

Antietam: A Failure To Achieve Victory

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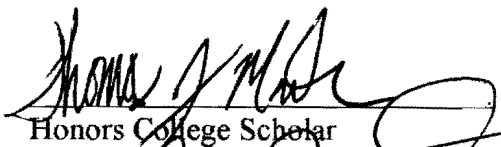
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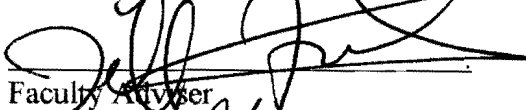
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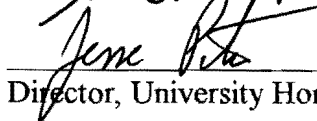
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The paper, "Antietam: A Failure to Achieve Victory," is an insight into the events that occurred during the Maryland Campaign of the American Civil War. It examines key events that altered both the course of battle and American history. This paper would not have been completed without the assistance from Dr. Jeff Frederick, history professor at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

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ABSTRACT

ANTIETAM: A FAILURE TO ACHIEVE VICTORY

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The Battle of Antietam was a turning point in the course of the Civil War. Prior to the battle, Confederate troops were on the offensive in Northern territory and were hoping to achieve a decisive victory against their Union foes. If this victory occurred there was the potential that both Great Britain and France would recognize the Confederate States of America as a legitimate country and would intervene on behalf of the South. "Another signal victory on the part of the Confederates," *The Charleston Mercury* reported on September 12, 1862, "may possibly decide the Cabinets of England and France on the course they will adopt." Therefore the South's Maryland Campaign was strategically important not only for military purposes, but also for diplomatic.¹

During the Maryland Campaign, chance events occurred that drastically altered the face of the Battle of Antietam. These events that occurred preceding the battle are an integral part in understanding both the outcome and the significance of

¹*Charleston Mercury*, September 12, 1862

the battle. The first of these events was the Confederate order for troops without shoes to travel to the rear if they desired. Confederate General D. H. Hill maintained that the Confederates needed every soldier to achieve victory on Northern soil, but Commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, Robert E. Lee, decided that since there was a lack of food it would be better to have provisions for properly equipped soldiers. The finding of Confederate Special Order 191 by Union General George McClellan, another chance event, is viewed by amateur historians as altering the Civil War. However, historian Michael Palmer has argued that McClellan was already on the offensive prior to obtaining the lost order, and that it only allowed McClellan to be more certain of his tactics.²

The cautious nature exhibited by Union General McClellan and his Union forces is one of the main factors that influenced the course of the Confederacy's Maryland Campaign. On several occasions when the Confederate line had been breached, Union generals decided not to advance reinforcements to scatter the Rebels. For example, this occurred when Union General George Sears Green gained the high ground at Dunker Church, but was unable to advance without the help of reinforcements that were never ordered to assist. This allowed for Confederate General Lee to reposition troops where the line had been broken.³

Even though the North had the opportunity to achieve a more significant victory the day after the battle, it is undeniable that the battle on September 17, 1862 was the bloodiest day of American history. Furthermore, the battle allowed for the President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, to issue the Emancipation

² Michael Palmer, *Lee Moves North* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1998), 29.

³ James McPherson *Cross Roads of Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 119.

Proclamation. Lincoln's Proclamation changed the tenor of war: the Union now required unconditional surrender to enforce the restrictions on slavery; and European nations were reluctant to support a Confederate nation increasingly isolated by its peculiar institution. The background, battle, and meaning of Antietam became one of the defining moments of the Civil War.

Introduction

From August 28 through the 30th of 1862, the Second Battle of Bull Run or Second Manassas created a change in the momentum of the war. Confederate forces pushed the Union Army back, forcing Generals John Pope and George McClellan to return to Washington. This allowed the South to cross the Potomac and enter Maryland placing them within striking distance of the Union capital and possibly a step closer to ending the war. The Confederates' Maryland Campaign, as it would come to be called, was an opportunity for the South to achieve a significant military and diplomatic success. Both Great Britain and France relied on Southern cotton, and the American Civil War had greatly reduced their production of textiles. Furthermore, some British and French citizens supported the Confederate cause. A decisive Confederate victory on Northern soil had the potential to bring about national recognition for the South and thus more desperately needed supplies. However, through the course of the Maryland Campaign, chance events occurred that altered the direction of the Civil War and American history.

Confederates Move North

In the capital city of Washington, the North feared the worst from their southern foes. In the streets, stragglers, wagons, and ambulances returned from the front, creating a sense of fear and desperation in the city. The government was in a dire position as it was in the process of removing money from the Treasury Department to be shipped to New York. Private banks followed suit. The fear of the Confederate threat had also caused the government to prepare for the worst by placing the steamer, *Wachusset*, in the Navy Yard for President Abraham Lincoln in case of evacuation. Even government

clerks were formed into organized militias to supplement the Union's 110,000 available men as desperate Union forces placed gunboats on the Potomac River.¹

In the Eastern Theater of war, the Confederates were gradually gaining momentum. After Second Manassas, the army could not stay in their present position and celebrate their victory in Northern Virginia. There was no longer food in the area and the Confederate supply line was too far extended to supply provisions. Many Rebels were forced to hunt for their own meals. General Robert E. Lee, Commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, now had to strategically plan the next advance of his weathered army. To the east was Washington, the Union capital, but Lee knew his forces would not be able to lay siege to the Union fortifications. The Shenandoah Valley was to the west, and soldiers would be able to feed off the crops, untouched by the war. The Confederate force could also travel south allowing them to recruit more men in the heart of Virginia and move closer to the Southern capital, Richmond. These southern and western options offered benefits, but each of these possibilities would give up the territory that had just been reclaimed. Thus Lee's best option was to invade the North and move into Maryland and Pennsylvania.²

By invading Maryland and Pennsylvania, Lee could take advantage of the demoralization of the Union forces and their retreat out of Confederate territory. "The great advantage of the advance of the army," Lee noted, "is the withdrawal of the enemy from our territory and hurling back upon their capital of their two great armies from the banks of the James and Rappahannock Rivers." Furthermore moving north would render

¹ Harry Hansen, *The Civil War* (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1962), 227; Ronald H. Bailey *The Civil War The Bloodiest Day* (Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1984), 14.

² Stephen W. Sears *Landscape Turned Red* (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1983), 63-64.

the Union's expected 60,000 recruits useless since they would not have time to be trained. But there was danger in heading north.³

The Confederate troops were in poor condition. Beyond supply and food issues, the Army of Northern Virginia was improperly equipped. Lee himself stated that the army "lacks much of the material of war, is feeble in transportation, the animals being much reduced, and the men are poorly provided with clothes, and in thousands of instances are destitute of shoes." Even a Shepherdstown, Virginia, housewife viewed the Confederate soldiers as "haggard apparitions" and was unable to see how men in these conditions were fit for battle. It has been estimated that one fourth of Lee's men were barefoot as they marched toward Maryland. Upon seeing the Rebels for the first time, a Union Loyalist woman wrote to a friend in Baltimore: "I felt humiliated at the thought that this horde of ragamuffins could set our grand army of the Union at defiance."⁴

Before entering Maryland, a small controversy did erupt over the condition of the troops. It was ordered that men without shoes had the option to withdraw from their regiment. General D.H. Hill later complained that this action sent thousands of the troops to the rear making the Confederate forces even smaller than they were. This is the first of many situations in the course of the Antietam campaign that could have altered the course of the battle. Lee maintained that since there was a lack food, sending barefoot troops to the rear would provide more resources to properly equipped soldiers. Thus this would create a more capable army. However, General D.H. Hill believed that the Confederates

³ Hansen, 231; Sears, 65.

⁴ Sears, 65; Hansen, 232; Bailey 15.

needed every man possible to win a critical battle against the superior numbers of the Union.⁵

Even if the army was in poor shape, Lee decided to move. Discussions with General James Longstreet, comforted Lee that moving north was the correct action. Longstreet later stated that he mentioned to Lee how during the Mexican War the men survived on “roasting ears and green oranges” and that “we could trust to the fields of Maryland, laden with ripening corn and fruit, to do as much as those of Mexico.” Lee should also have been confident since the people were supporting the action to move north. A *Charleston Mercury* editorial noted, “Our victorious troops in Virginia, reduced though they be in numbers, and shattered in organization, must be led promptly into Maryland, before the enemy can rally the masses of recruits whom he is rapidly and steadily gathering together.”⁶

Not everyone in the Confederate command understood Lee’s plan. According to Brigadier General John G. Walker, Lee’s goal was to feed the troops, harass the Federals, but to eventually reach south central Pennsylvania and destroy the railroad bridge that crosses the Susquehanna Bridge at Harrisonburg, a strategic railway city. However, it is more than clear that Lee was planning a major battle on the northern soil. As Robert Dabney, a member of General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson’s staff, noted, a Confederate victory in the north “might carry a wholesome terror into the heart of Pennsylvania” and possibly end the war. Regardless of what his subordinates were contemplating, Lee knew what he was doing. By placing his army at Frederick, Maryland he was poised to threaten both Washington and Baltimore, but in reality he was just drawing the Union

⁵ Hansen, 232.

⁶ Michael A. Palmer *Lee Moves North* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1998), 16; *Charleston Mercury*, September 6, 1862.

forces further away from their supply lines. Furthermore, Lee hoped that Maryland, a border slave state, would rally behind the Army of Northern Virginia and assist in the Confederate war effort. Then by redirecting his supply lines to the Shenandoah Valley, Lee could have rested and fed troops ready to engage the Union Army.⁷

McClellan at the Helm, Again

As Confederate forces were advancing north, Union forces were reorganizing and suffering ongoing command problems. Initially, Lincoln proposed command to General Ambrose Burnside, but the general declined for a second time. "I had always unreservedly expressed," Burnside responded to the President, "that I was not competent to command such a large army as this." Thus, on the September 2, General Henry W. Halleck, who served as the supreme head of the military and advisor to the President, and Lincoln asked McClellan to command the Army of the Potomac. The idea of McClellan back at the helm of the army, created an uneasy feeling with the members of the President's cabinet. Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, wrote in his diary that giving the command to McClellan was comparable to giving Washington to the Confederate forces. "McClellan has the army with him," Lincoln mused, "We must use the tools we have. There is no man... who can... lick these troops of ours into shape half as well as he... If he can't fight himself, he excels in making others ready to fight."⁸

Due to McClellan's previous failures as Commander of the Army of the Potomac, his only authority was over, "all the troops for the defense of the capital." This was an attempt by General Halleck and others to control the actions of the army. However, it

⁷ Palmer, 21; Sears, 82.

⁸ James McPherson *Cross Roads of Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 87.; Sears, 79; Hansen 229.

was only by a loose interpretation of the order to defend the capital that McClellan advanced his troops towards Confederate forces. This is another chance event that influenced the outcome of the battle of Antietam. McClellan's interpretation of his orders allowed him to seek out the Army of Northern Virginia, and ultimately force them out of Northern territory. If McClellan had not done this, the course of the war would have altered. McClellan wrote to his wife, "Again, I have been called upon to save the country." Whether McClellan saved the United States is debatable, but he did considerably alter the course of the war.⁹

Harper's Ferry

In preparing for the Army of the Potomac, McClellan had to make many decisions. One involved the garrison at Harper's Ferry which is located fifty-five miles away from Washington at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers. The position would be extremely hard to protect; the high ridges encircling the area needed to be secured: Maryland Heights to the North, Bolivar Heights to the West, and Loudon Heights to the South and East. McClellan decided that the 12,000 troops holding the position would be lost and cut off from the army if they did not evacuate soon. McClellan proposed this to Halleck. Halleck disagreed with McClellan and ushered him out of his quarters. "Halleck received my statement with ill-concealed contempt," McClellan later said, "And soon bowed us out." McClellan determined that the troops

⁹ Hansen, 230; Richard Wheeler *Lee's Terrible Swift Sword* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992), 33.

would be better served reinforcing the Army of the Potomac, especially since he considered Harper's Ferry to be of no great importance and to be indefensible.¹⁰

Lee, however, determined that the position at Harper's Ferry, if it could be gained, would benefit the Confederate cause. Lee was surprised that the Federal Troops at Harper's Ferry and also Martinsburg had not already left their positions since their main objective to guard the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Roads had failed. Since the Federal troops had not evacuated Harper's Ferry, it would have to be seized because it threatened the Confederate supply line that went through the Shenandoah Valley. Consequently, the Federal troops needed to be removed from the area in order for the Confederate forces to be supplied in Union territory. Yet, there was also a benefit in capturing the garrison at Harper's Ferry; it would provide Lee and his men with much needed provisions: shoes, clothing, and weapons. The importance of the Confederates gaining Harper's Ferry led to the issuing of Special Order No. 191.¹¹

Halleck's ignorance in not taking McClellan's suggestion of removing the troops at Harper's Ferry cost the Union Army in the long run. General Jackson and his Confederate forces captured Harper's Ferry and gained needed supplies. According to historian James McPherson, this supplemented the South's reinforcements at the battle of Antietam. When Burnside's Federals threatened the South into retreat, A.P Hill's division bewildered the Federal force and pushed them back. Hill's men wore Union uniforms collected at Harper's Ferry causing confusion within the Federal ranks.

¹⁰ Bruce Catton *The Army of the Potomac: Mr. Lincoln's Army* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1962), 195; Hansen, 230; Sears, 89-90.

¹¹ McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom*, 106.

Therefore General Halleck's mistake altered the course of battle, and hindered the McClellan's ability to earn a more decisive victory at Sharpsburg.¹²

Special Order 191

One of the most infamous incidents to occur during the Maryland campaign was the losing of Special Order 191. Special Order 191 was a risky maneuver by Lee. Historian Michael Palmer, even quotes Confederate General Jackson stating that the tactics issued in Special Order 191 were "too complex." Still the order had a greater significance considering McClellan had the fortune of obtaining a copy.¹³

Special Order 191 was issued on September 9, 1862 to the division commanders of the Confederate Army and told of the new plans for the assault on Union territory. The order called for the division of the Confederate forces into two main parts. The majority of the army would head to Harper's Ferry and would divide into three sections, thus creating a total of four separate wings of the Confederate Army. General Jackson with his three divisions would circle back to the west, take Martinsburg, and then venture to Harper's Ferry taking a position at Bolivar Heights. Major General Lafayette McLaws would cross the Potomac from Maryland to Harper's Ferry positioning at Maryland Heights. General John Walker would return to Virginia and attack Harper's Ferry from Loudon Heights. The goal was to attack Harper's Ferry on September 12. Under Longstreet, the fourth prong of the Confederate forces, consisting of three divisions, the reserve artillery, and the supply trains would head to Boonsboro. Here Longstreet and his

¹² McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom*, 128.

¹³ Palmer, 26.

force were expected to wait for the bulk of the army to capture Harper's Ferry and then unite at Boonsboro.¹⁴

Special Order 191 was a dangerous strategy. Longstreet actually opposed the action, but was resigned it: "They had gone so far that it seemed useless for me to offer any further opposition." By separating his forces, Lee placed a choke hold around Union forces at Harper's Ferry preventing evacuation. Furthermore, by positioning his forces in the key locations to capture Harper's Ferry, Loudon Heights, Maryland Heights, and Bolivar Heights, Lee put his army in a position to secure the supply line and gain needed materials from the Union garrison. Lee maintained that the success of this operation would be determined by the speed in which the Army of the Potomac would move and since General McClellan was in the lead, the Union forces were expected to move cautiously. "He is an able general," Lee noted of McClellan, "but a very cautious one. His enemies among his own people think him too much so. His army is in a very demoralized and chaotic condition, and will not be prepared for offensive operations, or he will not think it so, for three or four weeks. Before that time I hope to be on the Susquehanna." Yet, by chance events, McClellan was in a position to place the Army of the Potomac on the offensive.¹⁵

With the issuance of Special Order 191, Confederate forces moved to their assigned strategic positions. Later on that day, the Union forces set up camp in Frederick, evacuated by marching Confederates. Silas Colgrove, commander of the 27th Indiana Volunteers, a regiment of the Twelfth Army Corps who settled his force in Frederick, explained what happened next.

¹⁴ Bailey, 18-19; Hansen, 236; Sears, 90.

¹⁵ Hansen, 223; Sears, 90.

We stacked arms on the same ground that had been occupied by General D. H. Hill's division... Within a very few minutes after halting, the order was brought to me by First Sergeant John M. Bloss and Private B.W. Mitchell, of Company F... who stated that it was found by Private Mitchell near where they had stacked arms. When I received the order it was wrapped around three cigars, and Private Mitchell stated that it was in that condition when found by him. General A.S. Williams was in command of our division. I immediately took the order to his headquarters and delivered it to Colonel S.E. Pittman, General William's adjutant-general. The order was signed by Colonel Chilton, General Lee's adjutant-general, and the signature was recognized by Colonel Pittman who had served with Colonel Chilton, at Detroit, Michigan, before the war, and was acquainted with his handwriting. It was at once taken to General McClellan's headquarters by Colonel Pittman. It was a general order giving directions for the movement of General Lee's entire army, designating the route and objective point of each corps.¹⁶

It is a mystery how this chance event occurred. Two recipients of the order, Walker and Longstreet, both handled the letter with extreme care. Walker pinned the order to an inside pocket for safe keeping. Longstreet went to more extreme measures by chewing it: "The copy sent to me was carefully read, then used as some persons use a little of tobacco, to be assured that others could not have the benefit of its contents." The order that General McClellan obtained was addressed to D.H. Hill and signed by R. H. Chilton. However, the copy of the order that Hill received was from General Jackson. Hill, while entering Maryland, was under the command of General Jackson and therefore it was military protocol for Jackson to follow the command channels and write Hill a dispatch of the order. Therefore, Chilton does shoulder partial blame for not following

¹⁶ Wheeler, 66-67.

protocol, though he claims that the delivery receipt must have been received or there would have been an investigation on the missing order. After the war Hill denied ever viewing the order from Chilton; his adjutant signed an affidavit swearing to the fact that the order was never received.¹⁷

Now that McClellan knew what Lee was attempting, he had a much greater chance of victory. "Here is a paper with which if I cannot whip Bobbie Lee," he reportedly bellowed, "I will be willing to go home!" Amateur historians have surmised that if McClellan had not found the lost order, then he would not have gone on the offensive. Yet, it should be noted that McClellan had moved his forces forty-five miles away from Washington and was only fifteen miles from Sharpsburg, site of the battle. Historian Michael Palmer argued that McClellan would have continued his advance without the lost order, but finding it allowed him to take a more offensive strategy rather than a counter one. Furthermore, prior to becoming aware of Special Order 191, McClellan moved the Ninth Corps infantry four miles away from South Mountain which forced Hill to post one of his brigades at Turner's Gap, site of the next Union and Confederate confrontation. So it can be noted that McClellan was moving in the right direction without the help of the lost order. James McPherson even argues in his book Crossroads of Freedom that McClellan acted too slowly in advancing his troops once finding the lost order by waiting 18 hours before ordering his troops on the offensive. Therefore the notion, held by amateur historians, that the lost order gave McClellan an outright advantage over Lee has been grossly exaggerated.¹⁸

¹⁷ Hansen, 237; Sears 91, 114.

¹⁸ Wheeling, 67; McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom*, 109; Palmer, 29; Sears, 116.

Though most scholars have minimized the lost order, some historical actors debated Special Order 191 in the years after the war. Hill argued that the order did not have a great significance. Lee disagreed. In 1868, Lee told two associates, Colonel William Allen and E.C. Gordon, at Washington College, that if McClellan had not been aware of Lee's plans for two or three more days he would have defeated the Union forces. Another factor is that McClellan disregarded any information regarding the movement of Confederate forces if it did not coincide with Special Order 191. For example, he disregarded the fact that Longstreet's command had moved out of Boonsboro on to Hagerstown, which is eleven miles further away from Frederick, Maryland. Longstreet had moved to Hagerstown because there had been information given that a Union force was coming from Pennsylvania. Due to this, the Confederate forces were separated into five groups, not the four that McClellan believed. Therefore if McClellan had acted on this information he would have had a greater chance of victory, but he failed to do so. By not immediately attacking, McClellan allowed for crucial information dealing with the Union's finding of the lost order to reach Lee. A Confederate sympathizer, with an unknown identity, witnessed McClellan obtaining the lost order and also the Union advance to South Mountain. The sympathizer passed the information to the head of the Confederate Cavalry, Jeb Stuart, who told Lee of the new information. This allowed for Lee to move 1400 men to Turner's Gap at South Mountain to reinforce Hill. Also on the night of the thirteenth of September, divisions of Union forces had campfires that allowed for Hill to assess the enemy's numbers.¹⁹

A final key point about the lost order is not what it told, but what it did not tell McClellan. The order did not reveal the actual size of the Confederate forces. It only

¹⁹ McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom*, 111; Hansen, 237, 239; Sears, 118; Bailey, 38.

informed McClellan of how many divisions, four (McLaws, Anderson, Walker, and D.H. Hill), and the number of corps, 2 (Jackson and Longstreet). McClellan then deduced that each man had under him 15,000 men thus the whole Confederate force equaled 120,000 men. The truth is that the Confederate commanders only averaged around 4,500 men, placing them at around 40,500 men strong. This is compared to the Union force size at around 87,000 men, divided into five corps, with two divisions separated from the main of the army.²⁰

In general the lost order gave the potential for McClellan and his Union force to take a significant advantage over the Confederates. However, through a series of events, Lee and the Confederate Army were able to make the best of a terrible situation. If the anonymous Confederate sympathizer had not been at the right place at the right time to witness McClellan receive Special Order 191 or if the Union forces attempted a more surprise attack by not having fires on the night of the thirteenth, then the course of the war would have been totally different. Yet, Lee was most fortunate in the fact that he did not mention the number of men he possessed in his army within the lost order or McClellan would have been able to take full advantage of his superior numbers.

The Taking of Harper's Ferry

The key to Harper's Ferry was taking the high ground that surrounded it. This was the plan that was issued in Special Order 191: take Loudon Heights, Maryland Heights and Bolivar Heights, the areas that surrounded Harper's Ferry. The most important of these three was Maryland Heights since its altitude was 1, 476, 300 feet higher than Loudon Heights and more than double Bolivar Heights. If all three positions

²⁰ Sears, 117.

could be taken by the Confederates then Harper's Ferry would be "no more defensible than a well bottom," a Federal soldier noted. Though the Federals knew how to defend Harper's Ferry, they did not. Confederates took control of Harper's Ferry on September 15.²¹

The major factor why the Confederates took control of Harper's Ferry was due to the poor planning on the part of garrison commander Colonel Dixon Miles. It should be noted that Miles had been charged with drunkenness at First Bull Run and a fellow officer even stated that, "It seemed as though everything was mixed up in his head." Miles was unable to hold the key positions surrounding Harper's Ferry. In order to hold the area it was necessary to position artillery pieces to hold the higher ground. In one such case an ample supply of artillery including, two 9-inch naval Dahgren rifles, one 50-pounder Parrot rifle, and four 12-pounder smoothbores, were positioned halfway up Maryland heights, but facing the south and west. But nothing was done to secure the position at Maryland heights, making the artillery pieces useless if Confederates took that position.²²

Both Halleck and McClellan suggested that Maryland Heights should be the main focus of defense. Both thought it was the best option to defend just Maryland Heights and not Harper's Ferry. Yet this idea did not materialize because Miles did not plan in advance to place water reserves on the Heights; Maryland Heights had no water source. Miles also made the mistake of placing the 126th New York division, who had only been in uniform for three weeks, to assist in the defense of Maryland Heights. Once Colonel Eliakim Sherrill, the ranking officer for the defense of the Heights, was shot in the face,

²¹ Bailey, 39.

²² Bailey, 42; Sears, 122.

the 126th New York fled down the ridge. Colonel Thomas Ford of the 32nd Ohio wailed, "The 126 all run and the 32 are out of ammo." As a result, Confederate forces captured Maryland Heights with only minimal fighting. At the same time, Walker's two brigades were able to take Loudon Heights without any resistance and Jackson was beginning his siege on Bolivar Heights. Soon the Confederates were in control of the high ground surrounding Harper's Ferry.²³

On September 15, the Rebels captured Harper's Ferry. According to William H. Trimble of the 60th Ohio, there was, "not a place where you could lay the palm of your hand and say it was safe." Confederate forces gained tents, wagons, horses, mules, food, and clothing, as well as 73 artillery pieces, 13,000 small arms, and 12,500 men. Soon after the surrender, the Confederate forces at Harper's Ferry reconvened at Sharpsburg with the rest of the army, a twelve mile march north.²⁴

The taking of Harper's Ferry is of great significance. First, it completed the Confederate objective laid out in Special Order 191, consequently cleared a path for the Confederate supply line into Northern territory and provided a bounty of supplies. But the greatest aspect of the surrender, according to historian Stephen Sears, is that it freed the mass of Rebel soldiers to rejoin with the rest of their forces, allowing Lee to make a stand at Sharpsburg.²⁵

The Battle of South Mountain

As Jackson and his forces carried out their orders to take Harper's Ferry, McClellan issued his own. McClellan's plan was to take advantage of the Confederates

²³ Bailey, 43, 50, 59

²⁴ Bailey, 50, 59; Sears, 122, 124; Wheeler, 86.

²⁵ Sears, 151.

being spread out. In doing so he was attempting to split the Confederate forces in two, dividing McLaws, Jackson, and Walker, who were at Harper's Ferry, from the rest of the army. McClellan's orders sent the Sixth Corps under General William B. Franklin, through Crampton's Gap and on to Harper's Ferry to battle McLaw's two divisions. While this was occurring, 70,000 Federal troops advanced beyond Turner's Gap to Boonsboro. The plan had the potential for success, except that Lee had already learned of the Federal advance from a Confederate sympathizer and since D.H. Hill witnessed several fires on the Federal side of South Mountain.²⁶

The fighting broke out around nine in the morning of September 14 with the brunt of the action at Turner's and Fox's Gap. Confederate forces were greatly outnumbered, but were able to take advantage of their defensive positions. The Union objective was to flank the Confederate sides in order to force them to retreat. One successful flanking attempt was led by Lieutenant Colonel Rutherford B. Hayes of the 23rd Ohio. On the ascent to the summit, Hayes was wounded, but his men gained the position creating assaults on the Confederates from the right and center of their lines.²⁷

By 11 am, Federal troops gained Fox's Gap and headed towards Turner's Gap. The Confederate forces at Turner's Gap were going to be overwhelmed if the Federal troops from Fox's Gap joined in the assault at Turner's Gap. If this occurred D.H. Hill knew the battle would be over. Yet, Hill had no reserves since Longstreet's troops had not arrived from Hagerstown. To halt the union of Federal forces, Hill placed two artillery pieces south along the ridge road. Then he placed, "a line of dismounted staff

²⁶ Catton, 218; Sears, 119.

²⁷ Bailey, 45.

officers, couriers, teamsters, and cooks to give the appearance of a battery.” Luckily for Hill, it was enough to stop the Federal advance.²⁸

After a nineteen hour, thirteen mile march, Longstreet’s troops finally arrived at 3:30 pm to reinforce Hill. This increased the Confederate forces at South Mountain by 14,000 troops, half of the 28,000 Union troops present. McClellan, as usual had been too cautious in battle, and thus allowed Longstreet to reinforce the outnumbered Confederate forces. But by nightfall, the Confederate flanks had collapsed and the Rebels retreated down the other side of the mountain. The Confederates lost 2,700 troops; the Federals suffered 1,800 deaths.²⁹

The events at Crampton’s Gap were no better for the Confederates. Franklin’s Sixth Corps managed to take the Gap utilizing 9,000 troops compared to 2,150 Confederates. It was unmistakably clear that McLaw’s two divisions at Harper’s Ferry were in grave danger from Franklin’s forces. However, Franklin, like his superior officer McClellan, was too cautious. Franklin stopped after the battle on Crampton’s Gap, waiting until the next day to advance to Harper’s Ferry.³⁰

After the fighting on September 14, Lee was demoralized and was sure the Confederates had failed in Union Territory. The Confederates lost one quarter of all troops not at Harper’s Ferry. Lee wrote to McLaws that, “the day has gone against us.”³¹ From this, Lee decided it was necessary to retreat back into Virginia as fast as possible leaving the dead and wounded behind. But on the morning of September 15, he changed his mind. Lee, while in Sharpsburg, received word from Jackson that Harper’s Ferry had

²⁸ Bailey, 47.

²⁹ McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom*, 111.

³⁰ Catton, 222; McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom*, 111.

³¹ Bailey, 55.

been taken. "We will make our stand on these hills," Lee defiantly pronounced. And thus the stage was set for the Battle of Antietam.³²

The Battle of South Mountain proved very costly for the Confederate Army, though it could have been much worse. McClellan had been too cautious, expecting a significant force at Turner's Gap considering that Special Order 191 stated that D.H. Hill and Longstreet were supposed to be at Boonsboro. Furthermore he drastically overestimated the size of each force. Historian Richard Wheeler, in his book Lee's Terrible Swift Sword, maintains that if McClellan had sent more of his forces on Turner's Gap early in the battle, D.H. Hill would have been forced to retreat, allowing McClellan to divide the Confederate forces. Another scholar, James McPherson argued that if General Franklin would have immediately left for Harper's Ferry after the battle at Crampton's Gap, then Jackson and the Confederate forces would have had a much more difficult time taking Harper's Ferry. Consequently, by being overly cautious the Union generals unknowingly set the Battle of Antietam.³³

The Battle of Antietam: Strategy

The Battle of Antietam, the single bloodiest day in American military history, took place just north of the town of Sharpsburg, Maryland. On the night of September 17, the day the battle was fought, an estimated 5,000 men were killed in action and over 18,000 wounded; at least 2,000 of these wounded later died.³⁴

General Lee set the Confederate forces on a defensive position just north of Sharpsburg and south of Anietam Creek. The position had several advantages. The

³² McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom*, 111, 113; Bailey, 55; Hansen, 246.

³³ McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom*, 111; Wheeler, 72.

³⁴ McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom*, 129.

ground featured water on both flanks therefore making it rather difficult for the Federal troops to get around Confederate forces. Confederates took advantage of the high ground. For example, Stuart's artillery was positioned on Nicodemus Hill, the highest ground on the battle field deploying fourteen artillery pieces. The Confederates also took advantage of fences, rocks, forests, and hallows as defensive positions, and the battlefield possessed a sunken road worn out from wagon wheels that provided the Confederates with a natural trench. The final advantage was the position of the turnpike that ran from Hagerstown to Sharpsburg, and then to Harper's Ferry. Lee had positioned his forces so that the turnpike ran behind his troops; this would allow him to move brigades more easily to locations where the line was thin. Despite all these benefits, the ground provided only one escape route for the army. If the Confederates were forced to retreat, the Federals would be able to capitalize, by simply aiming their artillery at this one location.³⁵

On September 15, McClellan and his Union forces arrived on the east side of Antietam Creek, opposite the Confederates. McClellan did not probe or send reconnaissance missions to determine the exact location and numbers of his foe. By the next day, McClellan's force totaled 55,000 troops with another 14,000 six miles away. Across Antietam Creek, Lee had only 25,000 men. According to historian James McPherson, this would have been a prime time for McClellan to attack the undersized Confederates and take advantage of his strength in numbers, yet the overly cautious general waited until September 17, when Lee's forces had expanded to 36,000.

³⁵ Bailey, 60-61; McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom*, 113; Sears. 182.

McClellan, because of his failure to scout the Confederate Army mistakenly thought that he was fighting a force of 100,000 men.³⁶

There was a stark difference between the Confederate and Federal troops that were present for the battle at Sharpsburg besides their allegiances to their country. The Confederate soldiers at Sharpsburg were veterans and had already fought through major battles, including Second Bull Run. However, the Federal forces had a significant number of raw recruits prepared for battle. According to historian Bruce Catton, it should also be noted that the two forces counted the number of men they had available for battle differently. The United States Army counted all men present, including cooks, couriers, ambulance detail, and all others with non-combat duties. However, the Confederate Army only included men with muskets. One northern general would later state the necessity to take off twenty percent of the Federal forces to get its actual combat strength. Even with this mathematical reality, the Union still greatly outnumbered the Confederates.³⁷

Since McClellan waited for September 17 to begin the battle, he had ample time to strategize. The basic concept that McClellan employed was to attack the Confederate sides starting with the left and then the right side, followed by an attack on the center. The premise behind this was that it would not allow Lee to shift his men where the line became weak, except to move troops from the center. Consequently the center would become weak and allow for the Federal forces to easily break through. Antietam was one of the few battles in the course of the Civil War that the commanders on both sides

³⁶ Catton, 25; McPherson *Crossroads or Freedom*, 114-115.

³⁷ Catton, 253.

deliberately chose the field of battle and planned their tactics before the battle commenced, McClellan on offense, Lee on defense.³⁸

The battle plan that McClellan chose required a great deal of coordination. Prior to Antietam, the Army of the Potomac was organized into three wings under the commands of Generals Edwin Sumner, William Franklin and Ambrose Burnside. However, McClellan reorganized the Army for this battle, possibly because of the influence of General Joseph Hooker. This caused confusion within the chain of command. The new alignment placed Hooker and the I Corps in charge of flanking the Confederate left with Mansfield and Sumner supporting him. Yet, Hooker, due to his rank, could not issue Mansfield or Sumner orders, causing a disjointed attack on the Confederate left flank. By moving Hooker out of the control of Burnside's wing, Burnside placed General Cox in control of the IX Corps. Burnside interpreted these actions as a demotion. Burnside and Cox were in charge of the Confederate right. This caused information to move slowly from Federal headquarters to the right flank of the Confederates because information went from McClellan to Burnside and then to Cox. These two factors, according to historian Bruce Catton, were reasons why the Union was not able to be more successful at the Battle of Antietam.³⁹

The Battle

The battle began on the early morning of September 17 with artillery fire followed with the movement of troops. (Appendix A) General Hooker and his federal troops attacked the Confederate left held by General Jackson. The bulk of the fighting

³⁸ James McPherson *Battle Cry of Freedom* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 539; Hansen, 251.

³⁹ Catton, 254, 257.

was in the Cornfield, and the East and West Woods as they came to be called. What occurred was a series of bloody attacks and counter attacks that shattered whole divisions. Hooker's main objective was to overtake the high ground controlled by Jackson near the Dunker Church where Jackson's artillery was located.⁴⁰

Events on the morning of September 17 nearly ended in a decisive Union victory before noon. The first assault started at sunrise; 8,600 Federal troops attacked the Confederate's defensive line. "It was never my fortune," Union General Hooker noted, "to witness a more bloody, dismal battlefield." Within 45 minutes of fighting the First Texas regiment, under Confederate General John Hood, lost 82 percent of its men. For the Confederates; however, the battle could have been much worse. The Confederates were able to survive and capitalize on of the poor communication between Union commands. For example, General Mansfield did not send in reinforcements for Hooker's I Corps after it disintegrated. Therefore Lee ordered George T. Anderson's Georgia brigade to shift from General Longstreet's command to assist General Jackson in the defense of the Confederate left flank. Union General George Sears, actually gained control of the Confederate high ground at Dunker Church, where previously Confederate General Jackson had placed part of his artillery that had wreaked havoc on Union troops. (Appendix B) However, Green was unable to hold the position, again because the Unions inability to send reinforcements.⁴¹

At around the same time as General Green's escapade at Dunker Church, General McClellan called on an attack by the II Corps commanded by General Sumner. This was after the failed attempts by Hooker, and Mansfield. However, during the rush into battle,

⁴⁰ Sears, 180.

⁴¹ McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom*, 118-119; Sears 181,195; Bailey, 92.

Sumner failed to consider the necessity of discussing battle tactics with commanding officers who had previously seen the opposition. It did not help Mansfield that General Hooker was wounded and General Mansfield was dead, but still there were able men who could have informed Sumner of the situation.⁴²

General Sumner made a critical mistake during the rush into battle, maneuvering his forces in too tight of a formation. This caused three major problems for Sumner. First, it allowed for men at the rear of his battle lines to relax since they were not seeing any action; some even had the audacity to smoke their pipes and cigars. The next problem was that the tightness of the formation did not allow for his force to make tactical maneuvers in a timely manner. The final problem was that men at the rear of the battle lines could not fire their weapons without hitting their own men. All these problems together created a Union blood bath when the Confederate division under McLaws and Tige Anderson's brigade flanked Sumner's forces from the left. In less than ten minutes 500 Union soldiers were killed and in a matter of twenty minutes 2,225 Union troops were either dead, wounded, or missing. The carnage was massive; 12,000 casualties were created in four hours. This was the last main altercation on the left side of the Confederate line at Antietam. This Confederate flanking maneuver influenced a critical battle decision by McClellan that could have won the battle if not the war for the North.⁴³

General Sumner's attack on the Confederate left flank altered from the original battle plan. In the midst of moving into position, Brigadier General William H. French, in control of Sumner's rear division, became lost and drove into the center of the

⁴² Hansen, 254; McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom*, 119.

⁴³ Bailey, 89-91; Catton, 286; McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom*, 122.

Confederate line. French's Federal force doubled the Confederate force, though the Rebels held their position in the natural trench of the Sunken Road. In order to get to the Sunken Road, the Federal forces had to crest a hill that lay beside the road, then head down the other side, directly into Confederate line of fire. The Rebels waited until the last possible moment to fire in order to be the most effective with their shot. When the Confederates did take aim and fire, the Federal troops had no chance of survival. "My rifles flamed and roared in the Federals' faces like a blinding blaze of lightning accompanied by the quick and deadly thunderbolt," wrote Confederate Colonel John B. Gordon. "The effect was appalling. The entire front line, with few exceptions, went down in the consuming blast. Before his rear lines could recover from the terrific shock, my exultant men were on their feet, devouring them with successive volleys." In the five minutes that the Federal forces dared to stay within range of the Sunken Road, 450 casualties were taken. However, the defensive position eventually wore down against the waves of Federal attacks with Confederates also taking significant losses from holding their position. In the first two hours of battle, every officer in the 4th North Carolina regiment became a casualty. Eventually there would be a breach within the Confederate lines, turning the strong point into a trap. "We were shooting them like sheep in a pen," Union Sergeant Charles Fuller later stated, "If a bullet missed the mark at first it was liable to strike the further bank, angle back, and take them secondarily." When the fighting stopped, Union soldiers remarked that someone could walk the road without touching the ground. From that point on the Sunken Road was known as Bloody Lane.⁴⁴ (Appendix C)

⁴⁴ McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom*, 122; Bailey, 93, 96, 101, 102; Sears, 236.

Once the Federals broke through the Confederate center, the Rebels retreated. At this point the center of the Confederate line ceased to exist. "There was no body of Confederate infantry in this part of the field that could have resisted a serious advance," wrote an unknown Southern Officer. If McClellan had issued an attack, the battle would have ended; however, at the insistence of General Sumner, who had suffered such severe losses, McClellan did not take advantage because of the fear of a counter attack. This allowed for the Confederates to reform their line.⁴⁵

The action on the right side of the Confederate line started early as planned, but the action on the left was delayed. General Burnside was to receive orders from McClellan soon after the action commenced on the right, but these orders did not arrive until five hours after the battle began at around 10 AM. By chance, this actually gave an advantage to the Federal troops since Lee had been repositioning Confederate troops from the right side of his line to his left leaving only 4,000 men to face Burnside's 13,000. However, Burnside was not able to take advantage of this opportunity to flank the Confederates and take away their option of retreat. The Antietam Creek and the defensive positions of the Confederates stood in Burnside's way.⁴⁶

The Antietam Creek and the defending Confederates caused the Yankees terrible problems. The fifty foot wide creek could be waded through in most areas without much difficulty, though the depth of the creek was never checked by the Union. Therefore Burnside never planned to go directly through the water, which cost him dearly. His main focus was to get his men across the lone bridge that crossed the Antietam on the Confederate right side. Originally, the bridge was known as Rohrbach's Bridge, but after

⁴⁵ McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom*, 124

⁴⁶ McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom*, 124-125.

the 17th, it would be known as Burnside's Bridge. (Appendix D) The bridge was only wide enough to hold eight men marching shoulder-to-shoulder and those that crossed it had to contend with Confederate snipers at a distance of 150 feet, an easy shot for most. Brigadier General Samuel D. Sturgis reported the crossing a "mission of death" to take over the bridge. Indeed it was, it took three efforts to cross it. Eventually, Federal troops had the Confederates on retreat, but only followed them after two hours of reorganization. Again caution on the side of the Union Generals prevented them from ending the battle. Finally, Federal troops began to assault the Confederates who had by this time regrouped. The Federal troops successfully pushed back their foes, until the 16th Connecticut, a regiment that had not seen battle, was flanked on the left by none other than General A.P. Hill, who had marched a grueling seventeen miles that day. It did not hurt the Confederate cause that Hill's men had taken Federal blue uniforms from Harper's Ferry and were carrying a United States Flag. This caused a great deal of confusion among the Federal ranks. Despite the addition of A.P. Hill, the Confederates were forced back on their left side by Burnside. Burnside needed reinforcement to rout the Confederates but they did not appear. The day ended with the Confederate line intact.⁴⁷

On September 18, both sides expected the battle to resume, but nothing happened. McClellan received 13,000 more reinforcements to add to the 20,000 troops that went unused on the seventeenth. Lee only had 30,000 available men. McClellan remarked that there was no "reasonable certainty of success if I renewed the attack." That night,

⁴⁷ Catton, 301; Bailey, 120; Hansen, 256-257; McPherson *Crossroads of Freedom*, 128.

Lee and the rest of the Army of Northern Virginia crossed the Potomac and returned to the South. McClellan wired Washington, "Our victory was complete."⁴⁸

What occurred on September 17 and consequently on the 18th was a failure of the Army of the Potomac to take advantage of its superior numbers. Militarily Antietam was a victory for McClellan since at the end of the battle his troops held the position, and his foe retreated. What McClellan had hoped to do with his duel attack on both of the Confederate flanks was to halt Lee from shifting his men, leaving the middle weak for an attack. But this never occurred, because McClellan was too cautious to send reinforcements when the Confederates were on the verge of collapse. Therefore it leaves open to debate whether the Battle of Antietam was actually a Union victory. In truth the battle was a stalemate; neither side gained any territory or successfully breached the lines for a significant amount of time. The historian, Michael A. Palmer, in his book Lee Moves North, argues that the Battle of Antietam, was a failure for Lee and the Confederates since they never won a significant battle on Federal soil and were actually pushed back. James McPherson, in his book Battle Cry of Freedom, expressed that the Battle of Antietam was at least a strategic success for the Union, even though union deaths were significantly greater than Confederate casualties. The battle had significant repercussions for the Confederate States and the United States in the realm of political and diplomatic relations. The Emancipation Proclamation, issued a few months after the battle, changed the terms of the war and ended the Confederate opportunity to earn diplomatic recognition.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom*. 130.

⁴⁹ Palmer, 32; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 545.

The Beginning of the End of National Recognition

Prior to the Battle of Antietam, Great Britain and France were contemplating the necessity of recognizing the South as a nation. Great Britain and France had various economic, political, and imperial reasons for recognizing the Confederate States of America. However, the events that occurred on September 17 ended all real hopes of the South becoming an independent nation.

Great Britain as a whole was divided on the issue of supporting the South. Some Brits supported the war from its inception, while others were totally opposed to it. For example, the city of Liverpool was in full support of the Confederate States. "The city was made by the slave trade," McPherson noted "and the sons of those who acquired fortunes in the traffic now instinctively sided with the rebelling slave drivers." These groups assisted the South by building blockade runners and warships including the *Florida* and *Alabama* which together sunk over 100 Union vessels. The aristocracy in Great Britain championed the South because they wanted a similar patrician class in North America which they determined would be created if the South won the war. Others defended the war based on the principle that the South had the right of self-determination.⁵⁰

The economy of Great Britain suffered from the lack of cotton. Since the South was focused on winning the war and not tilling the fields, cotton was in short supply in Great Britain. This led to over three fourths of English cotton mill workers either being unemployed or working part-time. However, these workers, ironically, supported the Union cause. They determined that the North would create a society where the rights of

⁵⁰ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 546-547.

man would be truly fulfilled and maintained that these rights would eventually filter into Great Britain. Thus, for the workers if the North won the war, then it was a win for workers' rights. "As the American War of Independence initiated a new era of ascendancy for the middle class," the socialist intellectual, Karl Max commented, "so the American anti-slavery war will do for the working classes."⁵¹

France's position on the American Civil War was based on several factors. Louis Napoleon was the leader of France during the course of the Civil War. He desired more cotton, just as Great Britain did to use in the industrial sector. But, Napoleon further wanted to expand his empire by annexing Mexico. The leader of Mexico at this time was the Union-supported Benito Juarez. In order to sway French support, the Confederate diplomat, John Slidell offered several hundred thousand bales of cotton and an alliance against Juarez in return for French diplomatic recognition and naval assistance. Napoleon did not act on this; he knew could not be assured of success without the assistance of the powerful British navy. The potential of a Confederate victory on Northern soil left the door open for intervention. "The whole matter is full of difficulty," Viscount Palmerston, Britain's Prime Minister, stated, "and can only be cleared up by some more decided events between the contending armies." The Battle of Antietam was the deciding event and temporarily ended the Confederate hope of recognition.⁵²

Slavery, the South's economic foundation, made the possibility of diplomatic recognition more problematic. Great Britain and France had already abolished slavery, and they rightly knew that they, as civilized societies, could not act in favor of slavery. However, since the war, at this point, was not only over the issue of slavery, these

⁵¹ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 548-550.

⁵² McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 554; Sears, 33.

countries were free to support the South. Conversely, their positions changed when Lincoln strategically issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. "I cannot imagine that any European power would dare to recognize and aid the Southern Confederacy," Lincoln remarked a year prior, "if it became clear that the Confederacy stands for slavery and the Union for freedom." The proclamation set free all slaves in the Confederate territories except for certain areas in Louisiana and Virginia. It did not set slaves free in the four Border States that were still loyal to the United States. Therefore, Lincoln single handedly destroyed southern hopes of recognition surpassing what any battle had thus far accomplished.⁵³

Conclusion

The Battle of Antietam was the bloodiest day the United States has ever seen. But its significance goes much further than the destruction of the individuals who lost their lives in the fight. The chance events that occurred during the Confederate's Maryland Campaign had a decisive impact on the course of the battle and the war as a whole. Through these events, the Union was able to earn a strategic victory and destroy Confederate hopes for recognition.

The first chance events through the course of the Maryland Campaign directly affected the Confederates potential to claim victory. The first event for the Confederates was inopportune since troops without shoes were sent to the rear, and were unable to be used in battle. But still the Confederates were able to take advantage of Union General Halleck's mistake not to withdraw troops from Harper's Ferry, thus gaining a secure path for their supply line and needed equipment and provisions. However, the greatest of

⁵³ Sears, 334.

these chance events is the discovery of Special Order 191 by Union forces that provided the North with the location and strategy of their foe. Yet through fortunate events for the South, the Confederacy managed to learn about McClellan obtaining a copy of the order. This allowed for only minimal changes to Confederate strategy since forces had already been deployed to their strategic locations. Therefore the door was open for McClellan to gain a decisive victory, if not end the war completely.

Nevertheless, McClellan's trait of being too cautious and his overestimations of Confederate strength negated any benefit Special Order 191 provided. Furthermore, during the battle McClellan was unable to coordinate his military wings successfully to complete a tactical military attack. More specifically, McClellan had numerous opportunities to overrun the Confederate forces when their lines broke, but failed to send in reinforcements that could have won the day. Even after gaining reinforcements to amass a force that nearly doubled Lee's on September 18, McClellan allowed for the Confederates to retreat to their own territory, when in fact he could have destroyed them. It is ironic that McClellan failed in so many aspects of a battle that brought a high measure of success for the Union.

The battle just north of Sharpsburg, created such a stir in foreign circles that they backed off their position to support the Confederate cause or intercede to sue for peace between the North and the South. Consequently, it also provided Lincoln with the opportunity to issue the Emancipation Proclamation that ended all hopes of foreign recognition for the Confederacy since they Civil War was no longer over secession, it was over secession and the end of slavery. James McPherson concurs, stating that the battle itself could have delivered a more decisive military victory, but its significance in

the realm of politics and diplomatic recognition is unparalleled. Similarly, but more critically, Michael Palmer maintains that the Battle of Antietam and the Maryland Campaign as a whole was a complete failure for Lee citing that the Confederates did not enter Northern Territory to fight a stalemate and lose all hope of diplomatic recognition at the same time. Contemporaries of the Battle of Antietam in the South fabricated the outcome of the battle determining that it was "decidedly in our favor." *The Charleston Mercury* reported, "The Confederate Army, though opposed by largely superior numbers, again illustrated its valor and invincibility by successfully repelling the repeated onsets of the enemy." However, this naïve perception was not granted the significance to the Emancipation Proclamation. It was done "to pacify England," *The Charleston Mercury* informed, "and prevent a movement towards the recognition of the Confederate States and the raising of the blockade." Therefore, the chance events that occurred before and during the Battle of Antietam significantly changed the course of history and maintained the unity of the United States of America.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom*, 156; Palmer, 20; Unknown, "Emancipation Proclamation" *The Charleston Mercury*, October 1, 1862.

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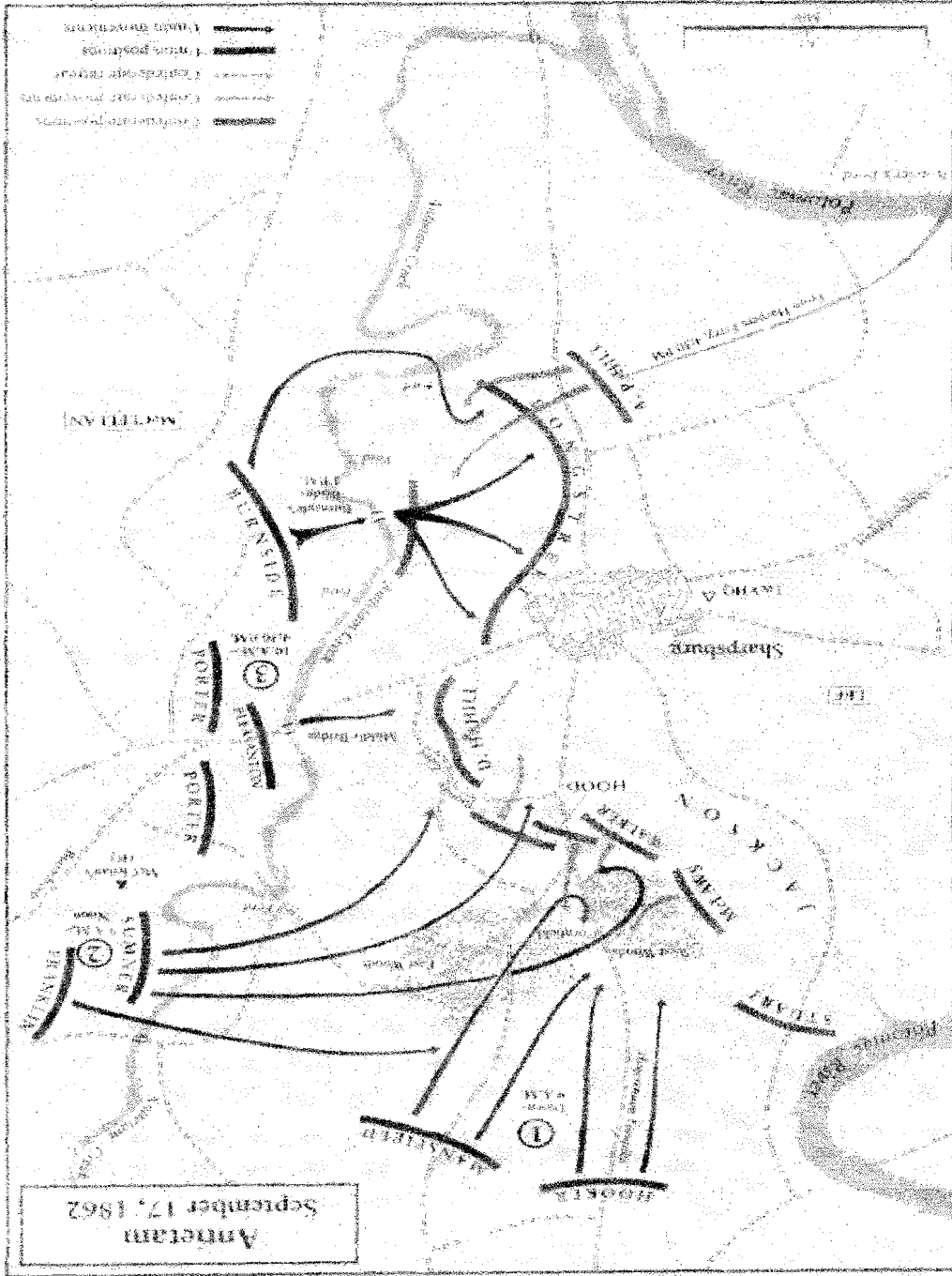
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Appendix A



Appendix A⁵⁵

Appendix B

Appendix B⁵⁶



⁵⁶ Alexander Gardner, http://www.nps.gov/anti/photos/G_DunkerC.htm

Appendix C

Appendix C⁵⁷



⁵⁷ Alexander Gardner, . http://www.nps.gov/anti/photos/G_BLane3.htm

Appendix D

Appendix D⁵⁸



⁵⁸ Alexander Gardner, http://www.nps.gov/anti/photos/G_BBridge3.htm