

One hundred and fifty years ago this spring, the eyes of the world were on Richmond.

Here in May and June 1862, more than 200,000 Americans fought to decide the future of the United States.

In April 1862, Union General George B. McClellan moved his army – numbering more than 100,000 – from his landing point at Fort Monroe, on the Virginia Peninsula, west toward Richmond.

After a series of Confederate defeats in Kentucky and Tennessee, the capture of New Orleans, and now with a massive Union army approaching the

Wherever McClellan's army went, its location instantly became the ninth largest city in North America.

capital, the future of the Confederacy was uncertain. McClellan hoped to take Richmond and bring the war to an end.

By July, his campaign had failed and had caused more than 35,000 casualties on both sides. Far from ending, the course of the war was transformed.

Northern leaders issued a call for tens of thousands of new troops and began to craft a document that would become the Emancipation Proclamation.

The new commander of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia – Robert E. Lee – had seized the initiative. Two months later, his army would be across the Potomac.



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May 15, 1862: Battle of Drewry's Bluff | Pages 4 - 5

Confederates were successful in preventing Union warships – including the U.S.S. Monitor – from reaching the city of Richmond. For the rest of the campaign – and the remainder of the war – Union forces would rely on overland routes in their efforts to take the capital.

May 31 – June 1, 1862: Battle of Seven Pines/Fair Oaks | Pages 3, 10

Confederate Gen. Joseph E. Johnston was wounded and Robert E. Lee was appointed to lead the Army of Northern Virginia.

June 26, 1862: Battle of Beaver Dam Creek | Page 7

In what would become the first of the Seven Days Battles, Lee began to execute his battle plan north of the Chickahominy River. Confederate attacks along the creek failed to dislodge entrenched Federals, but the arrival of Stonewall Jackson late in the day made the Union position untenable. McClellan withdrew southeast along the river.

June 27, 1862: Battle of Gaines' Mill | Pages 6 - 7

McClellan decided to move his supply base from the Pamunkey River to the James. He left Union troops under Fitz John Porter to hold the high ground south of Boatswain's Creek. In the evening, the Federal line finally gave way, resulting in a Confederate victory—Lee's first—and the initiative shifted to Lee. This was by far the largest

and costliest battle in the Eastern theatre thus far (95,000 engaged; estimated casualties 15,000).

June 29, 1862: Battle of Savage's Station | Page 3

As Confederates pressed McClellan, Federals abandoned the supply depot at Savage's Station on the Richmond and York River Railroad.

June 30, 1862: Battle of Glendale (or Frayser's Farm) | Page 8

Despite fierce fighting in close quarters, Confederate attempts to cut the Union army off in its retreat to the James were unsuccessful.

July 1, 1862: Battle of Malvern Hill | Page 9

Repeated but disorganized Confederate assaults were unable to take the strong Union position on high ground in the final and largest battle of the Seven Days. Nonetheless, McClellan abandoned the field overnight.

July 2, 1862 – Epilogue | Page 3

McClellan withdrew his army to Harrison's Landing on the James River. Lee determined that McClellan's position was too strong to be assaulted successfully and withdrew, ending the Seven Days Battles and the Peninsula Campaign. Over the next few weeks and months, Lee seized the initiative and the armies took the fight north to Manassas and, ultimately, Antietam.