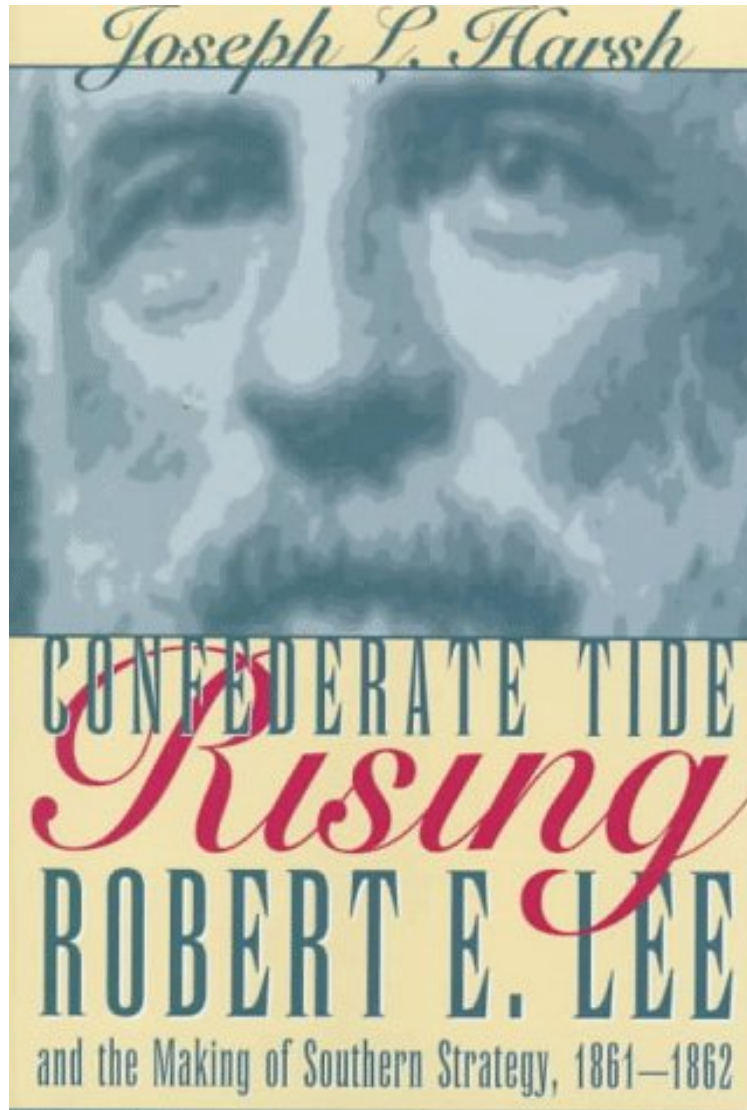


(Read free ebook) Confederate Tide Rising: Robert E. Lee and the Making of Southern Strategy, 1861-1862

Confederate Tide Rising: Robert E. Lee and the Making of Southern Strategy, 1861-1862

Joseph L Harsh

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Joseph L Harsh : Confederate Tide Rising: Robert E. Lee and the Making of Southern Strategy, 1861-1862

before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Confederate Tide Rising: Robert E. Lee and the Making of Southern Strategy, 1861-1862:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Harsh goes into great detail in describing the locations of the various bodies ...By Kevin B. Atkins Not finished reading it yet, and I find the analysis interesting, although a bit self-

justifying (i.e. Harsh suggests what he thinks was in Lee's mind, and then makes the evidence fit his [Harsh's] thinking, and voila, he concludes that that was what Lee was thinking all along). But the major complaint is the lack of maps. Especially when he gets involved in describing the Second Manassas campaign. While more maps would have been helpful in his analysis of the peninsular campaign, the are absolutely de rigor for his analysis of Manassas. Harsh goes into great detail in describing the locations of the various bodies of troops and how that influenced Lee, or how Lee misinterpreted the situation, or made a tactical blunder, or almost did this or that...! At least a map showing all the places and relative locations would have been nice. It would not have required showing the troop positions, just geographic locations - Gainesville, Sudley Spring Bristoe Sta. etc. His maps show the strategic moves, but given his analysis of the tactical moves his maps (what maps) leave a lot to be desired. What is wrong with these authors of military campaigns and the poor, or even absent maps.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Southern Strategy just didn't happen

By James W. Durney

This is the second book Joseph Harsh wrote on the Antietam Campaign and Southern strategy in 1861 -1862. Again, the reader's knowledge of the Civil War is challenged by series logical well-supported ideas. This book sets the stage for "Taken at the Flood" by establishing the strategy and events that resulted in the Antietam Campaign. This book can be read as a stand-alone history or with "Taken at the Flood". If read together, this is best read first even considering the review of Southern strategy at the start of the second book.

Beginning with an overview of CSA war aims, we are walked through the first months of the war learning how events shape strategy. When Lee assumes command of the Army of Northern Virginia, the author details how the victories in the summer of 1862 change strategy and lead to the invasion of Maryland in September. This is the heart of the book, showing Lee simultaneously both directing and being trapped by events. Once again, we are placed in real-time seeing events not as history but as happening now. This allows us to understand what they knew and why they acted as they did. Often, they had the wrong, incomplete or misleading information but something had to be done.

17 of 18 people found the following review helpful. Lee and Davis Making Southern Strategy

By E. E Pofahl

Joseph Harsh, the author, analyzes Confederate war strategy from Fort Sumter through the Battle of Second Manassas stating that it was not true that the all the South wanted was "to be left alone." Declaring independence did not guarantee independence, and the author states the South thus "pursued three closely related but distinct war aims: independence, territorial integrity and the union of all the slave states."The text notes that statistically the South could not win. To overcome the odds, the Confederacy needed to conserve its resources while inflicting unacceptable casualties on the North. The text explains the doctrines of the Swiss military theorist Jomini, the probable basis for Jefferson Davis's doctrine of the "offensive-defense." Davis's doctrine provided a firm strategic framework within which Confederate generals in the field could work. By October 1861, pursuing the offensive-defense considerable progress toward achieving Confederate war aims was made; followed next by reversals of Southern fortunes resulting in part from the failure to continue the policies/strategies that yielded early successes.

On June 1, 1862 Robert E. Lee took command of the Army of Northern Virginia, when Joseph Johnson was wounded. The offensive-defensive policy was already in practice and was not initiated by Lee as some contend. By "late May 1862, the South had nearly lost the war. Lee knew that Jefferson Davis expected him to go on the offensive to save Richmond and to reclaim Virginia. Harsh also notes "Lee chose the offensive because he wanted to win the war, and he thought it offered the only chance. He believed the defensive was the sure path to defeat." His first response was the Seven Days Battle, whose strategy/execution contained errors, but nevertheless relieved the pressure on Richmond.

The author gives an excellent account of the strategic/tactical problems during the Seven Days Campaign and the events leading to the Battle of Second Manassas. Richmond was a major railroad center, banking center, manufacturing center, milling center and its lost would have been serious. It was important that the city is not captured and that Virginia is reclaimed. After the Seven Days Campaign Lee lost the initiative and was in a strategic stalemate that didn't end until Union General McClellan's Army of the Potomac was ordered back to Washington thereby ending the threat to Richmond.

The text gives an excellent account of the development of Lee's field strategies before and throughout the Battle of Second Manassas. The author notes as the battle neared its climax "Lee desperately wanted to finish the task at hand by destroying the army of.... Pope." However a frontal assault was the only option; and Lee couldn't afford the losses a frontal assault would incur. Nonetheless the author notes following the Second Manassas "Through chance, risk and much bloodshed, he and the Army of Northern Virginia were cobbling together the series of rapid victories that might lead to Northern demoralization and Confederate independence." The text ends with the Battle of Second Manassas and closes with six appendixes that discuss strategy questions.

While this an excellent work, my major criticism is an almost total lack of suitable maps. I read the chapters on the Battle of Second Manassas with a copy of Hennessy's book on Second Manassas at hand for its maps. While much can be gained from this book without prior study of the first eighteen months of the Civil War, prior reading of history about the period covered by this book will greatly aid the reader in comprehending Harsh's text.

“Confederate Tide Rising is one of the most significant evaluations of Civil War strategy to be published in the past fifty years. It contributes critically to our understanding of the war, and it will influence the course of Civil War scholarship for decades to come. I cannot overemphasize the importance of this book.”?Richard J. Sommers, U.S.

Army Military History Institute In this reexamination of Confederate war aims, Joseph L. Harsh analyzes the military policy and grand strategy adopted by Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis in the first two years of the Civil War. Recent critics of Lee have depicted him as a general of tactical brilliance, but one who lacked strategic vision. He has been accused of squandering meager military resources in vain pursuit of decisive victories during his first year in field command. Critics of Davis claim he went too far in adopting a "perimeter" policy which attempted to defend every square mile of Southern territory, scattering Confederate resources too thinly. Harsh argues, to the contrary, that Davis and Lee's policies allowed the Confederacy to survive longer than it otherwise could have and were the policies best designed to win Southern independence.

From the Back Cover In this reexamination of Confederate war aims, Joseph L. Harsh analyzes the military policy and grand strategy adopted by Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis in the first two years of the Civil War. Recent critics of Lee have depicted him as a general of tactical brilliance, but one who lacked strategic vision. Critics of Davis claim he went too far in adopting a "perimeter" policy which attempted to defend every square mile of Southern territory, scattering Confederate resources too thinly. Harsh argues, to the contrary, that Davis and Lee's policies allowed the Confederacy to survive longer than it otherwise could have and were the policies best designed to win Southern independence. The Confederacy needed to retain the resources of the upper South, and wanted to include the border states, so its aims were offensive rather than defensive. For the most part, Davis encouraged his field commanders to undertake aggressive operations, but it was not until Lee took command of the Army of Northern Virginia that Davis found a general with the intelligence and courage to invent and then execute a cogent strategy which gave the South a chance to win the war. About the Author The late Joseph L. Harsh was professor and former chair of history at George Mason University. He was founding president of the Northern Virginia Association of Historians and was editor from 1980-90 of *Courier of Historical Events*. His articles have appeared in *Civil War History* and *Military Affairs*.