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A BRIEF HISTORY OF APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE
NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

by: Hubert A. Gurney

February 1955

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
REGION ONE
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

File references:
HLL-H

MAR 11 1955

Memorandum

To: The Director
From: Acting Regional Director, Region One
Subject: Short History of Appomattox

We are glad to transmit herewith a copy of the short history of Appomattox Court House National Historical Park, prepared by Superintendent Gurney, together with a copy of his transmittal memorandum of March 4.

The attached comments by Regional Historian Holland are administratively approved. Particularly, we join him in his expression of the excellence of this narrative and in asking, as Mr. Gurney, too, suggests, that a selection of a few prints, photographs, or maps be supplied to complete the report.

We feel that Mr. Gurney has produced a most readable and significant history of the park, and is worthy of commendation.

(SIGNED)

E. W. Lisle
Acting Regional Director

JWHolland:rnp

Attachments

Copy to: Supt., Appomattox CH NHP

General
Daybook

hch

Memorandum

To: Regional Chief of Interpretation, Region One

From: Regional Historian, Region One

Subject: Short History of Appomattox Court House National Historical Park

It has been a pleasure, in the course of this review, to have read and reread Superintendent Hubert A. Gurney's "Brief History of Appomattox Court House National Historical Park," which was received with his memorandum of March 4. It is beautifully written and provides a coherent and arresting account of the evolution of the Park.

The fact that Mr. Gurney has departed from the Outline, in ignoring Geographical Setting, Aboriginal History, Coming of the White Man, Colonial Period, and the American Period (before 1865) does not, in my view, detract at all from the effectiveness of the short history. In the special case of Appomattox, in fact, I believe the treatment given is best, starting as it does with the one really important thing that ever happened at Appomattox and going on from there with the park movement and history of the area. In this instance I hope the prescribed formula may be waived.

Quite probably Mr. Gurney did not intend it so, but I believe the last paragraph on page 1 provides full justification for the omission of the pre-significance history of the village: "Perhaps place is not the most exact word for Appomattox. A distinguished Southern author has this to say: 'Appomattox to the historian is an event, not a place . . . the little village of that name was not an interesting spot of earth; and only that which came to pass there . . . has brought the hamlet to the notice of the world'."

As with all good ones, this story has a beginning, a middle, and an end or at least an end "to date". It is written with a rare combination of dramatic force and restraint. It tells why and how the park was established and relates the pitfalls and false starts along the way. Above all, it presents the participants in the movement in

proper perspective. In general, it is an excellent "short history" of a national historical park -- with highlights highlighted and low-lights subdued, but included for continuity and background.

The list of suggestions which follows should not be regarded as, in any degree, affecting the fundamental excellence of the manuscript. Most of them items of "mechanics or typography, they are offered for consideration of the editor in the hoped-for event that it be decided to reproduce this short history for wider distribution than the manuscript possibly could receive.

Abbreviation and capitalization, in many instances, must be changed to conform to the Style Manual. These deviations are so apparent and numerous as to make it impractical to enter them as individual items in the following list. Some other editorial suggestions:

P. 3, 1.11. Eliminate "that" and substitute colon

P. 4, 1.6. "nineteenth century" instead of 19th Century
(Style Manual)

P. 5, 1.2. reassembly (no hyphen)

P. 5, 1.20. "toward securing" instead of "to secure"

P. 5, last line
to P. 6, 1.4

Apparently, from use of present tense, the material beginning "... the annual encampment ... " and ending "... for the proposed Park" is quoted from the Washington Post. If so, it should be enclosed in quotation marks, and "that" on p. 5, eliminated.

P. 6, last line
"positively negative" has an incongruous sound. Suggest "absolutely negative", if that is according to the facts.

P. 8, 1.9. "respectable" instead of "respectful"

P. 9, 1.5. firewood (one word)

P. 10, 1.6-7. The Act provided for commemoration of the end of the War, pointedly not the War itself.

P. 11, 1.6. ever-increasing (hyphen)

P. 13, 1.7. Sp. - descendants

- P. 13, 1.9. Instead of "to a near completion basis" suggest "to a stage of near-completion"
- P. 13, 1.14. "signalled." Wouldn't "stigmatized", "branded" or "denounced" be better? I prefer "denounced" if it accurately reports the situation.
- P. 15, 1.8. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.
- P. 15, 1.14. Type.- Secretary
- P. 15, 1.20. Type.- Among
- P. 17. No indication of the source of the quotation in the last 4 paragraphs.
- P. 18, 1.9. "had changed" instead of "changed"
- P. 19, 1.12. Believe "merely" would be a shade better than "strictly"
- P. 20, 1.10. It was at about this time that the redesignation from Colonial National Monument to Colonial National Historical Park took place. However, the area has never been Colonial National Park. "Park" should be changed to "Monument" or "Historical" inserted between "National" and "Park", as the facts warrant.
- P. 20, 1.17. Should be Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. Even that would not be the complete official name, but it would be consistent with the reference on page 22 of the manuscript.
- P. 21, 3rd line from bottom Should be "Arthur E. Demaray" or "A. E. Demaray" (because of first reference) with indication of his official position, not just "Mr. Demaray".
- P. 22, 1.2-3. "Acting Secretary Ickes ? !
- P. 22, 1.22. "Paper" implies an essay for delivery before a historical society. "Documented study", I believe, would be better.
- P. 25, 1.17-18. Edward S. Zimmer (first reference)
- P. 25, 1.18. Elbert Cox (first reference)
- P. 25, 1.20. Type. - Tavern

The foregoing remarks represent minor points indeed and, in some instances, reflect only personal preference. Their volume should by no means be considered as conditioning my previously expressed opinion as to the excellence of this manuscript.

I recommend it for acceptance as the Short History of Appomattox Court House National Historical Park. There has rarely been a narrative -- if indeed there ever was one -- which could not be made more interesting by judicious inclusion of illustrative material. I hope, therefore, that Mr. Gurney will supply the prints, photographs and maps, which he indicates are available, to complete this creditable history.

JWHolland:rnp

James W. Holland
Regional Historian

APCO-2503
CRBIB # 401703
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A BRIEF HISTORY
OF
APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Property of
National Park Service
Southeast Regional Office

By
Hubert A. Gurney
February 1955

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On Palm Sunday, April 9, 1865, at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, General R. E. Lee surrendered the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia to General U. S. Grant. For four years, North and South, the United States of America and the Confederate States of America had been engaged in a bitter and terrible Civil War. It is not our purpose here to dwell at any length on the causes of this struggle between the peoples of the States, nor to present any details of the battles, events, and course of the Civil War.

When Lee and Grant met in McLean's residence at Appomattox Court House and exchanged letters to effect the surrender of Lee's army, the Civil War was ended. For Lee's Army of Northern Virginia to the very end in 1865 was the military backbone of the Confederacy, the last effective, organized, fighting force left to sustain the cause of the Confederacy.

The Army of Northern Virginia went down, fighting gallantly to the end, but it went down and with it faded any last hope for the separation of the Southern states from the Union.

Grant's military telegraph flashed back the news to the North and to the world. On April 10, Appomattox Court House, administrative seat for Appomattox County, Virginia, swelled from its status of a remote and sleepy village to a place in history.

Perhaps place is not the most exact word for Appomattox. A distinguished Southern Author ⁽¹⁾ has this to say: "Appomattox to the historian is an event, not a place;the little village of that name was not an interesting spot of earth; and only that which came to pass there ... has brought the hamlet to the notice of the world."

(1) Walter A. Montgomery, "History...of North Carolina in the Great War". Goldsboro, N. C., 1901.

The significance of Appomattox has been expressed in hundreds of magazine articles, books, and orations. From these we quote one of the best, the statement of a Federal soldier who fought at Appomattox — General Nelson Miles.⁽²⁾ In his words he could say: "... that our country was now without a slave and without an enemy; that the great cause for which we had given the best years of our lives and hundreds of thousands of our comrades, the flower of American manhood, had at last triumphed, and that the nation, by heroism and sacrifice, was stronger, freer and purer than ever before."

Though firmly entrenched in history as an event, Appomattox Court House as a place faded into twilight obscurity in the years after 1865. In the process of healing up the scars of the late War, North and South both seem to have reached a gentleman's agreement to leave the fields of Appomattox Court House unmarked. The attitude of the South is understandable. "To the Southerners of that day Appomattox was the tomb of their social aspirations, the sepulchre of their political hopes."⁽³⁾ And the North, with an appreciation of this feeling, made no effort to erect granite or marble monuments to the victory of the Union at Appomattox. In the 20 to 30 year period after the War, at Gettysburg, Vicksburg, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Petersburg, on every great battlefield of the Civil War, markers and monuments placed by North and South marked forever the positions and history of regiments, brigades, and divisions. But Appomattox was between the lines—a place set aside.

This condition prevailed for almost 25 years after the close of the Civil War — 23 years to be exact. The concept of marking the significance

(2) Quoted from Robert L. Stewart, "History of the 140th Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers", 1912.

(3) Montgomery

of Appomattox by a Memorial Park had its origin in a group of officers of the Grand Army of the Republic. Leader in this group was General S. S. Burdette, at one time Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic. By 1889, this small group had moved their program from plans to actuality. Associated with Samuel M. Bryan, General Burdette moved into Appomattox County and bought up 1400 acres of land in and around the village of Appomattox Court House.

Next step on the program was the organization of the Appomattox Land Company, with Burdette as President. A prospectus of the Appomattox Land Company, Incorporated Under the Laws of Virginia, published in Washington, D. C., 1890, announced that "The property owned by the Company comprises the greater part of the village of Appomattox Court House, Virginia, with its hotel, store, and dwelling structures, and a tract of about fourteen hundred acres of improved and unimproved real estate, immediately contiguous to and completely encircling the village, extending to and beyond the horizon in all directions, and stretching southwestwardly a distance of two miles to Appomattox Station . . ." The Company planned to establish "a National Camp-Ground" for reunions and to get Congress to put up a monument and build an avenue to points of interest. The Company would sell lots and build a hotel and park.

The weak point in the Appomattox Land Company program was failure to acquire ownership of the McLean House, where the surrender terms were signed. General Burdette had closed in around the village to hold title to his 1400 acres but apparently had not been able to come to terms with Mrs. N. H. Ragland for purchase of the McLean House and lots.

While the Appomattox Land Company had been planning its program for a commemorative Park, another group headed by Captain Myron Dunlap of Niagara Falls, New York, had approached Appomattox from an entirely different angle. The Columbian World Fair, planned for Chicago, Illinois, in 1892, to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the discovery of the American Continent promised to be the great fair of the 19th Century. Commemorating a great historical event, it invited representative episodes in the history of the United States.

Whether apart from or inspired by the interest of the Appomattox Land Company proprietors, Captain Dunlap conceived the idea of removing the historic McLean House to Chicago as an exhibit at the World Fair. The 1400 acres acquired by the Appomattox Land Company had been purchased at moderate cost. In 1891, just one year after issuance of the Prospectus for the Appomattox Land Company, Captain Dunlap purchased the McLean House and lands for \$10,000 from Mrs. Ragland, and made a down payment of \$3,300 to seal the sale. Title to the McLean House was to be transferred to the Appomattox Land and Improvement Company of Niagara Falls, New York, after three years.

It is easy to understand the setback to the Appomattox Land Company program for Appomattox when the McLean House, the major potential attraction for their proposed development was snatched out of their grasp. Then, in 1892, the Court House building was gutted by fire. At a special called election, the voters of Appomattox County decided to move the county seat to a new location at Appomattox Station, on the Southside railroad.

In two disastrous years, the Appomattox Land Company had lost the McLean House and faced a removal of the county seat. Another year, 1893,

saw the dismantling of the McLean House preparatory to removal of structural members to Washington, D. C., for re-assembly as a Civil War Museum.

But General Burdette was apparently a man not easily discouraged. The setbacks of 1891 to 1893 forced channeling of the proposed memorial at Appomattox into the Congress of the United States. First and major achievement ascribed to the influence of General Burdette was the enactment of legislation authorizing location of iron tablets at points of interest on the Appomattox Battlefield. These iron tablets still on the field were placed in 1893.

In the Park files are photographs of temporary wooden markers placed to identify historic locations, preparatory to casting of the permanent iron markers. Only one sign was changed after initial designation of points of interest on the battlefield. The marker identifying the McLean House was discarded after razing of the building, and a new marker designating the McLean House as a site set up in its place. The original tablet is still preserved at the new Court House building.

Two years passed and again the influence of General Burdette and his associates, with support from the Grand Army of the Republic, revived interest in a national project for recognition of Appomattox. This time, 1895, the effort of the group was definitely pointed to secure establishment of a Park under direction of the Federal Government.

Opening the campaign for a Park at Appomattox, Colonel William Howard Mills in a letter to the Washington Post (reprinted in the Appomattox and Buckingham Times, February 28, 1895) reports that the annual encampment of

The Department of the Potomac, Grand Army of the Republic, will be requested to approve a recommendation for the purchase by the Government of the historic ground at Appomattox for a National Park. Every effort will be made to interest Confederate Veterans and to secure their support for the proposed Park. In furtherance of this North-South program, Colonel Mills recommended appointment of a five-man commission, with two members specified: General Fitzhugh Lee of Virginia and James Tanner of New York.

The same issue of the Appomattox and Buckingham Times reprints a dispatch from Washington, D. C., dated February 25, 1895, giving the text of a resolution introduced by Representative Harry St. George Tucker, Virginia. The substance of Representative Tucker's resolution is given below:

"Resolved that the President be requested to appoint and authorize General Fitzhugh Lee of Virginia, John B. Gordon of Georgia, Joseph Wheeler of Alabama, James Tanner of New York, and William Howard Mills of Maine, an Appomattox National Park Commission... and detail an engineer officer of the Army, with help... to survey and prepare a map of the grounds upon which the Army of the Potomac and Northern Virginia were stationed when hostilities ceased in April 1865... Also prepare a survey of routes from Richmond."

The Commission was to prepare a bill for next session of Congress for establishment of a Park at Appomattox, Virginia, with approximate cost of proposed land purchase and other detail.

Reaction in the South to Representative Tucker's resolution was generally lukewarm or positively negative. A few newspaper editors and

individuals spoke out for the proposed Park. The editor of the Norfolk Landmark, in the issue of March 21, 1895 declared:

"We would rather see the field of Appomattox turned into a beautiful spot, blossoming like the roses, with trees and grass and lovely drives, than to see it a muddy plain where the wild hares frolic, and are hunted by the small boy and his dog."

A correspondent who signed himself (or herself) only "Iris", in a letter to the Norfolk Pilot, gave staunch support to the proposal and furnished a full-scale plan for the Park. "Iris" suggested:

"...rebuilding of McLean House to be used as a military museum; nearby erect a tall substantial shaft with inscriptions of Grant's letter and terms, Lee's farewell order; 'Let Us Have Peace' and also 'Liberty and Union; Now and Forever; One and Inseparable'." The plan included fountains, statues of Lee and Grant, driveways, walks, and markers to designate positions of units at time of surrender.

Scattered notices of approval for the Park at Appomattox could not overcome the inertia or outspoken hostility of Confederate Veterans. In the Appomattox and Buckingham Times, March 28, 1895, Colonel R. B. Poore, President of the newly organized Appomattox National Park Association, expressed surprise and mortification at opposition to the Proposed Park from some of the Confederate Camps of Virginia. There was no intent to reflect on the Army of Northern Virginia.

"We are in favor of establishment of a National Park...; it will tend to encourage kindred feelings between the people of the North ... and South, and would also promote immigration to Virginia."

Without the support of Confederate Veterans, any proposal for a Park at Appomattox could not gather the Congressional votes required for its establishment.

After the brief flurry of notice in 1895 came a period of quiescence. Certainly not forgotten but just as certainly ignored, the place, Appomattox Court House, settled down to a period of quiet respectful decay. The new town and county seat absorbed all the best talent of the county. The red clay roads leading to the village, poor in the beginning, were gradually abandoned. Hub deep in mud in winter and spring and still in mid-summer rutted and dusty, they invited only the most hearty of Civil War students to the scene of Lee's surrender.

In 1905, Appomattox came briefly to the public eye again. In the last action at Appomattox on the morning of April 9, North Carolina infantry and cavalry (part of Gordon's 2nd Corps and Fitzhugh Lee's Cavalry) had held better than a third of the attack line. Confederate Veterans of this last attack supported a resolution to mark the position of the North Carolina troops at Appomattox. The legislature of North Carolina endorsed and passed a bill to authorize the erection of a Monument at Appomattox. With appropriate ceremonies, the North Carolina Monument marking the farthest advance of Confederate attack line on April 9 and proclaiming North Carolina's claim to honor as "First at Big Bethel; Farthest to the Front at Gettysburg and Chickamauga, and Last At Appomattox" was dedicated in 1905.

This was the first and only State marker erected on the Appomattox battlefield.

The years after 1905 marked a sharp deterioration in the village of Appomattox Court House. Residences were abandoned or rented out to tenants; outbuildings collapsed or were pulled down for fire wood. Two stores and the post office survived to serve the neighboring farmers. The materials from the McLean House were covered by a dense growth of honeysuckle. Occasionally a newspaper or magazine reporter would call attention to the lamentable condition of this historic spot and urge that something be done.

Many years were to pass before any attempt was made to revive the project of a national memorial at Appomattox. In the late 1920's a group of Appomattox residents decided to try once again for a congressional act to establish a park to preserve the landmarks on the battlefield, and at the Old Court House. Leading figures in this new drive were State Senator S. L. Ferguson and Commonwealth Attorney Joel W. Flood. With their prompting, Congressman Harry St. George Tucker, in 1929, introduced a joint resolution calling for appointment of a commission to report on recommendations for a National Memorial at Appomattox Court House, Virginia. Upon passage of this resolution, the President appointed a three-man commission naming Lieutenant-Colonel L. C. Pope, U. S. Engineers, as Chairman, with Captain Robert Carter representing the North and Captain Robert A. O'Brien of Appomattox County as Southern Delegate.

The Commission met at Appomattox on several occasions. Their final report to Congress was disappointing to most of those who had worked for establishment of the Commission. Joel W. Flood, in an interview in 1954 stated that he and Senator Ferguson had tried to steer the Commission's report

to establishment of a Park. In this they had the support of Captain O'Brien, but the opinion of the Chairman and Northern Representative prevailed, and the report to Congress recommended the erection of a shaft in the Court House Green to mark the termination of the War.

Guided by the Commission's report, Congressman Tucker introduced a bill approved by the President on June 18, 1930. This Act, providing for the commemoration of the War Between the States at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, reads as follows:

"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That for the purpose of commemorating the termination of the War Between the States which was brought about by the surrender of the army under General Robert E. Lee to Lieutenant General U. S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, in the State of Virginia, on April 9, 1865, and for the further purpose of honoring those who engaged in this tremendous conflict, the Secretary of War is authorized and directed to acquire at the scene of said surrender approximately one acre of land, free of cost to the United States, at the above-named place, fence the parcel of land so acquired or demarcate its limits, and erect a monument thereon.

"Sec. 2. There is hereby authorized to be appropriated the sum of \$100,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary, to carry out the provisions of section 1 of this Act.

"Sec. 3. The land acquired under section 1 of this Act shall be under the jurisdiction and control of the Secretary of War, and there is authorized to be appropriated for the maintenance of such tract of land and monument a sum not to exceed \$250 per annum."

In 1930 and 1931, the War Department made preliminary surveys at Appomattox in preparation for erection of the memorial shaft. The Virginia State Highway Department, in 1930, had rebuilt and surfaced the road from the Old Court House to the new town of Appomattox. The automobile was accepted and a new frontier "Travel America" marked this revolution in American life. In ever increasing numbers Americans were taking advantage of improved roads and improved vehicles to see the historic and scenic landmarks of our country.

To carry out the intent of the Act of 1930, the War Department appointed a 5-man commission of architects and sculptors and announced an open national competition for designs for the Appomattox Memorial.

In the issue for March 17, 1932, the Appomattox Times-Virginian reported award of the design for the memorial shaft to Architects Harry Sternfield, J. Roy Carroll, and Sculptor Gastano Cecere, of Philadelphia. The action of the commission was by unanimous vote. Nearly 200 designs by the foremost architects in the country were submitted in the contest. That all members of the commission were of one mind as to the award was held to be ample evidence of the superiority of the winning design.

"The monument, of marble or granite, will rise from a base symbolizing the nation's foundation; two pylons, above which the monument culminates, banded with laurel, express temporary division, reunion and peace. At its highest point, the memorial will tower 57 feet.

The conventionalized great seal of the United States will symbolize undivided unity, and, wreathed with palms, suggest peaceful unity.

"The war's termination, the two leaders identified with the event, Grant and Lee, and the two groups of states are represented by inscriptions, portraits and stars on the monument, and state seals and flags on the rostrum walls.

"In the paving at the base the symbolic colors, blue and gray will be used. Appropriate landscaping and easy avenue of approaching to the monument are included in the plans.

"It is emphasized that no sectional feeling is suggested or perpetuated in the memorial design. In transmitting the report of the jury of award, Chairman Noland, of Virginia, wrote:

'We feel that the design selected appropriately expresses in a monument of adequate size the spirit of peace and unity; and, if carried out consistently in the spirit of inscription and symbolism indicated will suitably fulfill the following clause governing the program: As the monument authorized by congress is to commemorate the termination of the War Between the States the design should carry out this thought and should not call to the mind the tremendous conflict with all its attending sorrows. It should symbolize an undivided nation and a lasting peace'."

"To Representative H. St. George Tucker, of Lexington, goes the credit for inducing congress to authorize the Appomattox memorial. He got the bill through the last congress, with the aid of Senator Swanson on the senate side.

"Only \$2,500 of the money has actually been appropriated. The balance of the \$100,000 must yet be made available. There is some

doubt whether the present session will provide the money, in which case the War Department will not be able to invite bids for actual construction. Mr. Tucker hopes, however, that he can induce his colleagues to make the appropriation at the current session."

The fact that this was a design for a monument awarded after national competition and warm approval by the jury made little impact on unreconstructed rebels and their descendents in the South. There seems to have been a spontaneous resolve to reject the whole plan for a memorial at Appomattox, once the plans had advanced to a near completion basis.

The Appomattox Times-Virginian on October 6, 1932, reported that the Appomattox Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy had voted to oppose a resolution before the State United Daughters of the Confederacy to record opposition to the Lee and Grant statue.

The monument was signalled by opponents as a "slur to the Confederacy".

Some factions in the United Daughters of the Confederacy were reported as considering any memorial at Appomattox an effort on the part of the North "to celebrate on our soil the victory of General Grant and his Army".

Lee and Grant are depicted clasping hands in token of the new peace, in Sternfield's winning design. Peace and unity had been achieved in fact, but a proposal for a memorial to peace and unity at Appomattox as late as 1932 could still arouse the opposition of a small and outspoken group in the South.

Without funds, the War Department could take no further action on the memorial shaft.

On July 28, 1933, by executive order, responsibility for carrying into effect the provisions of the Act of June 18, 1930 was transferred from the

War Department to the National Park Service. From the War Department, the National Park Service inherited the program to erect a granite monument in the village of Appomattox Court House at a cost not to exceed \$100,000, and also the design for the shaft awarded to Professor Sternfield. The Act of 1930 had authorized expenditure of \$100,000 for the granite monument, but no funds were in fact available when the National Park Service assumed responsibility at Appomattox.

In August 1933, the Director of the National Park Service placed the Appomattox project under the supervision of B. Floyd Flickinger, Superintendent of Colonial National Monument.

Several factors contributed to the change in concept of a statuary monument at Appomattox to a park. Transfer of jurisdiction to the National Park Service was, undoubtedly, the opening opportunity, and Superintendent Flickinger must be credited with much of the initiative which finally led to the establishment of Appomattox Court House National Historical Park.

The War Department had been content to follow the instructions of the Act of 1930. The National Park Service and Flickinger brought a new outlook and new approach to the project of memorializing the end of the Civil War.

Superintendent Flickinger's report on his first visit to Appomattox is the best evidence of the new trend to mark the importance of this area by restoration of the village group:

"In regard to the Appomattox Battlefield Site, I recommend the restoration of the McLean House where Generals Robert E. Lee and U. S. Grant met to arrange the terms of the surrender, and the very interesting group of Court House buildings which stood in and around the Court House Circle. I estimate that \$100,000 would be needed for such a project. By an act of June 18, 1930, \$100,000

was authorized for expenditure by the War Department for the acquisition of a parcel of land and the erection of a monument thereon. Instead of erecting a monument, I feel that any money that might be allotted to this project should be devoted to the restoration of the most important buildings which stood there at the time of the surrender".

The influence of the Williamsburg restoration, fostered by John D. Rockefeller, probably guided Flickinger in his first reaction in recommending a restoration of the village of Appomattox Court House as a memorial to the termination of the Civil War.

Once on the road, the suggestion for a permanent Park at Appomattox to replace the authorized granite shaft, gained headway. In the town of Appomattox and nearby Lynchburg, individuals and organizations joined to back the new proposal. In Lynchburg, Bob Ramsey, Executive Secretary of the Lynchburg Chamber of Commerce, sparked the program for a Park at Appomattox, enlisting the support of the powerful Lynchburg Lions Club, Architect Pendleton Clark, and Carter Glass, Jr.

The county and city of Appomattox, receptive to the idea of a permanent Park from the days of Colonel Bob Poore in the 1890's, gave immediate support to the proposed change. Among the many individuals in Appomattox who joined in the movement to promote the Park project, we record the names of: Miss M. Anna Jones, Miss Eula May Burke, Members Appomattox Chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy, R. L. Burke, Sr., Jerry A. Burke, Joel W. Flood, Senator S. L. Ferguson, Robert A. O'Brien, and Calvin Robinson. Space does not permit a full listing of the many friends who joined to give Appomattox support for the Park Project.

The concept of a National Park at Appomattox gained State and then National recognition and support. Excerpts from an editorial in the Newport News Daily Press, for March 5, 1934:

"In the place of the proposed monument at Appomattox Court House to commemorate a return of the South to the Union, over which a storm of protest was aroused in the South, there is now projected a restoration of the Court House Square of the little town which is the seat of Appomattox County and the McLean House where the actual surrender of Lee to Grant took place. In preserving the site at which the return to the Union was effected, the objectional interpretative aspect of the monument is removed. While Appomattox means one thing in certain sections of the United States, it has a meaning among several generations of Southerners which is most difficult to convey beyond the borders of the Mason and Dixon line.

"In the first place the South conceded only a physical defeat. The spirit which carried on during the four desperate years of the war, was never conquered, or the rehabilitation through most overwhelming odds could never have been accomplished by the people themselves.

"The simple restoration of Appomattox will be an adequate silent tribute. In eliminating the cold hard marble which would set for all time a stamp of finality upon the meaning of Appomattox, there remains to the Southern people themselves the opportunity of establishing its symbolic significance. Far more graphic than the tale of the Phoenix which arose reincarnate from the flames, is the

story that lingers around Appomattox. And in the interpretation of this story it is sought to preserve Appomattox as a tribute to a people who when confronted with physical defeat assumed unflinchingly a part in an economic conflict that was more disheartening than the war through which they had just passed. And to many Southern women it is a sacred trust that the memory of this spirit shall not perish."

On March 27, 1934, the efforts of individuals and civic groups promoting the plan for a Park at Appomattox resulted in introduction of a bill sponsored by Representative Patrick Drewry, to create the Appomattox Court House National Historical Park:

"Creation of an 'Appomattox Courthouse National Historical Park' on the site of Lee's surrender to Grant was proposed today in a bill by Representative Drewry of Petersburg.

"The bill would amend a law passed in 1930, authorizing expenditure of \$100,000 for a monument at Appomattox. That measure, fathered by the late Representative Harry St. George Tucker, and Senator, now Secretary, Swanson, was the subject of strong criticism from Confederate organizations.

"Drewry's bill carries out an idea of residents of Appomattox that a memorial park surrounding the place of surrender would be more acceptable than the monument, the design of which was disapproved by many Southerners.

The new measure would authorize the government to acquire by accepting donations or purchasing all needed lands within five miles of the old courthouse. A fund of \$100,000 would be authorized for the expense of establishment."

To give support to Representative Drewry's bill and to provide an organization to enlist support in passage of this law, citizens of Appomattox and Lynchburg--400 in number--met at Appomattox on October 18, 1934 to form the Appomattox Historic Park Association. Named as President at this meeting was Colonel Joel W. Flood, supported by a representative State and local group of officers.

Congressman Drewry's Bill to amend the Act of 1930 and create Appomattox Court House National Historical Park was passed by Congress and approved by the President on August 13, 1935. Senate amendments changed the name of the proposed shrine from Park to Monument.

A few excerpts from the Act of August 13, 1935 will give an idea of the conditions required for establishment of the Monument:

"That when title to all the land, structures, and other property within a distance of one and one-half miles from the Appomattox Court House site, Virginia, as shall be designated by the Secretary of the Interior in the exercises of his discretion as necessary or desirable for national monument purposes, shall have been vested in the United States in fee simple, such area or areas shall be, and they are hereby, established, dedicated, and set apart as a public monument for the benefit and enjoyment of the people and shall be known as the 'Appomattox Court House National Historical Monument'.

"Sec. 2. That there is hereby authorized to be appropriated the sum of \$100,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary, to carry out the provisions of this Act as amended hereby.

"Sec. 3. That the Secretary of the Interior be, and he is hereby, authorized to accept donations of land and/or buildings, structures, and so forth, within the boundaries of said park as determined and fixed hereunder and donations of funds for the purchase and/or maintenance thereof; Provided, That he may acquire on behalf of the United States, by purchase when purchasable at prices deemed by him reasonable, otherwise, by condemnation under the provisions of the Act of August 1, 1888, such tracts of land within the said park as may be necessary for the completion thereof within the limits of the appropriation as authorized in Section 2."

The authorization for expenditure of \$100,000 was carried over from the Act of 1930. However, this was strictly an authorization. No funds were actually appropriated for the Monument in 1935, and more important, Congress took no action to provide funds for acquisition of lands and, in effect, left this problem to the State and locality.

It was at this juncture that a combination of events made possible quick action to solve the problem of land acquisition.

As part of a national program of public works to alleviate unemployment during the years of the great depression, Congress had set up the Resettlement Administration to purchase submarginal lands. Elimination of non-productive lands would improve the economy of a community by insuring better markets for the products of good farm lands.

In furtherance of this program a Central Virginia district was established with headquarters at Farmville, Virginia.

Since the major difficulty facing establishment of the Monument was

land acquisition, the idea of enlisting Resettlement Administration support for purchase of needed acreage was advanced. It met with very favorable response from local officers of the Resettlement Administration. A major project of the Resettlement Administration was to set up a forest reserve on the border of Appomattox and Buckingham counties. With the support of James Andrews, R. P. Buford, and W. W. Scott, Resettlement, with funds specially secured began the program of land acquisition in the vicinity of the village as a gateway to the forest project.

Preparatory steps to guide the land acquisition program were undertaken by historians from Colonial National Park. Preliminary studies by Robert D. Meade and C. L. Coston covered the retreat route from Richmond and Petersburg to Appomattox, and provided the basic story of the last days and fighting. Guided by these studies, the National Park Service set up a minimum land acquisition program and requested Resettlement Administration to purchase the lands felt essential for the Monument.

In 1936, supervision of the Appomattox project was transferred to Branch Spalding, Superintendent of Fredericksburg National Military Park. The purpose of this change was to place all existing and projected Civil War parks in Virginia under one official. As Coordinating Superintendent, Mr. Spalding continued the preliminary investigation started by Flickinger and took an active part in bringing the Park to reality. Special surveys conducted under Spalding's direction were made by Dr. Charles W. Porter, and Major Joseph M. Hanson, culminating in the first Master Plan for the Monument.

An important milestone on the path from project to reality was the appropriation of the funds authorized by the Act of 1935. Senator Carter Glass of

Virginia, at the request of Bob Ramsey and Joel W. Flood, placed an item of \$100,000 in the Department of Interior appropriation for the fiscal year 1937 earmarking this amount for improvement and development of the Monument, as soon as the necessary lands were secured.

By 1939, the Resettlement Administration had purchased all the land earmarked by the National Park Service for inclusion in the Monument, with two exceptions. Thomas Gray, who owned a two-acre tract with dining room and dance hall on Route 24, west of the Confederate Cemetery, had rejected all offers by Resettlement. Funds available were about exhausted and the offer of \$4000 was all they could advance. When it seemed necessary to resort to condemnation suit, Mr. Gray suddenly gave up and accepted Resettlement's offer.

This left only one tract to be acquired before the Monument could be proclaimed. Mrs. Bessie Ferguson, whose residence was on the east side of the Court House Green had sold Resettlement the Bocock-Isbell House and other lands she owned in the village. While recognizing the sentimental attachment of Mrs. Ferguson for her home, Spalding and other officials of the National Park Service could not recommend establishment of the Monument until this key property was in Government ownership.

Resettlement Administration had no funds available for land purchase after acquiring the Gray tract. And there were no funds to be secured from the State or locality.

In this circumstance it was decided to request Congress to allocate \$8,000 from the Congressional Appropriation of \$100,000. Mr. Demaray presented the Service's justification at a hearing, and \$8,000 was released to purchase the Ferguson Tract.

This was the last hurdle before the Service could ask the Secretary of the Interior to designate the Monument.

On April 10, 1940--75 years and one day after Lee's surrender--Acting Secretary Ickes, under provision of the Act of 1935, proclaimed establishment of Appomattox Court House National Historical Monument, with an acreage of approximately 970 acres.

One day later--April 11, 1940--Historian Hubert A. Gurney, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, was transferred to Appomattox as Acting Superintendent to assume responsibility for administration of the area for the National Park Service.

Within two months the Service had secured transfer of a negro Veterans Civilian Conservation Corps Company from Yorktown, Virginia, with Superintendent Earl I. Carner, Foremen R. I. Scott, T. T. Tinder, A. Apperson, Russell Almond, and Historian Ralph Happel, assigned from Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park.

Work on the park developmental program, already agreed upon in general details, was immediately undertaken. Special emphasis was given to repair and stabilization of buildings and clearing of grounds.

Major and immediate objective in the park program was reconstruction of the McLean House. Archeological work at the house site was under the direction of Preston Holder. Historian Happel assembled all available data from photographs, prints, interviews, and other sources for a paper on the McLean House. Architects Alexander and Julian of Region One Office made the architectural survey and prepared the working plans.

By the Winter of 1941, working drawings for the McLean House were completed, based on architectural, archeological, and historical research

and plans were made to start work on the reconstruction in the Spring of 1942.

Another major step forward for the park development in 1941 was the start of work on construction of a By-Pass Road south of the Village. The purpose of the change in road location was to eliminate the traffic circle hazard at the Court House Green and to divert all through traffic away from the village. Starting in April, all grading and structures were completed and the road was ready for the stone base in August. Work was halted until the following Spring to enable the Civilian Conservation Corps Camp to crush the additional stone needed to complete the job.

Whatever plans were made for 1942, went into retirement on December 7, 1941, with the entrance of the United States into World War II. By March 1942 the Civilian Conservation Corps Camp had been transferred to A. P. Hill Military Reservation, leaving only a skeleton organization for maintenance and operation of the Monument.

In the lean war years only one transaction of note took place. Negotiations had been opened with the State of North Carolina to transfer the North Carolina Monument, two historical tablets, and the access road to the North Carolina Monument to Government ownership. This was accomplished in 1943 and these important areas were placed under Service direction.

Superintendent Gurney was drafted into the United States Army in December 1943 and succeeded by Robert R. Budlong in 1944 for the period of the war. With limited funds and handicapped by lack of equipment, Superintendent Budlong, Ranger Scott, and Clerk Smith ran the Park for the duration of the war.

When peace finally came in 1945, Superintendent Gurney returned to duty at Appomattox. Resumption of developmental work was slow at first, gradually accelerating as regulations for non-competition with the civilian housing program were relaxed. In 1946, stabilization repairs were made on all historic buildings in the village area.

First major product of the postwar program was renovation and repair of the frame Bocock-Isbell House, built in 1848, to serve as Park Superintendent's Residence, and completed in 1948. Then followed the reconstruction of the McLean House in 1949, under the supervision of Architect A. J. Higgins; completion of the village sewage disposal system, and installation of the village water supply system.

On Sunday, April 16, 1950, the reconstructed McLean House and the Monument were dedicated. A crowd estimated at 20,000 heard Dr. Douglas S. Freeman deliver the principal address of the afternoon. The Secretary was represented by Director Newton B. Drury and Regional Director Thomas J. Allen.

Guests of honor at the exercises were Major-General U. S. Grant, III, and Mr. R. E. Lee, IV, who crossed scissors to cut the ribbon on the McLean House porch and formally open the building to the public.

Included on the program were the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia; United States Senator Virgil Chapman of Kentucky; Congressman W. M. Abbitt of Virginia (Master of Ceremonies); State Senator C. T. Moses, Sr.; Judge Joel W. Flood of Virginia; Mrs. Roy E. Kyle, President, Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs, and Mrs. William Haggard of Florida, President General, United Daughters of the Confederacy.

Through the efforts of Senator Moses, the Commonwealth of Virginia had

appropriated \$5,000 to be expended for the dedication exercises and for purchase of original or replacement furniture for the parlor of the McLean House.

With the exception of the State fund, no money was appropriated to furnish the McLean House. Starting with bare rooms and a few scattered pieces left over after the loan of furniture for the dedication, Mrs. E. A. Watson of Lynchburg, Virginia, undertook the job of furnishing the McLean House. It took Mrs. Watson three years, but by persuasion and suggestion the task was substantially finished in 1953. In this period the Service adviser for the selection of furniture for the house was Museum Specialist J. Paul Hudson of Region One Office.

The impetus given to the development of the Monument by the widespread publicity given to the dedication of the McLean House was lost within a few months. Once again war and military needs -- this time the outbreak of the Korean episode -- forced suspension of all non-military projects.

Three years were to pass before another program for major improvements could be launched. After field inspections by Assistant Regional Director Zimmer, and a conference with Regional Director Cox, it was determined to provide the essential structures for park operation and interpretation. As a result of this decision, repair of the Clover Hill Tavern to house the Park Office and Museum was started in late 1953. By the Fall of 1954, one year later, renovation of the Tavern had been completed, Public Comfort Station built in the reconstruction of the Tavern Slave Quarters, the Peers House repaired for an employee's residence, and a two-building garage and workshop group erected.

The Ferguson House, a large frame rambling structure, built in the years after the Civil War, which had provided rooms for the temporary Museum, Park Office, and one employee's residence, was razed, as were the temporary garages, a tool house and pit-type toilets.

Another major improvement in 1954 was completion of the By-Pass Road, begun back in 1941. The road was finished by the Virginia State Highway Department, with funds provided by the National Park Service. Other road improvements were building of the Peers Lane, and the access road and paved area at the Utility Center.

The new By-Pass Road was opened for public use in October 1954. State Route 627, the historic Prince Edward Court House Road, was repaired to serve as access road to the Village Area.

On April 6, 1954, the President approved a bill, sponsored by Congressman W. M. Abbitt, to change the name of the area from Appomattox Court House National Historical Monument to Appomattox Court House National Historical Park. The change from Monument to Park was approved to give full recognition to the historic importance of Appomattox, and to eliminate confusion in use of the term "Monument".

Another Act approved by the President on July 17, 1953 authorized the Secretary of the Interior to exchange park owned lands of lesser historical value for more historic sites along the old Stage Road.

Much has been accomplished at Old Appomattox Court House since 1940. Much more remains to be done before this historic shrine achieves the place it deserves in our Nation's history.

We thank those men and women who have helped and forwarded the establishment and construction of the Park.

APPENDIX

APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
(Established April 10, 1940)

Roster of Park Superintendents

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Period of Service</u>
Hubert A. Gurney	Acting Superintendent	4-11-40 to 6-30-41
Hubert A. Gurney	Superintendent	7-1-41 to 3-2-43
Hubert A. Gurney	Custodian	3-4-43 to 2-29-44 (Mil. Furl.)
Robert I. Scott	Acting Custodian	3-1-44 to 8-3-44
Robert R. Budlong	Acting Custodian	8-4-44 to 3-19-46
Hubert A. Gurney	Superintendent	3-20-46 to

List of Other Important Personnel

Avis B. Smith	Clerk	6-4-41 to
James C. Price	Ranger	4-14-42 to 7-1-43
Robert I. Scott	Ranger	10-20-43 to 11-24-50

List of Important Friends

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
Mr. George F. Abbitt, Jr.	Appomattox, Virginia
Mr. W. M. Abbitt	Appomattox, Virginia
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry A. Burke	Appomattox, Virginia
Mr. George B. Buchanan	Appomattox, Virginia
Mr. & Mrs. Joel W. Flood	Appomattox, Virginia
Mr. David T. Robertson	Appomattox, Virginia
Mr. & Mrs. Calvin H. Robinson	Appomattox, Virginia
Mr. C. W. Smith	Appomattox, Virginia
Mr. & Mrs. E. A. Watson	3612 Sunset Drive, Lynchburg, Va.

PROPERTY OF

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

(OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR)

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