

Appomattox Court House

National Historical Park
Virginia

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



The Surrender Site ... Then and Now

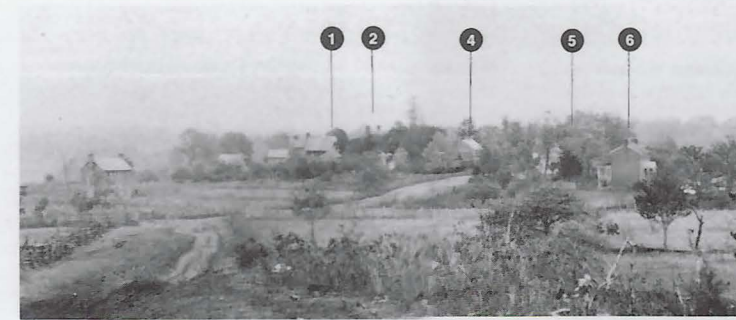
Here on April 9, 1865, Robert E. Lee, commanding general of the Army of Northern Virginia, surrendered his men to Ulysses S. Grant, general-in-chief of all United States forces. Though several Confederate armies under different commanders remained in the field, Lee's surrender signaled the end of the Southern States' attempt to create a separate nation. Three days later the men of the Army of Northern Virginia marched before the Union Army, laid down their flags, stacked their weapons, and then began

the journey back to their homes. For them it was an ending, but for the nation it was a new beginning. Today, the National Park Service, which manages this historical park, invites you to walk the old country lanes where these events took place and in the quietness and stillness imagine the activity of those April days of 1865. We suggest you use the map and guide on the reverse side as you travel about the park. Vignettes about the Appomattox story are presented on this side of the folder.



Lee and Grant

Lee and Grant were well-matched adversaries who skillfully led their troops against each other in the last year of the Civil War. Robert E. Lee's great strengths were aggressiveness and an ability to assess his opponents. Ulysses Grant knew how to exploit his opponent's weaknesses to his best advantage.



Yesterday and Today

Compare the cover picture of the village today with the picture at left taken more than a century ago. Both show the village from the west though the older one is further away. The numbers are on the same buildings in both pictures.

- 1 Tavern Guest House
- 2 Clover Hill Tavern
- 3 Woodson Law Office
- 4 Meeks' Store
- 5 Court House
- 6 McLean House
- 7 Kitchen
- 8 Servants' Quarters



The Park

Appomattox Court House National Historical Park is located in south central Virginia 148 kilometers (92 miles) west of Richmond and 29 kilometers (18 miles) east of Lynchburg. It is on Va. 24, 5 kilometers (3 miles) northeast of the town of Appomattox, which sits astride U.S. 460 and where motel accommodations, restaurants, and stores are located.

The nearest campground is at Holliday Lake State Park. We suggest you begin your visit at the visitor center in the reconstructed courthouse. On the ground floor is an information desk where a staff member can answer your questions. Upstairs is a museum and an auditorium where interpretive slide shows are presented.



Surrender Terms

When Grant and Lee sat down in the parlor of Wilmer McLean's home (above), Grant asked only that the Confederates pledge not to take up arms against the United States. Officers were allowed to keep their side arms and any man who owned a horse was allowed to take it home with him.

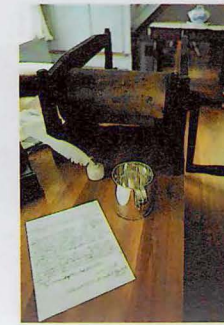


End of the War

Lee's capitulation did not bring an immediate end to the Confederate States of America, for other armies were still in the field. It wasn't until Joseph E. Johnston surrendered to William T. Sherman in North Carolina on April 26, and Edmund Kirby Smith hauled down the flag in Galveston, Texas, on June 2 that the Confederacy ceased to exist.

The Paroles

To print passes that the Confederates would need to return to their homes, printing presses (right) were set up in the tavern (far right). The presses broke down, and the job had to be completed in Lynchburg. The passes were finished barely in time to be distributed at the surrender ceremony.



The Village

Originally the village of Appomattox Court House was known as Clover Hill. It was a small settlement with just a few houses around the tavern, which was a stopping-off point on the main Richmond-Lynchburg Stage Road. When the new county of Appomattox was formed in 1845, Clover Hill was chosen as the county seat and renamed. The next year the courthouse itself

was built. Slowly the settlement grew into a village of homes, stores, and lawyers' offices. Among them were (left) the Kelly House, a wheelwright's home, and (above, from the attic of the tavern) Meeks' Store and Woodson Law Office, vital parts of the community.



The County

At the time of the Civil War, Appomattox County was a rural, agricultural area. The county had no towns except the county seat, which boasted fewer than 150 inhabitants. The remainder of the county's 8,900 citizens, 54 percent of whom were black, lived on the land. The few professions—blacksmith, cooper, wheelwright, miller, and sawyer—tended to support the

needs of the farmers and plantation owners. Despite the county's overwhelming agricultural character, the people needed a place to conduct their legal affairs, to buy the few items they did not grow or make, and to meet their neighbors. Appomattox Court House filled these needs. Some lawyers opened offices around the courthouse. Two of the county's dozen stores were in the small

village. The largest, Meeks' Store, also was the post office. Frances Meeks' son, Lafayette served in the Confederate army, died of typhoid, and was buried here (above). The village and county prospered in the 1850s and such refinements as picket fences with gates and gate weights (left) began to appear. The approaching war would change all of this.



Information

Park programs are designed to show how the war affected the people of the village and how they lived from day to day, catching water in rain barrels (above) or sharpening sickles, scythes, or axes (left). For information on programs, check at the visitor center.

Appomattox Court House

Appomattox Court House National Historical Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. The superintendent's address is P.O. Box 218, Appomattox, Virginia 24522.

Creating A Park

After the surrender ceremony the troops went away and the war ended, but Appomattox Court House was changed forever. In many ways the village was worse off. No heroic acts of battle had taken place here; neither side rushed in to erect monuments as they did on practically every battlefield of the war. Locally, the village became a backwater as Appomattox Station, just to the south, prospered because of its position on the railroad.

In the late 1880s a group of Union veterans formed the Appomattox Land Company. They apparently hoped to develop the area by selling lots and building houses, but their plans never really left the drawing board. In 1892 the courthouse (right) burned and the county seat was moved to Appomattox, formerly called Appomattox Station. And in the spring of 1893 the McLean House was dismantled with the hope of taking it to Wash-

ington, D.C., as a war museum. But the pile of bricks and lumber was never moved. The little village was either going up in smoke or crumbling into dust.

Enter the U.S. Congress. On June 18, 1930, Congress passed a bill that provided for building a monument at the site of the old courthouse. The monument was never built, but the idea of memorializing the event stayed alive. In 1934-35,

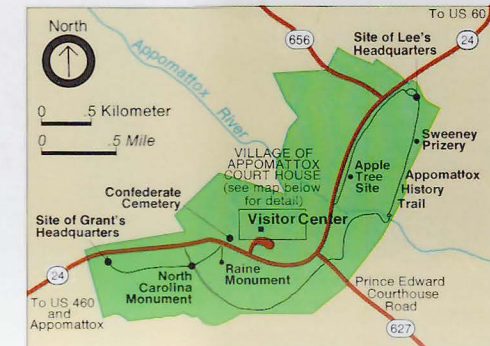


This photograph shows the courthouse after the fire of 1892.

the National Park Service, spurred in part by the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg, suggested that the entire village be restored. The idea was received enthusiastically. Legislation creating the park was signed into law August 3, 1935, and work began on acquiring land and researching the records. At the end of World War II, work began in earnest, and on April 6, 1954, the area was redesignated Appomattox Court House National

Historical Park. Today the major part of the village looks as it did in April 1865.

Getting Around



Outside the village are a few spots associated with the events of the surrender. The site of Lee's headquarters is northeast of the village. From a small parking lot on Va. 24, it is a 5-minute walk. In the opposite direction from the village is the site of Grant's headquarters. Nearby the State of North Carolina has erected a monument marking the furthest advance of its troops on that April day. And a small Confederate cemetery just west of the

village contains the graves of 1 Northern and 18 Southern soldiers who were killed on April 9. A hiking trail and the highway connect all these locations.

The official National Park Service handbook describes the historic events and contains a more complete guide to the park. It, along with other publications, is for sale in the park.

Touring the Village

After getting your bearings in the visitor center, tour the village to see the restored and reconstructed buildings. There is no established order to follow. Uniformed park rangers or interpreters in period dress can answer your questions and give you more information about the people who lived here and the events that took place. All the buildings shown on this map are within walking distance. It is approximately 300 meters (1000 feet) from the McLean House to the Surrender Triangle. The roads are closed to all vehicles. The historic roads are for pedestrians only.

• 1865 structure site

McLean House

The house was built in 1848 and bought by Wilmer McLean 15 years later. Behind the main house are the servants' quarters and the kitchen. Food could be carried directly from the kitchen to the dining room on the ground floor. An icehouse is just east of the front entrance. The well is inside the gazebo. All these buildings are reconstructions.

Meeks' Store

The building was put up in 1852 and over the years has been a store, private residence, and Presbyterian Church Manse. Francis Meeks was also postmaster and druggist.

Woodson Law Office

John Woodson bought this office in 1856 and practiced law here until his death eight years later. It is a typical lawyer's office of that period.

Clover Hill Tavern

The brick tavern, built in 1819, is the oldest structure in the village. At one time it had two frame additions, one for the dining room and one for the bar. Behind the tavern are the kitchen, now a bookstore, and the servants' quarters, now containing restrooms. Beside the tavern is the guesthouse where people stayed when the tavern was full.

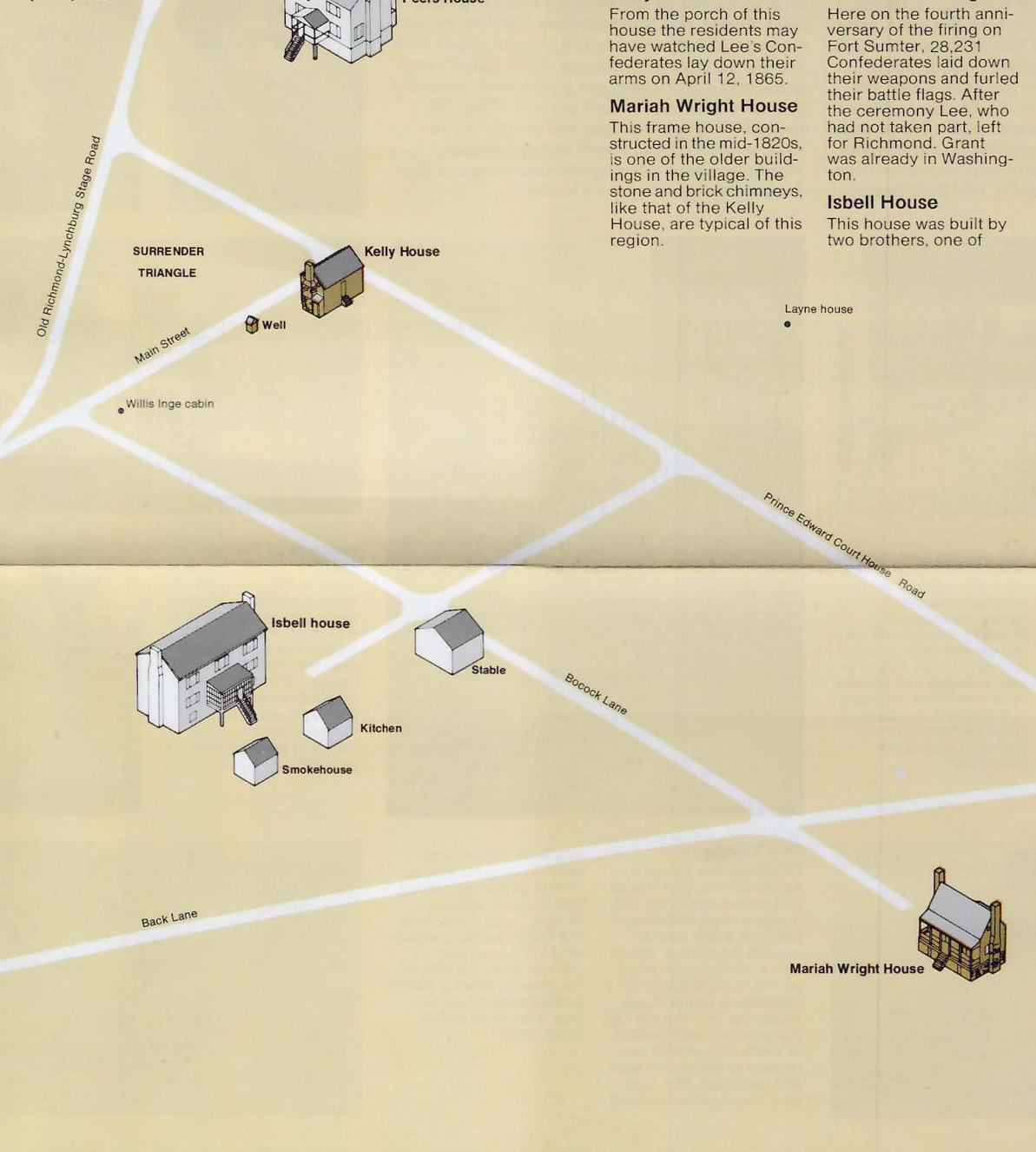
Courthouse

The courthouse was built in 1846. The present building is a total reconstruction. None of the surrender events took place here.

Jail

The jail was finished about 1870 and for the next 22 years served as county jail and sheriff's office and quarters. Until 1940 it served as a voting station.

Lee-Grant meeting, April 10, 1865



whom, Thomas S. Bocock, was speaker of the Confederate Congress. *Not Open to the Public.*

Peers House

George Peers, clerk of the court for Appomattox County for 40 years, lived in this frame house, which was built in the early 1850s. *Not Open to the Public.*

Surrender Triangle

Here on the fourth anniversary of the firing on Fort Sumter, 28,231 Confederates laid down their weapons and furled their battle flags. After the ceremony Lee, who had not taken part, left for Richmond. Grant was already in Washington.

Isbell House

This house was built by two brothers, one of

Kelly House

From the porch of this house the residents may have watched Lee's Confederates lay down their arms on April 12, 1865.

Mariah Wright House

This frame house, constructed in the mid-1820s, is one of the older buildings in the village. The stone and brick chimneys, like that of the Kelly House, are typical of this region.