

The Battle of Brandy Station, Virginia, June 9, 1863

The commander of the Union Army (at the time), Major General Joseph Hooker instructed his cavalry chief, Major General Alfred Pleasanton to take his cavalry and investigate Confederate activities at Brandy Station, VA. As it was, this battle turned out to be the greatest clash of American horsemen ever seen. Each side had approximately 10,000 engaged. Records show 81 Federals killed, 403 wounded, and 382 missing for a total of 866. Confederate casualties are put at 523. The Southerners held the field at the end of the battle, but the battle severely tested the Confederates. The battle made the Confederates realize that the Union cavalry was much better than they gave them credit for. Confederate cavalry commander Major General J.E.B. Stuart was severely criticized for his handling of the battle. Last but not least the Federals now had information that Lee's forces were moving into the Shenandoah Valley - an indication that was planning on invading the North again.

The Battle of Winchester, Virginia, June 13-15, 1863

This is also called the Battle of Second Winchester because a major battle had been fought there in 1862. Now aware that Lee was moving North with a very large force, authorities in Washington ordered or strongly suggested to the Union commander in Winchester, Major Robert H. Milroy, to evacuate his command, estimated between five and seven thousand men, to Harper's Ferry. Milroy found it hard to believe that Lee's Army could evade the main Union Army. Too late did Milroy realize the truth. As it was during the battle, Milroy's small force was challenged by Lieutenant General Richard S. Ewell's entire corps (Second Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia) of possibly 20,000 men. Federal losses were extremely high: 95 were killed, 348 wounded, and more than 4,000 were reported missing or captured. Confederate casualties were much smaller: 47 killed, 219 wounded, and 3 missing, or 269 overall.

Cavalry skirmishes in the Loudoun Valley, Virginia, June 17-21, 1863

The Union Army was now aware that Lee's Confederates were moving North. But where to? Union cavalry tried to and did penetrate the Confederate cavalry screen in a series of skirmishes and small battles over a five day period. Casualties were 613 Federals and 510 Confederate troopers killed, wounded, or captured. As a result, Union cavalry discovered Lee was definitely headed for the Potomac River and invading the North again.

The Battle of Williamsport, Maryland, July 14, 1863

In the retreat from Gettysburg, the Confederates were trying to cross the Potomac River back into Virginia which had swollen because of recent heavy rains. Union Brigadier General George Armstrong Custer's Michigan cavalry brigade assaulted Confederate positions and captured 1,500 Southerners. With this battle, the Gettysburg campaign ended.