

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

The Battle of Brandy Station June 9, 1863

By Clark B. Hall

Many Civil War enthusiasts believe the American Civil War was principally decided in Adams County, Pennsylvania in early July 1863. That belief asserted, historians affirm that the results and consequences of the Battle of Gettysburg both predicted and foreshadowed the ultimate outcome of the war. The way this argument proceeds is that whichever side controls Cemetery Ridge at the end of the long day of July 3, 1863, wins the war.

But when we think of Gettysburg today, many of us myopically direct our attention on the momentous events of early July 1863 as if our country's threshold battle somehow occurred in isolated context from the rest of the war. This chronic presentation of Gettysburg as a battle embodying an accidental clash between two heavy titans clumsily blundering into each other in the Pennsylvania countryside might be both uncluttered and convenient, but that parochial view is also badly wrong.

And why is this perception erroneous? We can answer the question by simply asking another: Where is the strategic context for the Battle of Gettysburg in that provincial assessment? Alternatively, here is a functional and valid counterpoint: The more one knows about the Battle of Brandy Station, the more one comprehensively understands the Gettysburg Campaign and its momentous after effects simply because Brandy Station is best understood when viewed as the opening combat action concurrent with the Confederate advance to Pennsylvania following the Chancellorsville Campaign.¹

"How many readers of history to-day know anything of the cavalry fight at Fleetwood, six miles from Culpeper Courthouse, 9 June 1863, where twenty thousand horsemen were engaged from early in the morning until nightfall?" The Honorable John Lamb, a sitting United States Representative from Virginia and late captain of Confederate cavalry, protested in a post-war text the dearth of extant chronicles "of that day of carnage and death." Other veterans on both sides also expressed perplexity that so few recollections issued forth regarding their big fight at Brandy Station, where, according to Brigadier General David McMurtrie Gregg, "there was fought a cavalry battle the influence of which was so great and far reaching that it must always hold a first place in the annals of the cavalry. . . a day of such fighting as would have gladdened the

¹ For a comprehensive discussion of the grand strategy of the Gettysburg Campaign, see Clark B. Hall, "Lee Steals a March on Joe Hooker," *Blue and Gray Magazine* 21, No.3, (Spring, 2004).

heart of the wildest dragoon that ever gave cut or thrust." And where to this day, avowed another blue trooper, "the mouldering bones of many a cavalry hero attest full well how that field was fought." ²

Some twelve years after the Civil War, Colonel Frederic Cushman Newhall, a Federal staff officer during the Battle of Brandy Station, boldly asserted, "The Gettysburg campaign was opened actively in Virginia, when General (Alfred) Pleasanton's command crossed the Rappahannock River on the morning of the 9th of June, 1863, at Kelly's and Beverly's Fords, and engaged the command of General J.E.B. Stuart. The influence of that day's encounter on the great campaign which it inaugurated, has never been fully understood or appreciated by the public." ³

Upon the dedication of the monument to the 6th Pennsylvania Cavalry at Gettysburg, Colonel Newhall addressed a huge throng on America's preeminent battleground. "From my point of view," he proclaimed, "the field of Gettysburg is far wider than that which is enclosed in the beautiful landscape about us. The larger field of Gettysburg which I have in mind is the great territory lying between the battlefield and the fords of the Rappahannock in Virginia. And while Gettysburg is generally thought of as a struggle which began on the 1st and ended on the 3rd of July, 1863, the fact will some day be fully recognized that it had its beginning many miles from here.... It was at Beverly Ford, then, that Gettysburg was inaugurated." ⁴

Captain. John Esten Cooke of Jeb Stuart's staff also set the scene as it existed on the banks of the upper Rappahannock in early June, 1863: "A great drama was about to begin to end in the really conclusive struggle of the war, and at this moment came the sudden clash and war in Culpeper, precluding the thunder at Cemetery Hill." ⁵

Succinctly, here is the historical setting for the Battle of Brandy Station, June 9, 1863: In mid-May 1863, General Lee decided to alter the strategic status quo existing between the two contending armies and undertook plans to invade the north. In preparation for his army's secret withdrawal from the Fredericksburg heights, Lee ordered his cavalry division over the Rapidan River into Culpeper County to screen and protect the impending shift of his army westward. Federal cavalry just across the

² John Lamb, "The Confederate Cavalry: Its Wants, Trials, and Heroism," in *Southern Historical Society Papers*, 52 vols. (Richmond, VA: Virginia Historical Society, 1876-1959), 26:359-64 (hereafter *SHSP*); David M. Gregg, *The Second Cavalry Division of the Army of the Potomac in the Gettysburg Campaign: Read Before the Commandery May 1, 1907*, (Philadelphia Commandery), full text available at: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=cool.ark:/13960/t6543950g;view=1up;seq=8>, accessed August 26, 2016.

³ Colonel F. C. Newhall, "The Battle of Beverly Ford," in *The Annals of the War: Written by Leading Participants North and South* (Philadelphia, PA: The Times Publishing Company, 1879), 134.

⁴ *Philadelphia Weekly Times*, November 10, 1877; John P. Nicholson, ed. and comp., *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg: Ceremonies at the Dedication of the Monuments Erected by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to Major General George G. Meade, Major General Winfield S. Hancock, Major General John F. Reynolds*, 2 vols. (Harrisburg, PA: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1904), 2:844-5.

⁵ *Philadelphia Weekly Times*, September 9, 1882.

Rappahannock River discovered the presence of Southern cavalry in Culpeper and concluded (erroneously) that Confederate horsemen were about to set off on a sweeping raid toward Washington, D.C.

By the end of May, Jeb Stuart—who arrived in Culpeper from Orange County on May 20—soon assembled five brigades of about 9,700 men, including five horse artillery batteries. Lee then instructed Stuart, “Devote your attention to the organization and recuperation of your command.” And looking over this seemingly perfunctory message on May 23, Jeb Stuart knew exactly why he was ordered to “recuperate” his command. (Evidence exists suggesting Lee privately notified General Stuart of his plans to invade Pennsylvania. It could well be the case, in fact, the trusted Stuart knew of Lee’s plans before anybody else in the army.)⁶

Having assembled a cavalry force of near 10,000 troopers—five brigades commanded by Brigadier Generals Fitzhugh Lee; William Henry Fitzhugh “Rooney” Lee; Wade Hampton III; William Edmondson “Grumble” Jones, and Beverly Holcombe Robertson—as well as five horse artillery batteries (Major Robert Franklin Beckham), Jeb Stuart conducted a Grand Review of most of his division at Inlet Station, three miles due east east of Culpeper on June 5. Amid terrific military pageantry—cavalry galloping in review with sabres flashing, sham artillery fire, bands playing—invited dignitaries, as well as Lieutenant General John Bell Hood’s entire infantry division hugely enjoyed the affair.

On Sunday morning, June 7, 1863, the gray man on the big gray horse crossed Raccoon Ford and joined his assembling forces in Culpeper County.⁷

By this time, all of Lieutenant General Richard Stoddert Ewell’s Corps arrived in Culpeper as well as two divisions of Lieutenant General James Longstreet’s Corps, with Major General George Edward Pickett’s soon on its way north from Hanover Junction to join the First Corps. General Lee proceeded into the Court House, arriving early in the afternoon and immediately called upon Widow Sarah Freeman at her home, Eastern View, located on the eastern outskirts of town. Situated on a high knoll with a sweeping

⁶ United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series I, volume 5, part 2, p. 820, 823, 825, 846 (hereafter cited as *O.R.*, I, 25, pt. 2, 820, 823, 825, 846). Also see William Deloney to wife, May 26, 1863, William Gaston Deloney Papers, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens.

⁷ *O.R. I, 27, pt. 2, 347*; Susan Lee, *Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton, D.D.* (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott, 1893), 276. Lee was accompanied to Culpeper by his artillery chief, Brig. Gen. Pendleton. Pendleton wrote that he and Lee left Fredericksburg in the early afternoon of 6 June, and both probably spent that night at the Lacy farm (Ellwood) near Wilderness Tavern.

view of the countryside, Eastern View's front yard was soon festooned with General Lee's headquarters flag.⁸

At his headquarters tent located in the shaded yard of farmer Henry Miller's home, Fleetwood, on Fleetwood Hill near Brandy Station, Jeb Stuart received word on June 7 from General Lee that the commanding general desired to review the cavalry on the following day. Eager at the prospect of shining before the army's leader, Stuart readied his division for another review at Inlet Station.⁹

Mounted on Traveller and accompanied by artillery chief Brigadier General William Nelson Pendleton, General Lee trotted three miles from Eastern View on June 8 arriving at Inlet Station in the early afternoon. Mounted on the treeless, open plain before him, awaited Stuart's incomparable cavalry division. Generals Longstreet and Ewell, also invited by Stuart, greeted Lee as he rode up to the review platform.¹⁰

Lee rode upon the review knoll and observed the cavalry division mounted "in three lines facing and parallel to the railroad tracks," each file ranging over a mile, spaced equally apart by several yards. Dressed in the "full uniform of his rank," General Lee got right down to business and "from the word go it was rush," noted an impressed onlooker. Escorted by Jeb Stuart, General Pendleton and several staff officers, "at a full run," General Lee raced down the front and rear of each long line, "receiving the salutes of thousands of upraised sabres." As Lee's cortege "thundered along," a soldier noticed that "General Lee seemed in buoyant spirits, (and) pointed with his finger to different parts of the line as he rode. His easy posture and soldierlike mien...made the blood tingle through the veins in every cavalryman..." Focused on the inspection, General Lee apparently didn't notice (or care) that several members of his entourage couldn't keep up with the

⁸ See post-war letter from Judge (former major) Daniel Grimsley, a resident of Culpeper, for the location of Lee's headquarters contained in John Singleton Mosby, *Mosby's War Reminiscences and Stuart's Cavalry Campaigns*, (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1898), 22.

The house no longer stands and the site is owned by the Culpeper National Cemetery. Gabriel Freeman, deceased husband of Sarah, might have been an acquaintance of Lee's, or perhaps Lee's father was a colleague of Colonel Freeman. One wonders whether it was mere coincidence that Lee situated his headquarters on a knoll where from where his vantagepoint was straight east, right back toward Fredericksburg.

⁹ Stuart's staff consistently records that General Lee ordered the June 8 review. For example, "General R.E. Lee...notified General Stuart that he would review his cavalry...." A. B. M. McClellan, "Battle of Fleetwood," in Alexander K. McClure, *The Annals of the War Written by Leading Participants, North and South* (Philadelphia, PA: The Times Publishing Company, 1879), 395.

Stuart earlier invited General Lee to attend the June 5 review, but the commander was "otherwise occupied". The author believes General Lee had a profound motive in mind when ordering the June 8 review, but that long (persuasive) argument will necessarily appear in a subsequent offering.

¹⁰ Lee, *Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton*, 277-8. The review field today partially survives, just east of the Hwy. 29/Business 29 intersection. The review knoll was largely obliterated long ago by the Virginia Department of Transportation.

rapid pace. Many so-called reviewers “succumbed to ditches. . .with their hats gone off and led their mounts most dejectedly away.”¹¹

Finally returning to the review stand after the sustained gallop, General Lee took his place beneath “a tall pole, some 75 or 100 feet, from which floated the Stars and Bars.” At the blare of a bugle, “the corps of horsemen broke by right wheel into columns of squadrons (two companies abreast) and moving south for a short distance, the head of the column was turned to the left, and again to the left...” As the leading edge of the division approached the review knoll at a walk, Jeb Stuart and his staff “rode out in front in single line, General Stuart alone in front of us,” a staffer noted.

At the head of his men, “superb in every movement...the personification of grace and gallantry combined,” General Stuart trotted before Army of Northern Virginia’s revered “Marse Robert,” raised his sword in salute and turned “eyes right.” As the long columns filed past, General Lee noted with fatherly pride his middle son, Rooney’s fine brigade, as well as his youngest son and namesake, Robert E. Lee, Jr., an aide on Rooney’s staff.¹²

With Lee declaring the event “a splendid sight,” General Stuart individually retired the five brigades, dispatching them to their camps fronting the Rappahannock. The horse artillery followed, with many troops not arriving back at their distant camps until sunset. “Many a young man,” a participant recalled, “rode proudly past the commanding general that day, who, before another day’s sun had sunk behind the western hills, was sleeping his last sleep, having fought his last battle.”¹³

On the late afternoon of June 8, Jeb Stuart received orders to forge his division the next morning across the Rappahannock and Hazel Rivers at Beverly’s and Welford’s Fords. Lee’s orders further directed Stuart to screen and cover the imminent advance of Richard Ewell’s Second Corps into the Shenandoah Valley. Stuart would track the eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge moving through Fauquier County into the Loudoun

¹¹ Leiper Moore Robinson Reminiscences, Mss5:1R5642:1, 2-5, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond VA; G. W. Beale A Lieutenant of Cavalry in Lee’s Army (Boston: Gorham Press., 1928), 192; Lee, *Memoirs of William Nelson Pendleton*, 277-8. A fatigued Pendleton opined Lee’s troop “had a ride of it—some six miles.”

¹² Dr. William B. Conway, “Cavalry Parade in Culpeper County, Va. June 8th, 1863,” *Atlanta Journal*, August 2, 1902; Major Daniel A. Grimsley of the Sixth Virginia Cavalry, *Battles in Culpeper County, Virginia, 1861-1865* (Culpeper, VA: Compiled and published by Raleigh Travers Green, 1900), 8; Frank S. Robertson, “Reminiscence of the Years 1861-1865,” *The Historical Society of Washington County, Va. Bulletin* 2, No. 23 (1986): 18; George H. Moffett, “Battle of Brandy Station,” *Confederate Veteran*, 14, (1906): 74.

¹³ By His Son, Captain Robert E. Lee, *Recollections and Letters of General Robert E. Lee* (New York: Doubleday Page & Company, 1904), 95-96; Lamb, “The Confederate Cavalry,” *SHSP*, 26:362; Clifford Dowdy, ed., *Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee* (Boston: Little Brown, 1961), 507; Frank R. Reade, “In the Saddle With Stuart, The Story of Frank Smith Robertson of Jeb Stuart’s Staff,” Frank Robertson Reade Papers, UA-2-1-3, Box 3, Folder 6, 74, Valdosta State University Archives, Valdosta, GA. Gatewood, “The Cavalry Review,” *Bath County (VA) Enterprise*, n.d., but written between 1895 to 1900.

Valley, operating protectively on the right flank of the gray infantry while Ewell moved north on the opposite side of the mountains.¹⁴

Commanding two Union volunteer cavalry divisions and the Reserve Brigade (U.S. Regulars) ensconced in Fauquier County just across the river from Lee's consolidating forces, Brigadier General John Buford dispatched troubling data to army headquarters at Falmouth on June 6. "I have just received information, which I consider reliable, that all the available cavalry force of the Confederacy is in Culpeper County." Buford's wire also included an assertion Major General Joseph Hooker least wanted to read, Jeb Stuart "is going to make a raid." And not making Hooker feel any more secure, Buford sent another wire on June 6, "Yesterday cannon firing was heard toward Culpeper." He further posited, "I suppose it was a salute, as I was told Stuart was to have had that day an inspection of his whole force."

John Buford possessed perfect intelligence, as (it is recalled) Stuart reviewed his division on June 5. Buford unwittingly, though, lent authentication to Hooker's already-fallacious belief that Lee's army remained at Fredericksburg when he added, "I can't learn that there is any infantry force north of the Rapidan"—when in fact Hood's division arrived in Culpeper 4 June. and even as Buford wrote Hooker, Major General Lafayette McLaws' division poured across Raccoon Ford into Culpeper. Buford closed his dispatch by precisely asserting, however, "there is a very heavy cavalry force on the grazing grounds in Culpeper County."¹⁵

On June 6 Joe Hooker rendered a fateful decision effectively cancelling Jeb Stuart's orders to move north on June 9: "As the accumulation of the heavy rebel force of cavalry may mean mischief," Hooker telegraphed Washington on the afternoon of June 6, "I am determined to break it up in its incipency." Hooker added, "I shall send all my cavalry against them...it is my intention to attack them in their camps." Hooker then ordered his cavalry corps commander to "disperse and destroy the rebel force assembled in the vicinity of Culpeper."¹⁶

At 4:30 a.m., June 9 1863, the 8th New York Cavalry charged across Beverly's Ford inaugurating The Battle of Brandy Station, the opening combat of the Gettysburg Campaign and the largest and most significant cavalry battle in American history—with about 20,000 troops engaged before the killing concluded at sundown. Despite inadequate (in fact no) reconnaissance prior to the battle—Federal intelligence did not

¹⁴ Stuart's orders from Lee for the movement on June 9 were apparently delivered personally by Lee or his staff, as they have not otherwise surfaced. Stuart's staff officers, however, report the sum of Lee's instructions. See an article by McClellan in *Philadelphia Weekly Times*, October 20, 1877 and H. B. McClellan *The Life and Campaigns of Major General J.E.B. Stuart* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1885), 262 wherein McClellan writes that on June 8, Lee "wished his cavalry to move across the Rappahannock on the following day, to protect the flank of these corps as they moved northward."

¹⁵ *O.R.*, (1): 32; *Ibid.*, (3) 14.

¹⁶ *O.R.*, I, 27, pt. 1, 33; *O.R.*, I, 27, pt. 3, 27-28.

anticipate Rebel troopers fronting the river as gray cavalry was “assumed” to be at Culpeper, ten miles inland—the ensuing attack was secret, skillful, successful and an astonishing and humiliating surprise to Jeb Stuart.¹⁷

“On fire with the heat of battle,” with “eyes flashing like red hot coals,” General Stuart recovered brilliantly from the rude shock administered by the enemy sabres. According to one trooper, “Genl’ Stuart always fought the hardest when things looked looked the worst,” and another horse soldier observed the “coldly furious” Stuart “here, there and everywhere...his black plume floating...where the battle was fiercest...ringing out the words of command...give them the sabre boys.” By early afternoon, the Confederates had beaten back stubborn, valiant attacks at St. James Church, at Stevensburg, and southern Fleetwood Hill, north of Brandy Station.¹⁸

Heavy fighting continued in the early afternoon at northern Fleetwood, two miles north of Brandy Station. (Fleetwood Hill is actually a low ridge averaging 400' above sea level. It parallels the Rappahannock and courses roughly north/south over two miles.) Brigadier General Junius Daniel’s Brigade was put into motion a mile from Auburn southeast to the hamlet of Brandy Station to support cavalry “at a distance” that “encouraged” Federals back toward the river. In the late afternoon, as stirrup-to stirrup fighting across the battlefield wound down, Major General Robert Emmett Rodes advanced the rest of his division a loose line of battle toward Beauregard Farm, west of Fleetwood Hill.¹⁹

Generals Lee, Ewell and Rodes climbed atop the roof of Beauregard’s headquarters (Major James Barbour’s home, Barbour was a member of Ewell’s staff) and witnessed the last fighting of the day on northern Fleetwood. But unfortunately for the army’s commander, this fighting occurring under his very eye involved his son Rooney Lee, who was badly wounded in the final, successful charge. As his beloved son was toted down the hill, a concerned father met Rooney “on the field.” Speaking encouragingly to Rooney, General Lee reported to his wife their son “seemed more concerned about his brave men...than about himself.”²⁰

From his headquarters at Farley following the battle, Jeb Stuart tallied up his heavy losses—he suffered over 500 dead and wounded, with Federal casualties

17 For details on the Battle of Brandy Station, see Clark B. Hall, “The Battle of Brandy Station,” *Civil War Times Illustrated* 29, No. 2 (June, 1990): 32-45 Clark B. Hall “Brandy Station,” in Frances H. Kennedy, *The Civil War Battlefield Guide* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1990), 217 and Clark B. Hall “ ‘A Long and Desperate Encounter’: Buford at Brandy Station,” in *Civil War* 8 (July-August 1990): 12-17, 66-67.

18 John Esten Cooke, *Wearing of the Gray* (New York: E.B. Treat, 1867), 229; Daniel B. Coltrane, *The Memoirs of Daniel Branson Coltrane* (Raleigh, NC: Edwards & Broughton, 1956), 20; Moffett, “Battle of Brandy Station,” 74;.

19 *O.R. I*, 27, pt. 2, 564; Gay letter to “Dear Pussie,” 10 June, 1863, Troup County Archives, LaGrange, GA.

20 Jedediah Hotchkiss, *Make Me a Map of the Valley: The Civil War Journal of Stonewall Jackson’s Topographer* (Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University Press, 1981), 150; Lee, *Recollections*, 96-97.

approaching 900. But General Stuart realized he lost more than good friends, officers and men (and irreplaceable horses) during the “fiercest mounted combat of the war—in fact of any war,” as Colonel John Mosby claimed.²¹

And on this topic of the impact of the battle on Jeb Stuart, we’ll let a Maine man who fought at Brandy weigh in with an honest verdict that rings only slightly over the top. “A higher value attaches to Brandy Station...than has ever been sounded in praises...The rebel cavalry had been in the ascendancy...but Brandy Station broke its spirit ... It lost its prestige there and never regained it afterward...It was the beginning of the end of the war.” The operative word is prestige, because the reality of prestige lost was something the thirty-year old Stuart absolutely could not abide.²²

Not a single Rebel infantryman hurled a minié ball at a Yankee at Brandy Station. A foot soldier carped, “we did not have the pleasure of a meeting.” In fact, a reporter “embedded” (to use a modern word) with Rodes’s men noticed Georgia troops “all day unmolested...playing leapfrog.” But was gray infantry spotted on the field by Federal cavalry? They certainly were. But it is also a fact that Union horsemen were a bit too occupied cutting and parrying to tot up distant infantry who could do them no harm. There is not a single extant Federal account purporting to describe the quantity or purpose of enemy infantry “observed” at Brandy Station.²³

Union cavalry commander Alfred Pleasanton relayed an absurd story to Hooker that Rebel infantry “jumped” down from railroad cars in Brandy Station. He also boasts that he took infantry prisoners, but this bold lie is laid bare when he never produced any captures.

On the Federal side, there are in fact three things we can easily conclude about the Battle of Brandy Station. Pleasanton did not “disperse and destroy” the enemy cavalry, as ordered; Hooker knew nothing more regarding enemy infantry intentions, numbers or positions after the battle than he did beforehand; Federal cavalry proved they could fight, and fight well. On the latter point, let’s leave the last (begrudging) word to a Confederate trooper: At Brandy Station, the Union cavalry “gained confidence in themselves...had now emerged...and had become foeman worthy of our steel.” (Rebel cavalry may have lost their lives and their horses, but they never lost their pride.)²⁴

And although Stuart correctly claimed a tactical victory at Brandy Station—after all, he held the field after the battle—it was however a dark and pyrrhic victory because at Brandy Station, Jeb Stuart was forced to confront several hard truths. First of all, his

21 John S. Mosby, *Stuart’s Cavalry in the Gettysburg Campaign* (New York: Moffat, Yard & Co, 1908), 32; G.F.R. Henderson, *The Science of War* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1927), 56.

22 Edward P. Tobie, *History of the First Maine Cavalry* (Boston: Emery & Hughes, 1887), 155. The southern newspapers almost without exception ripped Stuart *personally*, with a typical account describing “a complete surprise of Stuart’s command...woeful lack of vigilance...*somebody* is greatly to blame.” See *Daily Mississippian*, June 20, 1863.

23 *Savannah Republican*, 20 June 1863.

24 *O.R.*, 27 (1): 1045; George Baylor, *Bull Run to Bull Run* (Richmond: R.F. Johnson, 1900), 146.

bold, skillful and energetic enemy brought on the largest battle that Jeb Stuart ever fought in his life. General Stuart did not select Brandy Station as his threshold battlefield; ominously, the bluecoats made that choice for him. But more substantively, Stuart also realized that along with the unencumbered prowess of the newly spirited Federal cavalry, bloody attrition was to become his relentless enemy. Men and horses lost at this stage in the war disappeared forever, and Stuart in fact lost plenty of irreplaceable resources at Brandy.

Consider—on the morning of June 9, 1863, Jeb Stuart's cavalry was unquestionably perched at its combat zenith. And on the evening of the same day, Stuart's command suffered the beginning of a plunging, rapid decline in assets, which inexorably degenerated their combat effectiveness for the succeeding twenty-two months of the war. The days of shining success for Confederate cavalry were forever over.

The Battle of Brandy Station proved such a bellwether for cavalry operations in the Civil War, in fact, that 1st Maine Cavalry veteran Brevet Brigadier General Charles Henry Smith wrote in 1885, "A higher value attaches to Brandy Station...than has ever been sounded in praises...The rebel cavalry had been in the ascendancy...but Brandy Station broke its spirit...It lost its prestige there and never regained it afterwards... It was the beginning of the end of the war." ²⁵

The Battle of Brandy Station certainly did not stop General's Lee's infantry movements. On June 10, Ewell left Culpeper for the Valley by way of Chester Gap near Front Royal. He moved 70 miles in three days with 30,000 men. By June 14, the federal positions at Winchester, Berryville and Martinsburg were in peril. That same day, June 14, Hill disengaged from his position at Fredericksburg for Chester Gap and Longstreet prepared to move north and east of the Blue Ridge Mountains. General Lee's plan was on schedule, albeit delayed by one day.

²⁵ Tobie, First Maine Cavalry, 155.