

The first battle of bull run

[History](#)



The First Battle of Bull Run Following the failure of Union troops at the First Battle of Bull Run, Lincoln decided to pursue a bold strategy by emancipating the slaves in those states that had left the Union. He could not announce the Emancipation Proclamation while the South had the upper hand since it would appear to be made in desperation, so he had to wait for some sort of Union victory (Goldfield et al. 435). Although neither side could claim victory after the battle, the clear winner in the larger context of the war was the Union. The withdrawal of Confederate troops from Antietam ended General Lees Maryland campaign which could have resulted in an early, decisive victory for the Confederacy (Goldfield et al. 436). The most important battle of the Civil War was Antietam because it marked a turning point in the war and gave Lincoln the opening he needed to make the

Emancipation Proclamation.

Prior to Antietam, the Confederates carried an aura of invincibility following their victory at the First Battle of Bull Run (Goldfield et al. 431). The Union troops suffered a demoralizing loss at the opening of the war, and further losses could have destroyed the will to fight among Northerners. Prior to the Emancipation Proclamation, the Union also lacked a strong moral imperative for winning the war. The initial reasons for entering the war were merely to preserve the status quo. Although the result of the battle was inconclusive, the Union emerged in a superior position. Antietam boosted morale in the North and allowed Lincoln to announce the Emancipation Proclamation, giving the Union a principled cause to continue fighting the war to its conclusion. While Antietam wasn't a decisive victory over the Confederacy either on the battlefield or in the war, it marked a decisive change in the <https://assignbuster.com/the-first-battle-of-bull-run/>

fortunes of the Union.

Although Gettysburg and Shermans March to the Sea is often remembered as defining moments in the defeat of the Confederacy, those victories would not have been possible if the Confederacy had won at Antietam and continued the Maryland Campaign.