

HOW THE SOUTH MIGHT HAVE WON ‘LINCOLN’S WAR’

IF THE SOUTH HAD WON ITS WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE, as the United States did some 80 years earlier, the world might today be a much better place for all of us—Northerners and Southerners, white and black alike, believe it or not. The author shows how it could rather easily have happened, had the Southern leaders adopted better strategies: more aggressive at the outset, or more defensive later on. In this article, Mississippian Pat Shannan examines the strategies that might have brought the Confederacy victory and analyzes those that failed.

BY PAT SHANNAN



Reams of volumes have been written over the past century and a half on America’s great “Civil War,” a misnomer from the beginning because if there is anything scholars from all sides will agree on, it is that the four-year bloody conflagration never met the definition of “civil war.” To qualify as a “civil war,” one faction of the citizenry must attempt to overthrow the existing government and establish its own. That this was not the case was obvious from the very beginning.

Following the first major battle (involving infantry clashing with infantry) at Manassas, Virginia in July 1861, the Confederates gave the Union’s “90-day wonders” a complete thrashing. The Confederates called the clash the Battle of Manassas (later called the Battle of First Manassas). Washington civilian residents had dressed in their fin-

The controlled media propaganda machine of the North depicted Confederate President Jefferson Davis as a devil, complete with horns and a tail flying a pirate flag. Such hateful imagery is the standard operating procedure for the establishment when it wants to stampede the American people into a war for the benefit of the cryptocracy.



Confederate Gen. Lewis Addison Armistead led a suicidal charge on Cemetery Hill at the Battle of Gettysburg. Above is a depiction of Armistead and his men crossing over the stone wall in their path on Cemetery Hill. He was 50 yards ahead of his troops—hat on sword, according to legend—when he breached the enemy lines (he was the only brigade commander in Pickett’s division to do so) and was mortally wounded. But Armistead drove the Union defenders from their position and lived long enough to see his colors raised over the spot. Could the South have won independence by avoiding such reckless gallantry in the middle and latter part of the war? Defenders of the South’s Gettysburg invasion strategy say the Confederates needed shoes so badly, a full scale invasion of the North was warranted. Might shoes (or at least the materials to make them) also have been acquired by fast-moving, guerrilla-style cavalry raids on Union factories and warehouses without risking tens of thousands of irreplaceable soldiers, officers, horses, war materiel and artillery pieces?

ery and ridden in their horse-pulled carriages the 20 miles to watch the battle as if it were to be a modern-day football game. They, along with their bloodied troops, soon went scurrying like rabbits back to the city in fear for their lives.

This battle, known in the North as the “Battle of Bull Run” for the name of the creek running through the Wilmer McLean¹ farm, took place on July 21. Had the “rebels” actually been attempting to overthrow the existing government and chasing the aggressors to the White House and Capitol Building, this likely would have gone down in history as “America’s One-Day War.” But because such a plan was never part of Jefferson Davis’s agenda, the Confederate troops packed up

“A question settled by violence, or in disregard of law, must remain unsettled forever.”

JEFF DAVIS

and went home, puffed and arrogant in the knowledge that they had just shown “dem Yankee boys” what to expect “if you wanna mess with us.”

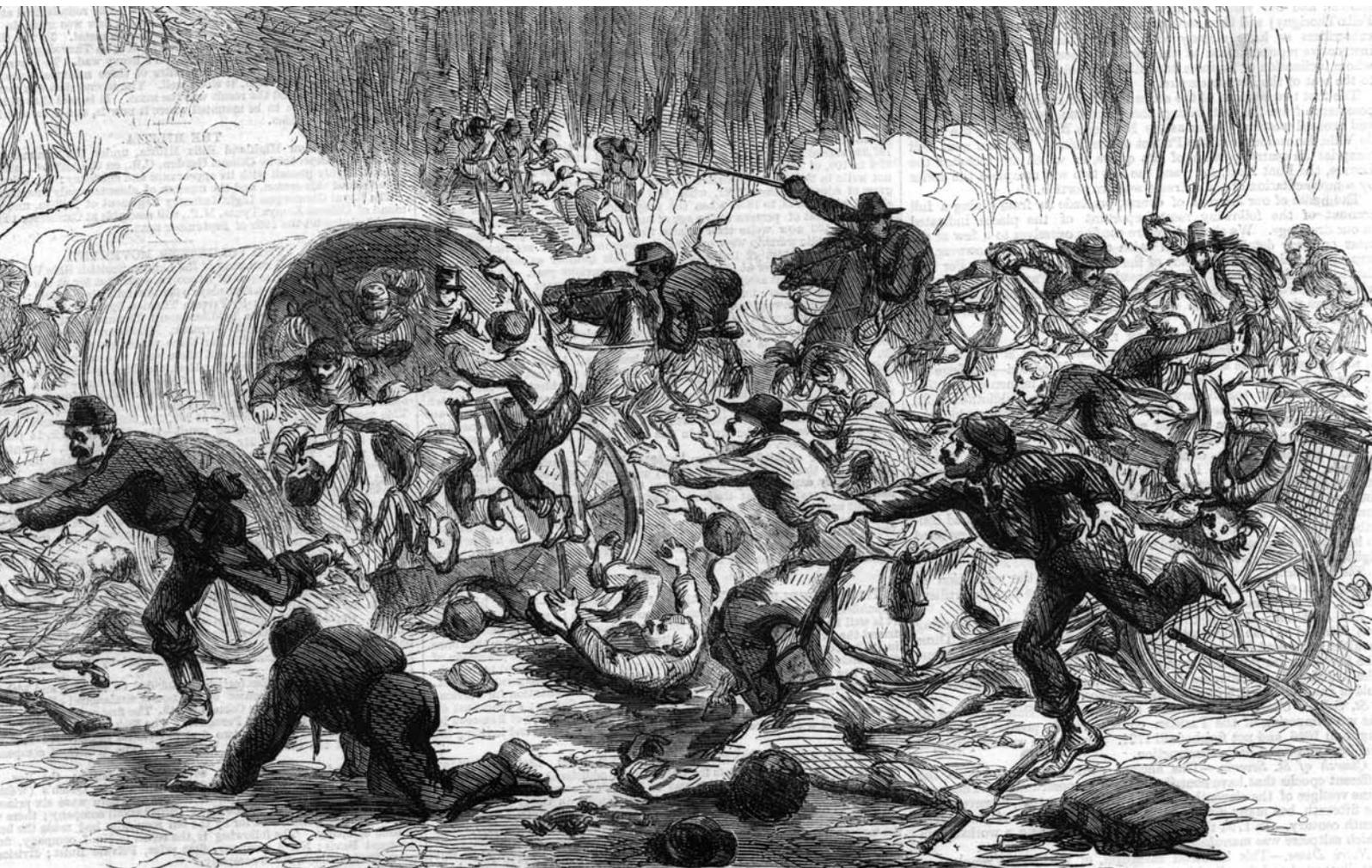
It turned out to be a crucial military error, not even equaled by the disaster at Gettysburg known as “Pickett’s Charge,”² because it not only would have to be the first chapter of any treatise summarizing how the South might have won the war, but portrays that the South had never wanted to make war in the first place, was merely defending its land and only wanted a “divorce” from Lincoln’s federal government.

It was for this reason that throughout the South, for the duration, this was known as “Lincoln’s War” and not a “civil war” nor even a “war between the states.” Southern-

ers knew that those Christian white men in Minnesota and Indiana had no argument with their Christian brothers in Georgia and Louisiana. This was a political war, stirred by Washington’s overtaxation of the Southern states and Lincoln’s fear of the financial center of the continent becoming New Orleans rather than New York.

Slavery, though not initially the reason for the war, became a convenient scapegoat to rally these Northern men into uniform.

The Southern states, of course, had every right to secede, so succinctly outlined in the 1776 Declaration of Independence; and even Rep. Lincoln had acknowledged it more than a decade earlier with this statement on the floor of the House of Representatives:



Had the Confederates pursued their military advantage immediately following the Battle of First Manassas (First Bull Run), they could have taken Washington, D.C. and ended the war for independence in one day. It was no civil war: It was divorce from, not the replacement of, the central government that was the Rebel desire. Here a scene from *The Illustrated London News* of July 1861 shows the defeat and stampede of the panicky Union troops and the confused flight of the foolish Northern spectators who came to watch the battle as if it were some sort of picnic.

CREDIT: NEWS.COM/WHPHOTOS000776

Any people anywhere, being inclined and having the power, have the right to rise up and shake off the existing government and form a new one that suits them better. This is a most valuable—a most sacred—right, a right which, we hope and believe, is to liberate the world. Nor is this right confined to cases in which the whole people of an existing government may choose to exercise it. Any portion of such people that can, may revolutionize, and make their own, of so much of their territory as they inhabit.

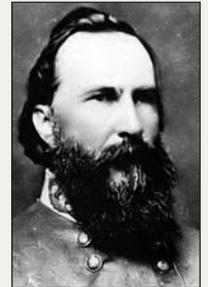
But he was not talking about the Southern states that were seceding from the union in early 1861, before and after he officially took the office of president. No, these remarks were made in 1847, when Lincoln was defending the right of Texans to demand their independence from Mexico. Fourteen years later, when 11 Southern states began to declare their independence, Lincoln's response was to wage war on them, because he happened to be on "the other side" at that time.

That was the godlike Lincoln—agreeing with Thomas Jefferson until it became politically expedient to think otherwise. It wasn't until this author became an adult and started reading history from a Southern perspective that I began to doubt and refute the version of events I was taught six decades ago, especially the deification of Abraham "Honest Abe" Lincoln.

For example, how many Americans know (or have been allowed to know) that Lincoln suspended civil liberties in the North, including the essential writ of *habeas corpus*? That he filled the jails with more than 13,000 political prisoners, newspapermen and outspoken citizens, all incarcerated without due process of law? And when the Maryland Legislature was about to vote to become state No. 12 in the Confederacy, Lincoln sent his troops to the home of each legislator during the night and arrested and jailed them one by one before they could vote to secede. All 100 or more state lawmakers spent the duration of the war behind bars. How come that's not in the establishment history books?

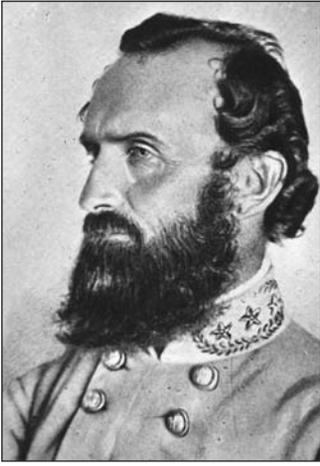
The Supreme Court protested Lincoln's disregard for our Constitutional protections, but the president replied he had a war to fight. Since he commanded the army, Lincoln won that argument, and with his military power intimidated even the Supreme Court justices into submission, with the threat of arrest.

As a child, I never questioned the schoolbook assertion that the South was wrong to secede, and that Lincoln was right to use as much force as necessary to preserve the

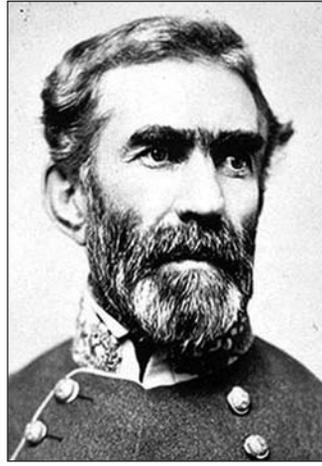


THE FATE OF GEN. GEORGE PICKETT

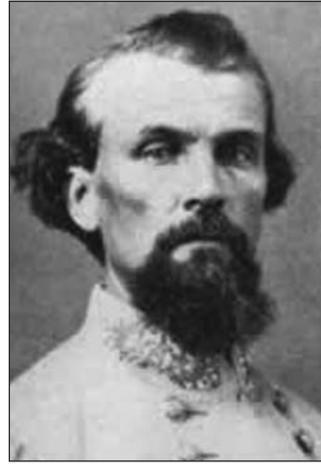
George Edward Pickett (pictured above left; born January 28, 1825), ordered his men to make a gallant, if stupid, mile-long, uphill charge with little cover against an entrenched enemy during the Gettysburg battle, an unsuccessful attempt to coordinate a massive assault on the Union center. Just where he was during the charge is a matter of dispute, but it seems he was unhurt, though many of his men perished under the withering Yankee fire. Short of men (he was lacking two brigades), Pickett fiercely resisted the initial order to make the charge. Returning from the charge with his battered brigades, Lee ordered Pickett to re-form his troops to repel an expected Union countercharge. It is alleged he flatly refused and walked away from Lee. (Pickett's official report for the battle has never been found. It is rumored that Gen. Lee rejected it for its bitter negativity and demanded that it be rewritten, and an updated version was never filed.) Although Pickett's superior officer, Longstreet (pictured above right), really ordered the charge over Pickett's protests, Pickett became the scapegoat. His career went downhill and, after fighting in several more battles, he was relieved of command by Gen. Lee. Within a few more days, Lee surrendered at Appomattox, but the Confederacy kept shooting until at least June 22, 1865 and never actually surrendered, so officially the war has never ended. Jefferson Davis said, "A question settled by violence, or in disregard of law, must remain unsettled forever." Could the South have won by fighting a defensive, guerrilla war for as long as it might take?



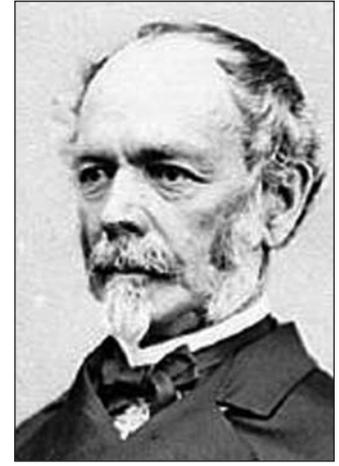
STONEWALL JACKSON



BRAXTON BRAGG



NATHAN BEDFORD FORREST



JOSEPH E. JOHNSTON

Lee's officers were all capable enough to have engaged in a pure guerrilla war. Some, including Forrest, were experts at it.

Union, for the simple reason that this was all I had ever been taught. Later, as I grew to understand the strength and uniqueness of our Constitutional republic, I began to question both assumptions.

The U.S. Constitution, I came to understand, was a contract—a contract between the various states and the federal government they created, and one man's goal to "save the union" at any cost was not a lawful act even for a sitting president.

But this raises the question, if it was necessary for the states to adopt the Constitution, why wouldn't it be legal for some or all of those states to rescind that vote, especially if they felt the contract had been broken? More and more, I found myself thinking that the South was legally and morally right in declaring its independence.

And the North's central government, by invading those states and waging war on them, was wrong. Even though I had been born in Illinois (I delight in reporting that), I fantasized about going back in a time machine and waging war on the side of the South—or better yet, maybe assassinating that tyrant Lincoln long before he could ever make it to Ford's Theater after the war was already over and my favorite team had lost.

And what a terrible war it was. By the time it was over, nearly 650,000 Americans were dead—more American servicemen than were killed in World War I, World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War combined. Fully one-fourth of the draft-age white population of the South was

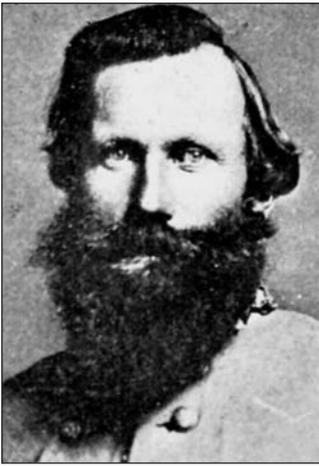
dead. The best and brightest of the North were dead.

The devastation in the former states of the Confederacy is hard to imagine. Sherman's march from Atlanta to Savannah is notorious for its savagery. But he was far from the only Northern officer who ordered his troops to lay waste to Southern farms, fields and plantations.³ Union troops routinely destroyed crops, sacked homes and even stabled their horses in Southern churches. Gen. Benjamin Butler, after capturing New Orleans and controlling it for the duration of the war, set an early example by hanging a shopkeeper from a French Quarter lamppost. The business owner's crime: He had displayed a Confederate flag outside his Canal Street store. There were at least a half-dozen more Union officers just as vicious.

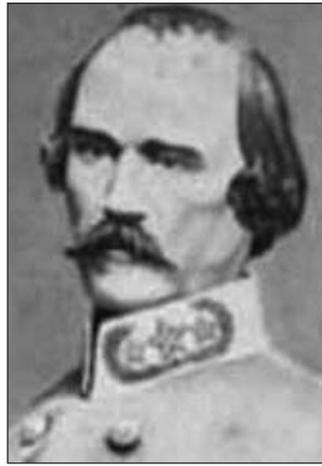
"The U.S. Constitution, I came to understand, was a contract—a contract between the various states & the federal government they created."

As H.W. Crocker III puts it in *The Politically Incorrect Guide to the Civil War*, "If abiding by the law of a free republic and fighting a defensive war solely against armed combatants be flaws, the South had them and the North did not." Crocker continues, "Lincoln ignored the law, the Constitution, and the Supreme Court when it suited him. His armies waged war on the farms, livelihoods and people of the South, not just against their armies."

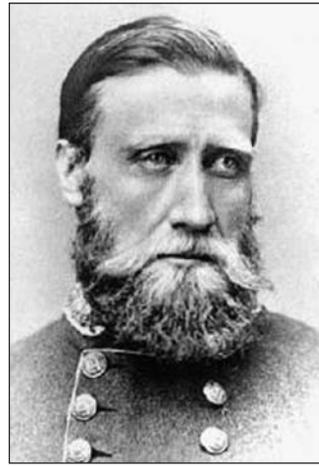
Of all the big lies about the "War of Federal Aggression" (as I prefer to recognize it), the biggest of all may be that "it was necessary to end slavery." The truth is that many illustrious Southerners, including Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee, recognized that slavery had to come to



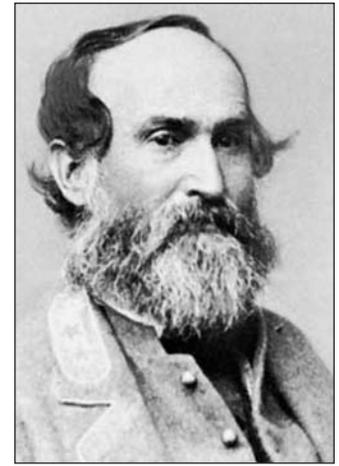
J.E.B. STUART



ALBERT SIDNEY JOHNSTON



JOHN BELL HOOD



JUBAL EARLY

Cavalry leaders like Stuart and Early conducted impressive guerrilla raids during the war. Early threatened Washington, D.C. in 1864.

an end and had even written it into the Confederate Constitution (another suppressed truth). But it should not come by force of arms, they felt; not at the point of a gun, but rather through the free consent of the owners, with the proper preparation of the slaves. To get them ready for their own freedom, for example, Lee's wife insisted the family's slaves be taught to read and write, and the women how to sew. (The 21st-century reader must understand that while the Negro worker was loyal to his master, both he and his wife were unschooled in almost all of the ways of the world. A scant few, as Booker T. Washington explained in his autobiography, *Up from Slavery*, learned to read and were able to become self-sufficient.)

For all these reasons and more, I have long since decided that "the South was right," just as Louisiana historians Walter and James Kennedy eulogized with priceless research and a book title by the same name.

But what if the Confederate troops had adopted this defensive mode, upon which they had ill advisedly embarked following the victory at Bull Run, to a much greater extreme? What about going into a total defensive mode? The end result would likely have been far different. What we are saying here is that because the single (as it turned out, it was probably the only) opportunity to win a short war had evaporated with indecision; then there was no chance of winning unless the enemy gave away "home field advantage."

"But what if the Confederate troops had adopted a defensive mode, upon which they had ill advisedly embarked following the victory at Bull Run, to a much greater extreme?"

If Jefferson Davis had instructed Robert E. Lee and his fellow officers to remain on the defensive, then that plan should have been put into force the very next day, July 22, 1861, and maintained for the duration of the war. After all, it did not take a mathematical genius to quickly calculate that a battle of attrition against a vastly outnumbered enemy was fruitless and ultimately doomed to failure.⁴ The North had a population of more than 22 million to the South's less than 10 million, of which 3.5 million were slaves. [The North, especially in Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri, had about 500,000 negro slaves itself, a fact you seldom hear mentioned.—Ed.]

We have to wonder if the Confederate generals, feeling a little cocky, might have realized their mistake in not following up that Sunday afternoon just outside of the enemy's headquarters and decided then to go on the offensive. If so, it was too late. Lee's army was never able to get so close again, and some historians today say that the next "high-water mark" of the Confederacy came long before the historic one of Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg in 1863. It was probably more likely at Antietam in September of 1862 that it began to subside.

Of course, hindsight is always accompanied by perfect vision, but let us reconstruct some military strategy after considering that the South lost about 300,000 men over the duration of the war (while the North lost about 350,000). So here we must step into the Time Machine and rewind to

July 22, 1861.

“Hello, Mr. President, this is Gen. Lee,” the voice on the phone in the Confederate White House might have said, except that it was still 15 years before the world would hear of Alexander Graham Bell, so, instead, the written message had to be sent by courier on horseback. President Davis had left the original capital city of the Confederacy, Montgomery, Alabama, and arrived in the newly designated capital in Richmond, Virginia, early that summer. But his permanent quarters wouldn’t be completed for another month, so the courier found him in his temporary office quarters in the Treasury Building.

For a moment we imagine President Davis thanking the courier, tipping him with a silver coin or two, and opening the sealed envelope. Herein he reads of Gen. Lee’s proposition that they go on the offensive and invade the North; but Davis sees it as folly of an ego inflated by the recent smashing victory at Manassas and writes back that the “numbers against us are too great to attempt a head-on battle of trading body for body” and orders Lee to do one of two things:

“You are the military strategist, Gen. Lee, and you have the battlefield experience of leadership, while mine, as a secretary of war during a mostly non-combative period, has been strictly administrative; and for that reason I will yield

to your judgment for a limited time.

“However, if you insist that we can prevail by going on the attack, General, then you must change your tactics, begin training your troops for guerrilla warfare, place Nathan Bedford Forrest of Tennessee as second in command and put him in charge of this training of the young troops. It is the way that our forefathers prevailed in the Revolution of 85 years ago and the only way we can meet and beat the overwhelming numbers of the enemy in this one. We have no man in our whole army better qualified to head up this training and offensive than Gen. Forrest.”⁵

“On the other hand, I believe that the better plan is to remain on the defensive, insist that the enemy pursue us, and annihilate him in our home territory. But because you are a far more battlefield experienced warrior than I, and if you do not concur with my strategy, then I will allow you, again for only a limited period of time, to pursue the enemy in Virginia and beyond, and only with Gen. Forrest first administering the guerrilla training of unannounced attack and withdrawal. The two of you are hereby granted one year from this date forward to win this war with these tactics.

“Should the better angels of your nature help you see that the smarter plan is what I have recommended above, then this will be the way for us to remain invincible, place the attacking enemy in his most vulnerable position possi-



No, he was not wearing a skirt. Much flapdoodle has been related about the capture of C.S.A. President Jefferson Davis, and different regiments given the credit. Here are the facts according to a Union soldier who was there: President Davis was captured by the Fourth Michigan cavalry in the early morning of May 10, 1865, at Irwinsville in southern Georgia. Besides the suit of men’s clothing worn by Mr. Davis, he had hastily thrown on, when captured, Mrs. Davis’s large, waterproof overcoat or robe, thrown over his own fine gray suit, and a blanket shawl tossed over his head and shoulders. This shawl and robe were stolen and finally deposited in the archives of the War Department at Washington, by order of Secretary Edwin Stanton. The yarn of the “hoopskirt, sunbonnet and calico wrapper” was started in the overheated brains of the publishers of the illustrated newspapers of that day (left). Mrs. Davis, their children and others were with Davis at the time of his capture. The president and his party were seeking to get to Texas to join Gen. Kirby Smith, there to try to re-establish the central government of the Confederacy.

ble, and so prolong this war that even Lincoln will throw up his hands in despair.

“Continue to pull back and make the inexperienced enemy pursue you. Then, each time he reaches his weakest with his thinnest ranks, blast him into oblivion. Eventually, we must surround our 20 most strategic villages, forts and cities with 15,000 troops each.⁶ Starting with Richmond and Petersburg, you then move the next contingent south to surround Greensboro, Raleigh and Durham, North Carolina. We also protect Charlotte and Charleston, South Carolina and strategic cities as far west as Chattanooga and Nashville in Tennessee right now.

“Should the Union army be successful in penetrating farther south as the war progresses, we will then leave 10,000 in place as long as necessary but move 5,000 of these men from each original position farther south; from which we then surround Vicksburg, Jackson, Memphis, Montgomery, Atlanta, Columbus, Macon and Savannah.

“At the same time, we must arm our civilian population who are alone and unguarded on the rural farms that they may defend themselves and their families as much as possible.

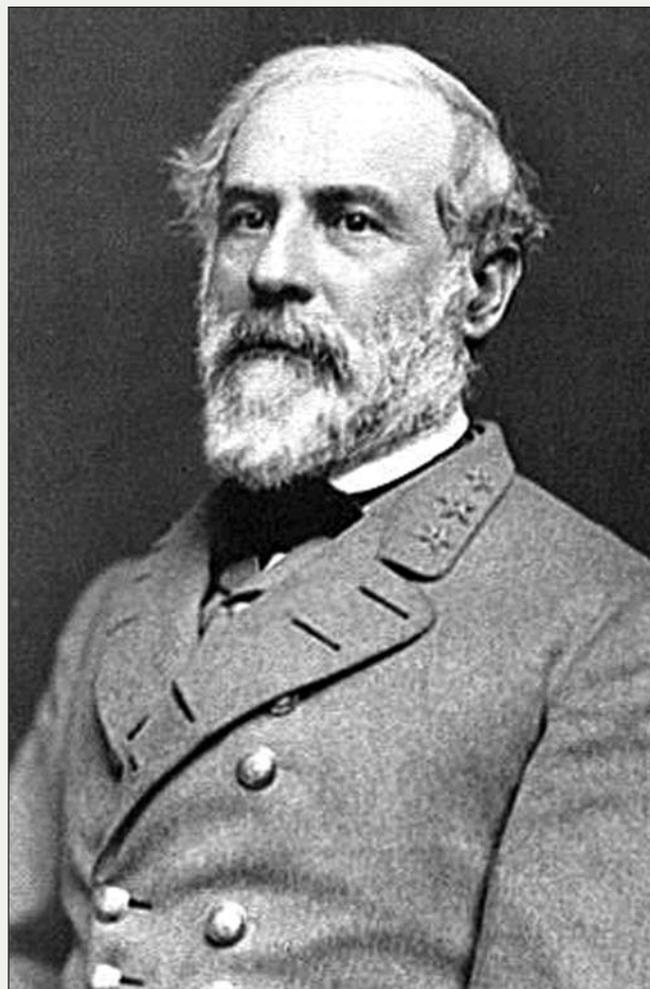
“This strategy will totally frustrate Lincoln and his military officers, because (1) They have no training or experience in fighting a war against such a defense; and (2) They will be left with no worthy targets to capture or destroy.

“The decision is in your hands, Gen. Lee. I pray you make the right one.”

We do not know, of course, if this imaginary counterproposal by President Davis might have been the right decision. We do know that Gen. Lee’s plans of going on the offensive against the superior numbers of the Union troops did not work, and the dismal results of “Pickett’s Charge” (to which even generals Longstreet and Pickett had objected) at Gettysburg proved to be the greatest military blunder of Robert Edward Lee’s career.

Had such a defensive plan as herein proposed been installed early in the war, there is no doubt that the course of the whole war would have been re-routed and the history rewritten. But would it have changed anything? Certainly the duration of the war would have stretched dramatically—maybe to the point of a Union loss, which would have created two separate nations on this continent and who knows what ramifications might have followed.

We suspect that as the old generations passed and those were born anew, the long term result would have been



IN DEFENSE OF ROBERT E. LEE

Overwhelming odds—Posterity has placed Robert E. Lee in a unique position as one of the most respected men who ever lived. While the Army of Tennessee under Braxton Bragg only managed to win at Chickamauga, Gen. Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia was able to compile a large number of impressive victories during the war. In his farewell address to the Army of Northern Virginia, Lee mentioned the “overwhelming resources and numbers” that the Confederate armies fought against. Referring to newspaper accounts that accused him of culpability in the loss, he wrote, “I have not thought proper to notice, or even to correct misrepresentations of my words and acts. We shall have to be patient, and suffer for a while at least. . . . At present the public mind is not prepared to receive the truth.” While we can criticize his overall strategy for conducting the war, the admiration given to Lee is nearly universal. He was loved by his soldiers, revered by his peers, respected by his enemies—and his former slaves and servants cherished the time they were given to spend with him.



JOHN S. MOSBY: The Gray Ghost Guerrilla

When named adjutant of his homespun-clad regiment, the humorous Col. John S. Mosby took special delight in using a civilian saddle, and when at length he procured a uniform, he defied regulations by wearing the red facings of the artillery instead of the yellow of the cavalry. It pleased him to affect a drawling vernacular. A Virginian, Mosby led an “invisible” little band of a few hundred men, who, under his daring and skillful leadership, were able to make as much trouble for the Yankees as a whole army could under ordinary circumstances. Never captured, the famous Southern soldier was a terror to the North. One of his daring exploits was the capture of Gen. Edwin Stoughton. Mosby’s men stole like ghosts through the heavily manned Union camp in the dead of night and nabbed Stoughton in his bed. The “Rebels” also captured 32 other Union soldiers. Could the war have been won if the South had deployed several dozen “Mosby-style bands”? Interestingly, after the war, Mosby became a state-level campaign manager for Ulysses S. Grant’s presidential effort in Virginia. Mosby’s friendship with Grant, and his work with Northerners, made Mosby a reviled figure in his home state. He received death threats; arsonists burned down his childhood home; an attempt was made to assassinate him. Grant later appointed him as U.S. consul to Hong Kong from 1878 to 1885, thus forcing Mosby out of the country and harm’s way.

much as it is today: two groups of descendants of European families whose ancestors at one time were divided by political beliefs but never by their religious beliefs, and who today would be separated by little more than two national capitals and national borders.

The plight of the Negro would have changed slightly, but at least it would have been for the better, and far fewer would have migrated to Detroit and Chicago over the next century. Neither real history nor any Confederate Southerner then or now who knew his history would dispute the fact that the Negro of the era was treated far better by the white man than he had ever been treated in Africa or since his departure from the South.

Yes, the war could have been won by the South, and had it happened, at least the southern half of this nation would be outside of the restraining chokehold and financial slavery of Washington, D.C. today. ♦

ENDNOTES:

1 One of the strangest and most interesting details of the war was the fact that the fighting both began and ended on the same man’s property. Not willing to endanger his family further, McLean sold his farm later in 1861 and moved to a little-known place in the heart of Virginia called Appomattox. It was in his living room that Lee and Grant signed the papers of surrender on May 9, 1865.

2 [Lee decided to strike what he thought to be a weakened Union center on Cemetery Ridge, where he observed few troops and only a handful of batteries. If this section of Meade’s line collapsed, it would threaten the Union rear and their strong hilltop positions. He issued orders for a massive bombardment followed by an assault of 18,000 men, coordinated and commanded by his corps commander Gen. James Longstreet. Longstreet’s

Grand Assault, better known today as “Pickett’s Charge,” would be Lee’s last gamble at Gettysburg. The Southern heroes temporarily broke the Union line, but were forced to retreat, losing half their men. The immediate commander, Maj. Gen. George Edward Pickett, survived unscathed. His location during the charge later became a matter of much debate. Under him were three generals, of whom brigade commander Lewis Armistead was the only one to breach the enemy line. He was later shot in the arm, was taken prisoner, and died in a Union field hospital.—Ed.]

3 See *War Crimes Against Southern Civilians*. Walter Brian Cisco’s exposé of Union war crimes rips the facade off Lincoln’s “Army of Emancipation.” Union troops burned, raped, and terrorized Southern civilians east to west. Softcover, 192 pages, #506, \$25.

4 More than a century later, an American mathematician put together some interesting facts regarding the impossibility of winning against overwhelming numbers. Speaking of fighting a ground war in Vietnam and the Communist support through Red China, he computed that because of the already enormous numbers in China and the multiplying birth rate, the Chinese Army could begin marching its troops, four abreast, off a cliff and not only *never* run out of manpower but actually continue to increase in numbers. While the odds against the South in 1861 were not quite so overwhelming, the Confederate defeat was inevitable in a confrontational ground war.

5 A self-made millionaire while still in his 30s, Forrest actually had joined the Confederate Army in Tennessee only a week before the First Battle of Manassas and was certainly unknown to Davis at this time, but we are fantasizing and taking liberties with history here. The fact that Forrest went from an enlisted private to brigadier general in only one year is indicative of his fighting prowess and leadership. It was for his tactical guerrilla warfare that he became a terror to Gen. Grant on the western front and renowned for his victories against overwhelming odds. He certainly would have been the logical one to lead such training and attack, had it ever been ordered.

6 Let us not forget that 20 x 15,000 equals the 300,000 who died during the next four years. Here we are removing them beforehand from head-on confrontations and battlefield illnesses and placing them in a “protectionist” mode.

PAT SHANNAN is a contributing editor of *American Free Press*. He is also the author of several videos and books including *One in a Million: An IRS Travesty* and *I Rode With Tupper*, detailing Shannan’s experiences with Tupper Saussy when the American dissident was on the run in the 1980s. Both are available from FIRST AMENDMENT BOOKS for \$25 each. Please call FAB toll free at 1-888-699-6397 to charge to Visa or MasterCard.