

## **ABRAHAM LINCOLN – The Presidential Years (part 3)**

### **Leadership in the Union Army**

After the First Battle of Bull Run, Lincoln had appointed West Point graduate General George McClellan as Commander of the Army of the Potomac. McClellan set his sights upon the capture of the Confederate capital of Richmond. In what he called the Peninsula Campaign, McClellan planned to move the huge army by boat to the Eastern Shore (Peninsula) of Virginia and then over land to Richmond itself. McClellan, however, took an inordinate amount of time planning and mobilizing the movements, and challenged the president's authority several times in the process. Furthermore, McClellan was slow to strike when he had the opportunities and always exaggerated the number of enemy troops waiting to engage his army.

On September 16, 1862, the Union Army scored a major victory at Sharpsburg, Maryland, in what came to be known as The Battle of Antietam. Antietam would prove to be the bloodiest one-day battle of the war. The battle forced the battered Confederate Army under General Robert E. Lee to cross the Potomac River back into Virginia and foiled Lee's attempt to carve a path of military victories in Union territory. Despite the urgings of the president and Congress, McClellan failed to order his army to pursue the fleeing Confederates, enabling them to regroup in their own territory. Lincoln, having had enough of McClellan's indecision and insubordination, replaced him as Commander of the Army of the Potomac. Finding a suitable replacement, however, would prove no easy task. In fact, Lincoln went through several more commanders before settling on General Ulysses S. Grant.

### **The Slavery Issue**

From the time the war had started, Lincoln had wrestled with himself and members of his cabinet concerning the proper timing of emancipating slaves in the South. With the momentum of the war swinging back to the Union, and on the heels of the major victory at Antietam, Lincoln issued his famous Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862, to be effective on January 1, 1863. The decree freed all slaves in "enemy territory." The proclamation, however, failed to address slavery in the Border States. Lincoln believed forcing the Border States of Kentucky, Maryland, Delaware, and Missouri to free their slaves would push them to join the Confederacy. Despite his failure to free slaves in the Border States, Lincoln believed that slavery would die as long as it did not extend into new territories.

Despite the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln maintained his primary goal was not the liberation of slaves, but rather the preservation of the Union. In fact, Lincoln believed the best plan of action for the newly freed slaves was to set up a colony for them in Africa. Lincoln enjoyed little, if any, support for the plan, and by 1863 abandoned the idea. By the end of 1863, Lincoln had formulated a plan to recruit black soldiers to the Union Army in the belief that "the bare sight of 50,000 armed and drilled black soldiers on the banks of the Mississippi would end the rebellion at once."

### **Good News for the Union**

July of 1863 would prove a major turning point in the war. On July 3, the Army of Northern Virginia led by Robert E. Lee was repulsed at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, in arguably the most storied battle in American history. The following day, on July 4, 1863, General Ulysses S. Grant and Union forces took Vicksburg, Mississippi, after a long siege, gaining control of the Mississippi River for the Union Army and splitting the Confederacy into two separate parts. For Lincoln, control of the Mississippi River, its ports, and its navigation were one of the main objectives in eventual military victory.

- 1.) **Which of the following statements correctly describes George McClellan?**
  - a.) An indecisive general who always struck quickly
  - b.) A decisive general who always knew the size of an enemy force
  - c.) A decisive general who failed to strike quickly but always knew the size of an enemy force
  - d.) An indecisive general who failed to strike quickly and who exaggerated the size of an enemy force
  
- 2.) **The Battle of Antietam was...**
  - a.) the bloodiest one-day battle in the war.
  - b.) a battle that occurred in 1864.
  - c.) a decisive victory for the Confederate Army.
  - d.) the bloodiest battle in the war.
  
- 3.) **Why did Lincoln replace McClellan as General of the Army of the Potomac?**
  - a.) He failed to pursue the fleeing Confederates.
  - b.) He challenged the president's authority.
  - c.) He was slow to strike.
  - d.) All of the above
  
- 4.) **Why did Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation fail to free slaves in the Border States?**
  - a.) He did not want those states to be persuaded to join the Confederacy.
  - b.) Those states had no slaves.
  - c.) Freeing those slaves would mean certain victory for the Confederacy.
  - d.) Lincoln did not believe that slaves in those states deserved their freedom.
  
- 5.) **What was Lincoln's primary goal in the war?**
  - a.) Preserve the nation
  - b.) Punish the South
  - c.) To free the slaves
  - d.) Win the presidential election of 1864
  
- 6.) **Which of the following was NOT TRUE about Abraham Lincoln?**
  - a.) He believed in allowing former slaves to become soldiers for the Union Army.
  - b.) He thought slaves should not be allowed to become soldiers for the Union Army.
  - c.) He thought, at least for some time, that freed slaves should be sent to a colony in Africa.
  - d.) He believed slavery would die if it was not extended into the new territories.
  
- 7.) **Which of the following was NOT a reason why July of 1863 was a "turning point" for the Union Army?**
  - a.) July 4th became a national holiday after the fall of Vicksburg.
  - b.) The Union took Vicksburg, Mississippi.
  - c.) The Union Army drove the Confederates from Northern soil at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.
  - d.) The Union Army took control of the Mississippi River.
  
- 8.) **What happened first?**
  - a.) The Battle of Gettysburg ended.
  - b.) The slaves were actually freed.
  - c.) July 4th
  - d.) The Emancipation Proclamation

**9.) Which of the words in the following sentence means the act of "keeping together"?**

Despite the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln maintained his primary goal was not the liberation of slaves, but rather the preservation of the Union.

- a.) primary
- b.) liberation
- c.) preservation
- d.) Proclamation

**10.) Which battle was arguably "the most storied" in American history?**

- a.) Vicksburg
- b.) Antietam
- c.) Bull Run
- d.) Gettysburg