George McClellan at Antietam

Class Two

The Confederacy is formed and the war begins at Fort Sumter. Union forces are defeated at Bull Run, Big Bethel and Wilson’s Creek. Lincoln appoints George McClellan to lead Union forces.
Outline

- Class One – John Pope at Second Bull Run
- Class Two – George McClellan at Antietam
- Class Three – Ambrose Burnside at Fredericksburg
Events of 1862

- **September 12-15** - *Gen. Stonewall Jackson's* Confederate troops take [Harpers Ferry, WV](http://example.com) and capture more than 12,500 Union troops.

- **September 17** - The bloodiest day in U.S. military history occurs at [Antietam, MD](http://example.com) when *Gen. Robert E. Lee's* advancing Confederates are stopped by *Gen. George McClellan's* Union forces at a cost of over 25,000 casualties.
George Brinton McClellan (12/3/26 – 10/29/85) was a major general during the Civil War and the Democratic Party candidate for President in 1864.

He organized the Army of the Potomac and served briefly (11/61 – 3/62) as the general-in-chief of the Union Army.

Early in the war, McClellan played an important role in raising a well-trained and organized army for the Union.

Although McClellan was meticulous in his planning and preparations, these characteristics may have hampered his ability to challenge aggressive opponents in a fast-moving battlefield environment.

He chronically overestimated the strength of enemy units and was reluctant to apply principles of mass, frequently leaving large portions of his army unengaged at decisive points.
**George B. McClellan [2]**

- **McClellan's** Peninsula Campaign in 1862 ended in failure, with retreats from attacks by *General Robert E. Lee's* smaller Army of Northern Virginia and an unfulfilled plan to seize Richmond.

- His performance at the bloody Battle of Antietam blunted *Lee's* invasion of Maryland, but allowed Lee to eke out a precarious tactical draw and avoid destruction, despite being outnumbered.

- As a result, **McClellan's** leadership skills during battles were questioned by President Abraham Lincoln, who eventually removed him from command, first as general-in-chief, then from the Army of the Potomac.

- Lincoln offered this famous evaluation of **McClellan**: "If he can't fight himself, he excels in making others ready to fight."
• **McClellan** was the most popular commanders with its soldiers, who felt that he had their morale and well-being as paramount concerns.

• **McClellan** also failed to maintain the trust of Lincoln, and proved to be frustratingly derisive of, and insubordinate to, his commander-in-chief.

• After he was relieved of command, **McClellan** became the unsuccessful Democratic Party nominee opposing Lincoln in the 1864 presidential election.

• His party had an anti-war platform, promising to end the war and negotiate with the Confederacy, which **McClellan** was forced to repudiate, damaging the effectiveness of his campaign.

• He served as the 24th Governor of New Jersey from 1878 to 1881. He eventually became a writer, defending his actions during the Peninsula Campaign and the Civil War.
Lee’s Special Order No. 191 [1]

- Special Orders, No. 191
  Hdqrs. Army of Northern Virginia
  September 9, 1862

  “The citizens of Fredericktown being unwilling while overrun by members of this army, to open their stores, to give them confidence, and to secure to officers and men purchasing supplies for benefit of this command, all officers and men of this army are strictly prohibited from visiting Fredericktown except on business…”

  “Major Taylor will proceed to Leesburg, Virginia, and arrange for transportation of the sick and those unable to walk to Winchester…”
“General Jackson's command will form the advance, and, after passing Middletown, with such portion as he may select, take the route toward Sharpsburg, cross the Potomac at the most convenient point, and by Friday morning take possession of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, capture such of them as may be at Martinsburg, and intercept such as may attempt to escape from Harpers Ferry.”

“General Longstreet's command will pursue the same road as far as Boonsborough, where it will halt, with reserve, supply, and baggage trains of the army.”
“**General McLaws**, ... will follow **General Longstreet**. On reaching Middletown will take the route to Harpers Ferry, and ... capture the enemy at Harpers Ferry…”

“**General Walker** ... will cross the Potomac at Cheek’s Ford, ... take possession of Loudoun Heights, if practicable, by Friday morning, Key's Ford on his left, and the road between the end of the mountain and the Potomac on his right. He will ... intercept retreat of the enemy.”

“**General D. H. Hill’s** division will form the rear guard of the army…”

“**General Stuart** will ... cover the route of the army.”

“...**Generals Jackson, McLaws, and Walker** ... will join the main body of the army at Boonsborough or Hagerstown.”

By command of **General R. E. Lee**

**R.H. Chilton**, Assistant Adjutant General
The Battle of Antietam

- The Battle of Antietam - History Animated
- The Civil War – PBS – Ken Burns
- The Battle of Antietam – History
- Antietam, MD - Civil War Journeys
“... the Irish Brigade had to occupy and hold a gap in the line of the Union army, which the enemy perceiving had flung a formidable column to break through, and so take the two divisions last named on their flank and rear.”

“This movement was suddenly checked by the impetuous advance of the Irish Brigade, which in a great measure filling up the gap through which the rebel column was descending to the rear of the Federal lines, drew up in line of battle within 50 paces of the enemy ...”

“On coming into this close and fatal contact with the enemy, the officers and men of the brigade waved their swords and hats and gave the heartiest cheers for their general, George B. McClellan, and the Army of the Potomac.”

“Never were men in higher spirits.”

“Never did men with such alacrity and generosity of heart press forward and encounter the perils of the battle-field.”
“The first volley from the Union lines in my front sent a ball through the brain of the chivalric Colonel Tew, of North Carolina, to whom I was talking, and another ball through the calf of my right leg. On the right and the left my men were falling under the death-dealing crossfire like trees in a hurricane.”

“Higher up in the same leg I was again shot; but no bone was broken.”

“When later in the day the third ball pierced my left arm, tearing asunder tendons and mangling the flesh, they caught sight of the blood running down my fingers, and these devoted and big-hearted men, ... pleaded with me to leave them and go to the rear...”

“A fourth ball ripped through my shoulder, leaving its base and a wad of clothing in its track.”

“I was shot down a by a fifth ball, which struck me squarely in the face, and passed out, barely missing the jugular vein.”

Colonel John B. Gordon
6th Alabama Infantry
Rode’s Brigade

Play Rose of Albamy
January 1, 1863 - A Proclamation.

"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom."
“And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.”

“And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.”

By the President: Abraham Lincoln