Jackson Was the Turning Point in the History of the Army of Northern Virginia."

Beyond the loss of Stonewall's outstanding generalship, Lee had two new corps commanders, Powell Hill and Dick Ewell, neither of whom came close to filling Stonewall's shoes when it mattered most. There were also six new division commanders and because several brigades had been shuffled among newly aligned divisions former command relations that were once tried and true were replaced by new relationships that in just two months' time had not always yet begun to mature. In the minds of many, Chancellorsville was Lee's finest hour but unfortunately The Army of Northern Virginia, with its revised order of battle and new commanders, was never able to again fight with the same command discipline, which in military terms means being able to follow orders but also knowing what to do in the absence of orders.

After the loss of Jackson, the success of the Army of Northern Virginia was limited to defensive or counter offensive campaigns, and after Gettysburg Lee's army could never launch another offensive campaign. As Lee feared attrition continued to take a devastating toll to the point that the once vaunted Army of

Northern Virginia eventually became a mere shell of the army that had fought at Second Manassas, Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Charlottesville.

Before we wrap this up, let have a look at what one other Southerner had to say.

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Pickett's Explanation: "I always thought the Yankees had something to do with it."

For the purposes of this program, I have intentionally ignored the many accomplishment of the officers and soldiers in the Union's Army of the Potomac. But in any event, and when viewed from either perspective, Gettysburg was hardly a lopsided victory for the North, especially since Lee was able to successfully retreat across the Potomac and back into the relative safety of Virginia.

Whether you agree with Freeman's analysis I hope you've learned something about that epic battle; I'll try to answer your questions as John Murray leads further discussion.

-Top Reasons given by Bowden & Ward*

1. The breakdown of the July 2 attack and the wounding of Dorsey Pender.
2. Dick Ewell's failure to pursue with the 2nd Corps on July 1.
3. The loss of John Bell Hood early in the fighting on July 2.
4. The absence of Jeb Stuart and his cavalry.
5. Powell Hill and the mishandling of the 3rd Corps.
6. The failure of Dick Ewell to timely inform General Lee on July 1 that Culp Hill was vulnerable and subject to capture.
7. The failure of 2nd Corps senior officers to coordinate their movements and get the commands into action on July 2.
8. The sacrifice by the Federal 1st Corps on July 1.
9. President Jeff Davis, missing brigades, and a failure of support,
10. Lee's failure to assume direct tactical command on July 3.
11. Longstreet's disobedience on July 3.
12. Winfield Hancock's excellent performance throughout the battle.
13. William Pendleton's incompetence.
14. The troops comprising the first wave of the Picket-Pettigrew-Trimble assault on July 3.

15. The collective decision by Meade and his corps commanders to stay and fight on July 3.
 16. Meade's localized counterattack at Culp's Hill early on July 3.
 17. General Lee's inadequate staff size and faulty organizational structure.
- Bowden, Scott & Ward, Bill. *Last Chance for Victory: Robert E. Lee and the Gettysburg Campaign* (2001) Cambridge: Da Capo Press