

Timetable

Pre Gettysburg

Note: Some dates concerning the marches, especially as the Confederate army moved north, might vary slightly from source to source

May 6 -- Following his defeat at Chancellorsville -- often considered Robert E. Lee's masterpiece -- Joe Hooker withdraws his Army of the Potomac back across the Rappahannock River. Both armies refit, replenish, and reorganize their respective tables of organization. Lee reorganizes his army from two corps into three plus a cavalry division under Jeb Stuart.

May 14 -- Lincoln writes to Hooker -- who has done little with the army since Chancellorsville -- that, "Some of your troops and Division commanders are not giving you their entire confidence."

June 3 -- Elements of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia begin shifting their bases from the Fredericksburg area westward to Culpeper County.

June 5 -- Severe fighting erupts as a result of a Union reconnaissance effort in the Fredericksburg area. This encounter will be called the Battle of Franklin Crossing, or Deep Run.

To inspect the readiness of his subordinate brigades and to show off his cavalry division -- some 10,000 strong, his largest ever assembled -- Stuart stages a series of reviews, replete with pomp and circumstance followed that evening by a moonlight ball attended by dignitaries.

June 8 -- Lee concentrates his entire army, except A.P. Hill who remains in his old position near Fredericksburg to deceive Hooker, near Culpeper

Stuart conducts another review, this one primarily for Lee's benefit. Later that evening Stuart sends his five brigades back to their separate camps within a few miles of Brandy Station while Stuart himself and his staff remain at Fleetwood Hill near Brandy Station.

June 9 -- The Federal cavalry under Alfred Pleasonton launches its surprise attack at Brandy Station, one of the most severe cavalry battles of the war. Although

forced to withdraw, the Federal cavalry gave an excellent account of itself, demonstrating that Union horsemen were finally coming into their own. Stuart comes under harsh criticism from the Southern press.

June 10 -- Ewell begins to move his corps in a northwestern direction out of the Culpeper area.

June 14 -- Ewell's corps advances down the Shenandoah Valley to "gobble up" (Lincoln's words) Winchester, capturing supplies, wagons, artillery pieces, and nearly 4,000 prisoners from three brigades that would never be reconstituted.

Finally realizing Lee was moving, but not knowing exactly where, Hooker begins moving his army away from the Rappahannock. Hooker's seven infantry corps are divided among three widely spread groups.

June 17 -- As Longstreet is moving from Culpeper westward to the Blue Ridge, Fitz Lee's cavalry brigade (under Col. Thomas Munford while Fitz is recovering from wounds) is sent to Aldie, east of Winchester along Little River Turnpike -- present day U.S. Rte. 50, to cover Longstreet's movement.

June 19 -- Ewell's corps, the van of Lee's army, wades across the Potomac at a ford at Williamsport while an unit of Confederate cavalry raids Chambersburg.

Pleasanton's Union cavalry continues a series of charges to sustain pressure upon Stuart, who fights defensively in order to protect Lee's movements rather than becoming involved in a general engagement.

June 21-- Pleasanton makes another concerted effort to go after Stuart's cavalry and "to cripple it up." This series of on-again-off-again cavalry engagements over five days along the Little River Turnpike are bloody but indecisive as both cavalries survive to fight another day.

June 23 -- Lee knows Hooker's Army of the Potomac has begun to cross the Potomac River via a pontoon bridge at Edward's Station.

June 24 -- Unfortunately Hooker he still has insufficient intelligence to allow him to fathom Lee's intentions except that it is obvious that Lee is headed north somewhere between Washington and Pittsburgh. Fighting occurs between Federal troops and elements of Longstreet's and Hill corps at Sharpsburg, MD.

June 25 -- During the early morning Jeb Stuart, with 5,600 cavalymen from three of his brigades together with six artillery pieces, leaves Salem (now Marshall), Virginia, to begin another ride around the Army of the Potomac. Before departing, Stuart, per Lee's order, leaves the brigades of William ("Grumble") Jones and Beverly Robertson – Stuart's least two favorite generals -- to guard gaps in the Blue Ridge.

Almost as soon as Stuart gets underway he encounters an unexpected delay near Haymarket, Virginia, where his route crisscrosses the march of Hancock's 2nd Corps. Stuart sends a dispatch to Lee with this discovery but the single courier carrying this valuable intelligence was never heard from again, and Lee is thus not immediately aware of the extent of Hooker's movements.

Lee, accompanying his "Old War Horse" Longstreet, crosses the Potomac. That same day Hooker starts his army in motion toward Frederick, Maryland.

June 26 -- Jubal Early and his Confederate division move into Gettysburg after skirmishing with Federal forces outside Gettysburg. Early then moves on to York, PA where he will be headquartered for the next couple days.

June 27 -- The same day Hill and Longstreet are arriving in the Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, area – Stuart has reached the Potomac at Rowser's Ford; but Stuart has been on the march for 50 hours while covering only 34 miles.

While crossing the National Pike near Rockville, Maryland, Stuart's troopers capture a Union train of 150 supply wagons – eight miles in length – headed for Hooker's army. These wagons—each pulled by four mules – are filled with a variety of valuable supplies, including grains, meat and even whisky.

Tensions between the Administration and Hooker have arisen over differences as to how to meet Lee. Either because of sincere frustration or as a bluff to gain more command leverage Hooker requests that he at once be relieved, which to his apparent surprise, is promptly accepted.

Lincoln selects George Gordon Meade, one of the army's corps commander, to replace Hooker. Halleck's appointment order includes the phrase, "You will ... maneuver and fight in such a manner as to cover the capital, and also Baltimore, as far as circumstances will admit."

June 28 -- On the same day of receiving his appointment Meade receives an intelligence report generated by a citizen in Hagerstown that Lee had at most 80,000 troops supported by 275 cannons. Meade immediately begins to dramatically reposition his army, ordering one day marches that normally would take two days. Meade himself remains in the middle of his army at Middleburg.

Lee learns that the Army of the Potomac had crossed the Potomac River. Lee then issues orders to consolidate his army in the area of Cashtown, east of Chambersburg. His lead division within sight of Harrisburg, PA, Ewell receives Lee's orders to return to Cashtown to rejoin the rest of Lee's army. To this point Ewell's corps has captured 28 guns, almost 4,000 prisoners, 5,000 barrels of flour, 3,000 head of cattle, trainloads of ordinance and medical stores at Chambersburg, in addition to food, horses, and quartermaster supplies that were seized and issued to his own men

June 29 -- In addition to ordering Ewell to conclude his foraging mission and instead to return toward the Cashtown area, Lee begins to move his other two corps, first Powell Hill starting from their bivouac near Chambersburg to be followed by Longstreet, along the Chambersburg Pike toward Gettysburg

June 30 -- Stuart's slow pace causes his advance unit to run into Kilpatrick's rear guard at Hanover, Pennsylvania, a town where six roads intersect six or seven miles north of the Pennsylvania line and just 14 miles east of Gettysburg.

Meade issues a directive to his subordinates that it appeared Lee's army was advancing toward Gettysburg but he hoped to maintain the army's present position "until the plans of the enemy shall have been more fully developed." After passing through Emmitsburg (where Reynolds' corps was camped) John Buford reaches Gettysburg with two of his brigades and encounters a force of Confederates on the town's outskirts. This was a brigade under the command of Johnston Pettigrew who recognized that his force was too small to force its way through Gettysburg. Once Pettigrew returned to Cashtown his division commander, Henry Heth, becomes determined to take his entire division east to Gettysburg, ostensibly to find badly needed shoes. His corps commander, Powell Hill, admonishes Heth to avoid anything that might bring about a major engagement.

After receiving information that indicated Lee was advancing toward Gettysburg, Meade issues orders for six of his seven corps to start heading toward Gettysburg.

July 1-- As Heth approaches Gettysburg his division encounters fierce delaying tactics by Buford's cavalry on the town's western outskirts. Both sides send urgent messages to their respective rears to send reinforcements without delay. In the meanwhile, Ewell is approaching Gettysburg from the north.

Day One of the Gettysburg battle, Stuart's exhausted riders finally reach Dover, Pennsylvania. Not only are the horses and riders exhausted, but the captured mules are badly fatigued, hungry, and thirsty, frequently becoming unmanageable, sometimes stubbornly refusing to move to cause more inconvenient delay for the rest of Stuart's column. Stuart will not reunite with Lee until mid-afternoon of Day Two of the main battle in Gettysburg.