

Topic Page: [Gettysburg, Battle of, Gettysburg, Pa., 1863](#)

Definition: **Gettysburg, Battle of** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

(1-3 July, 1863) Decisive campaign of the American Civil War, fought over three days near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The Union army of George Gordon Meade checked the invasion of Pennsylvania by the Confederate forces of Robert E. Lee. The battle was a turning point. The heavy casualties (c.20,000 each side) prompted Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

Summary Article: **Gettysburg** from *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Site of one of the decisive battles of the American Civil War: a Confederate defeat by Union forces 1–3 July 1863, at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 80 km/50 mi northwest of Baltimore. The site is now a national cemetery, at the dedication of which President Abraham Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address on 19 November 1863, a speech in which he reiterated the principles of freedom, equality, and democracy embodied in the US Constitution. The site is part of Gettysburg National Military Park (1895).

The South's heavy losses at Gettysburg came in the same week as their defeat at Vicksburg, and the Confederacy remained on the defensive for the rest of the war. The battle ended Robert E Lee's invasion of the North.

The address begins with 'Fourscore and seven years ago', and ends with an assertion of 'government of the people, by the people, and for the people'.

Confederate advance After his victory at Chancellorsville, Lee decided to advance north into Union territory. He marched up the western side of the Blue Ridge mountains and sent General J E B (Jeb) Stuart's cavalry to the east to act as scouts. Unfortunately, Stuart instead set off to find a Union force to defeat, and failed to carry out any scouting. When the Confederates reached Chambersburg, they found that two Union corps were a few kilometres away and that General Joseph Hooker had been replaced as commander of the Union Army of the Potomac by the more dangerous General George Meade.

First clash at Gettysburg Lee sent General Ambrose P Hill's corps over the mountains to report on the Union forces' strength, but a Union cavalry patrol discovered them and Meade began moving his army toward Gettysburg. The two forces met close to the town and fighting broke out more or less immediately. The Union forces eventually passed through the town and took up a strong position on Cemetery Hill; Lee moved his troops on to a ridge across the valley, and ordered an attack the following morning.

Confederate attacks This attack was a shambles, owing to the Confederate general James Longstreet's failure to support General Richard Ewell during the morning attack. By the time Lee got him moving, the Union lines had outflanked his corps. The following day Lee planned another concerted attack. Longstreet again failed to move, allowing Ewell to make his attack and be beaten back.

Confederate defeat Ammunition began to run low, and General George A Pickett, waiting to make a frontal attack when Ewell and Longstreet had done their part, was warned that unless he made his assault now, there would be no covering fire available. Longstreet ordered him to advance. Pickett's

division poured from a ravine and was blown to shreds by concentrated Union artillery fire. At the same time Hill made an attack on the Union lines, which was driven off by the appearance of a strong Union reserve. Lee saw that there was no hope of victory, and set off back to Virginia.

documents

Everett, Edward: Address at Gettysburg

Kemp, Jack: Lincoln's Vision of Democracy

Lincoln, Abraham: Gettysburg Address

Sagan, Carl: Thoughts on the 125th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg

weblinks

Battle of Gettysburg Home Page

From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs of Confederate General James Longstreet

Gettysburg Address



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