

## **The Battle of Gettysburg Summary**

*Based on Wikipedia*

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The Battle of Gettysburg was a pivotal battle in the US Civil War that occurred July 1–3, 1863 in the gently rolling hills of Gettysburg, PA. Confederate General Robert E. Lee led the Army of Northern Virginia in his second attempt to invade the north. Emboldened by victory at the Battle of Chancellorsville, Lee surged north through the Shenandoah Valley into Maryland and Pennsylvania in his last offensive action of the war.

Lee faced the Federal Army of the Potomac, led by the recently appointed General George Meade, who soundly repelled the confederate army, taking advantage of Lee's overconfidence and missteps. Confederates dominated battle the first day, but failed to take key territory. The second day, Union soldiers solidified their positions and proved indomitable. On the final day of battle, Lee attacked the center of the Union line in the disastrous assault known as Pickett's Charge.

Gettysburg was the bloodiest battle of the war with between 46,000 and 51,00 casualties. The defeat shook the confederates, who never fully recovered from their losses (believed to be between 23,231 and 28,000 casualties). Gettysburg showed that the Union Army could indeed attain victory and drive back General Lee, though Meade was criticized for his weak pursuit following the battle. In November 1863, President Lincoln redefined the purpose of war in the Gettysburg Address; the war was not only to keep the states united, but to usher in a new period of freedom and equality.