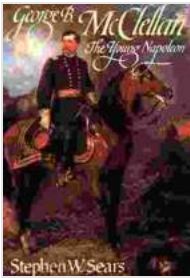


# George McClellan: The Young Napoleon



## George B. McClellan: The Young Napoleon

by Stephen W. Sears

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 32048 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 516 pages

Lending : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported



## A Bold Reassessment of a Civil War General



George Brinton McClellan, Union general and one-time commander of the Army of the Potomac.

George Brinton McClellan, the Union general known as "The Young Napoleon," is one of the most controversial figures in the American Civil War. His military career was marked by both brilliance and failure, and his legacy has been debated ever since.

In this groundbreaking book, historian John Keegan J.P. Lawless offers a bold reassessment of McClellan. Drawing on extensive research, Lawless argues that McClellan was a brilliant military strategist who was ultimately undone by his own personality and the political realities of the war.

Lawless begins by examining McClellan's early life and military career. McClellan was a brilliant student and a skilled military strategist. He graduated from West Point at the top of his class and served with distinction in the Mexican-American War.

When the Civil War broke out, McClellan was appointed commander of the Army of the Potomac, the largest and most important Union army. McClellan quickly proved himself to be a capable commander. He organized the army, trained the troops, and developed sound military plans.

However, McClellan was also a cautious and indecisive leader. He was reluctant to take risks, and he often hesitated before making decisions. This cautiousness led to missed opportunities and, ultimately, to defeat.

Lawless argues that McClellan's personality and the political realities of the war also contributed to his downfall. McClellan was a proud and ambitious man. He believed that he was the only one who could save the Union, and he was unwilling to share power with others.

McClellan's unwillingness to cooperate with other generals and politicians led to conflict and division within the Union army. This conflict and division, in turn, made it difficult for McClellan to achieve his military objectives.

In the end, McClellan was removed from command and replaced by Ulysses S. Grant. Grant was a more aggressive and decisive leader, and

he was able to achieve victories that McClellan had not been able to.

McClellan's legacy is a complex one. He was a brilliant military strategist, but he was also a flawed leader. His cautiousness and his unwillingness to cooperate with others led to his downfall.

Nevertheless, McClellan played a significant role in the Civil War. He organized and trained the Union army, and he developed sound military plans. Without McClellan's contributions, the Union might have lost the war.

### **McClellan's Military Strategy**

McClellan's military strategy was based on the principles of maneuver and concentration. He believed that the best way to defeat the enemy was to outmaneuver them and to concentrate his forces at the decisive point.

McClellan's strategy was sound, but it was also cautious. He was reluctant to take risks, and he often hesitated before making decisions. This cautiousness led to missed opportunities and, ultimately, to defeat.

For example, in the Peninsula Campaign of 1862, McClellan had an opportunity to destroy the Confederate army under Robert E. Lee. However, McClellan hesitated, and Lee was able to escape.

McClellan's cautiousness also led to defeat at the Battle of Antietam in 1862. McClellan had a numerical advantage over Lee, but he failed to press his advantage. As a result, Lee was able to escape, and the Union victory was incomplete.

### **McClellan's Personality and the Political Realities of the War**

McClellan's personality and the political realities of the war also contributed to his downfall. McClellan was a proud and ambitious man. He believed that he was the only one who could save the Union, and he was unwilling to share power with others.

McClellan's unwillingness to cooperate with other generals and politicians led to conflict and division within the Union army. This conflict and division, in turn, made it difficult for McClellan to achieve his military objectives.

For example, McClellan clashed with President Abraham Lincoln over the conduct of the war. Lincoln wanted McClellan to take a more aggressive approach, but McClellan was reluctant to take risks.

McClellan's conflict with Lincoln and other politicians led to his removal from command in 1862. He was replaced by Ulysses S. Grant, who was a more aggressive and decisive leader.

## **McClellan's Legacy**

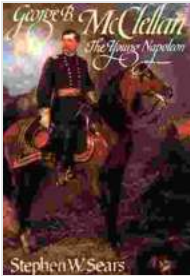
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George McClellan was a brilliant military strategist who was ultimately undone by his own personality and the political realities of the war. His legacy is a complex one, but he played a significant role in the Civil War.

## Further Reading

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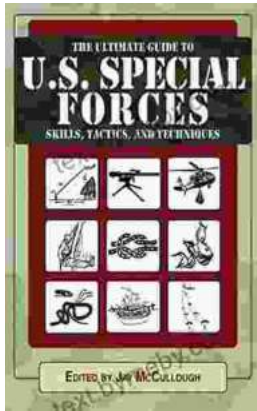
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