

Appomattox Court House

Appomattox Court House
National Historical Park
Virginia

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



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The Surrender Site . . . Then and Now

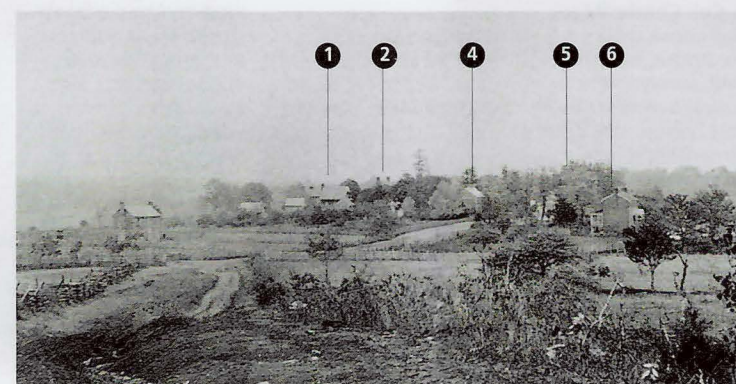
Here on April 9, 1865, Robert E. Lee, commanding general of the Army of Northern Virginia, surrendered his men to Ulysses S. Grant, general-in-chief of all United States forces. Though several Confederate armies under different commanders remained in the field, Lee's surrender signaled the end of the 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. 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 brochure.



Grant and Lee

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



Yesterday and Today

Compare the picture of the village today (above) with the picture at left taken in 1889. Both show the village from the west, though the older one is farther away. The numbers are on the same buildings in both pictures. The building at the far left in the older photograph is the Union

Academy Dwelling House, which no longer exists.

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



The Park

Appomattox Court House National Historical Park is located in south central Virginia, 92 miles west of Richmond and 18 miles east of Lynchburg. It is on Va. 24, three miles northeast of the town of Appomattox, where motel accommodations, restaurants, and stores are located. The nearest public campground is at Holiday Lake State Park.

Park programs show how the war affected the people of the village and how they lived from day to day. Begin your visit at the visitor center in the re-constructed courthouse, which contains an information desk, a museum, and an auditorium where videos are presented. Service animals are welcome.



Black Contributions
Blacks served in both armies. In Lee's army, blacks served in support roles (musicians, cooks, teamsters, and personal servants), and 39 of them received paroles. For Grant,

seven regiments of black soldiers known as United States Colored Troops, about 2,500 men, participated in the Battle of Appomattox Court House just hours before the surrender.



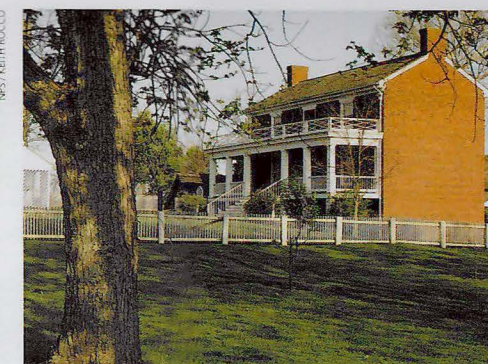
Surrender Terms

When Grant and Lee sat down in the parlor of Wilmer McLean's home, 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 Confederate soldier who owned a horse was allowed to take it home with him. The generous terms began the process of reunification.

The official surrender documents were prepared by Lt. Col. Charles Marshall of Lee's staff and Lt. Col. Ely S. Parker of Grant's. They appear at the far left in Keith Rocco's painting of the surren-

der. Also shown, standing directly behind Grant, is Capt. Robert Todd Lincoln, son of President Abraham Lincoln and a junior member of Grant's military family.



The Paroles

To print the passes that Confederates needed to return to their homes, printing presses (right) were set up in the Clover Hill Tavern. Printers worked in relays to print 30,000 blank forms. By April 11, the paroles were ready for distribution to the Southern camps. The parole seen here was issued to Maj. Gen.



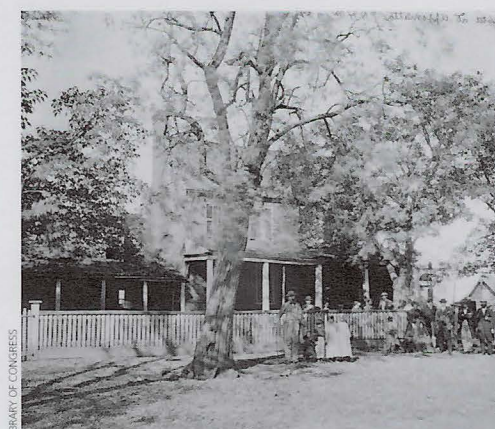
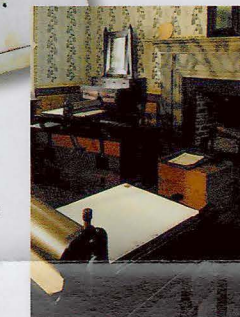
Fitzhugh Lee, Army of Northern Virginia cavalry commander and the nephew of Robert E. Lee.

The McLeans

During the war Wilmer McLean and his family left their home in Manassas, Va., for business purposes. He was a sugar speculator and bought the property at Appomattox Court House in the fall of 1862 to be near the railroad. Lee used the parlor of their home (left) when he surrendered to Grant.

End of the War

Lee's surrender did not immediately end the Confederate States of America; other armies were still in the field. Not until the surrender of Joseph E. Johnston's army in North Carolina on April 26, Richard Taylor's army in Alabama on May 4, and Edmund Kirby Smith's army in Texas on June 2 did the Confederacy cease to exist. All were surrendered on the terms set at Appomattox Court House by Lee and Grant.



The Village

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

house was built. Slowly the settlement grew into a village of homes, stores, and lawyers' offices. Among the original structures still standing from 1865 are the Clover Hill Tavern (left, in 1865), Meeks Store, Woodson Law Office, Peers House, Mariah Wright House, and Jones Law Office.



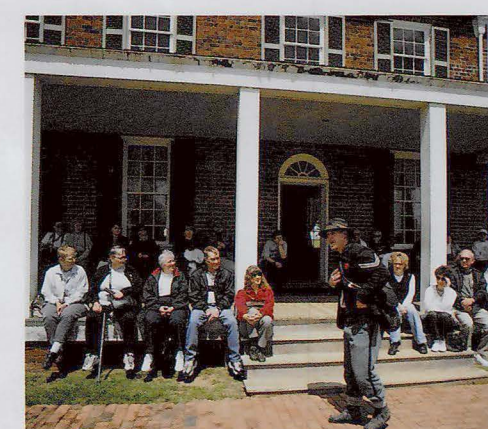
The County

At the time of the Civil War, Appomattox County was rural and agricultural. Of its 8,900 residents, 54 percent were black, most of them enslaved. The county seat was the only town, boasting a population of less than 150. The few trades—blacksmith, cooper, wheelwright, miller, and sawyer—served mostly the needs of farmers and plantation owners.

Despite the county's overwhelmingly agricultural character, the people needed a place to conduct legal affairs, buy the few items they did not grow or make, and meet 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. Meeks Store, the

largest, doubled as post office. Francis Meeks' son Lafayette served in the Confederate army, died of typhoid, and was buried here (left). The village and county prospered in the 1850s. The war would change all this.



More Information

Appomattox Court House National Historical Park
P.O. Box 218
Appomattox, VA 24522
434-352-8987
www.nps.gov/apco

For firearms laws and policies, see the park website.

To learn more about parks and National Park Service programs in America's communities visit www.nps.gov.

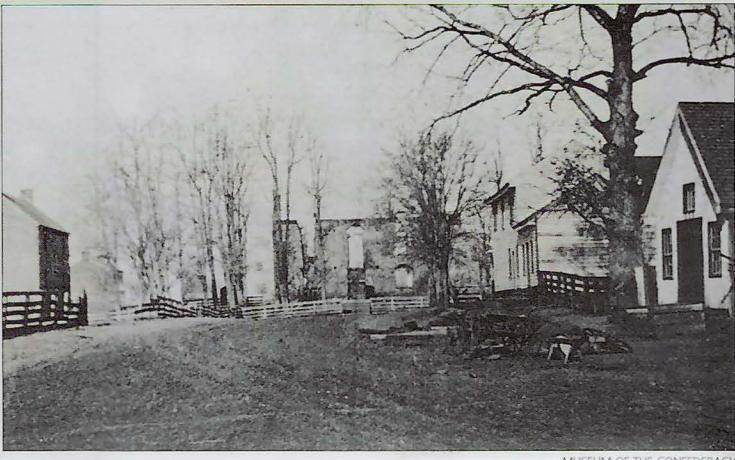
Appomattox Court House

Creating A Park

After the surrender ceremony the troops went away and the war ended, but Appomattox Court House had been changed. In many ways the village was worse off. No large battle had taken place here; neither side rushed in to erect monuments as they did on many other battlefields of the war. Locally the village became a backwater as Appomattox Station, just to the west, prospered because of its

position on the railroad. In the late 1880s Union veterans formed the Appomattox Land Company. They hoped to develop the area by selling lots and building houses, but their plans never really left the drawing board. In 1892 the courthouse burned (*right*) and the county seat was moved to Appomattox, formerly Appomattox Station. And in early 1893 a Niagara Falls, N.Y., company had the McLean House dismantled with the hope of taking it to Washington, D.C., as a war museum. But the piles of bricks and lumber were never moved. Exposed to the elements, they eventually disappeared. The little village was either going up in smoke or crumbling into dust.

In 1930, Congress passed a bill that provided for building a monument at the site of the old courthouse. The monument was



MUSEUM OF THE CONFEDERACY

never built, but the idea of memorializing the event stayed alive. In 1934-35 the National Park Service suggested that the entire village be restored. The idea was received enthusiastically.

Legislation creating the park as a national historical monument was signed in 1935, and work began on acquiring land and re-searching the records. The project resumed at the end of World War II;



in 1954, the area was redesignated Appomattox Court House National Historical Park. Today the village looks much as it did in April 1865.

Outside the village are a few spots associated with the events of the surrender. Lee's headquarters site is northeast of the village. It is a two-minute walk from a small parking lot on Va. 24. Grant's headquarters site is in the opposite

direction from the village. Nearby, a monument erected by the state of North Carolina marks the farthest advance of its troops that April day.

West of the village a small Confederate cemetery holds the graves of one Northern soldier and 18 Southern soldiers killed on April 8 and 9. A hiking trail and the highway connect all of these locations.

Touring the Village

Start at the visitor center, where museum exhibits, video programs, seasonal talks, map orientations, and restrooms are available. The map below depicts the historic village much as it looked in April 1865. Existing structures have white labels; those no longer existing are shown pale gray with numbers for the key at far right. All the sites are within easy walking distance but require travel on gravel and grass surfaces. Most buildings are over 150 years old and require steps for entry. Wheelchairs are available at the visitor center. The official National Park Service handbook, covering many aspects of Lee's retreat, the surrender, and the history of the village, is available along with other publications at the park bookstore.

Note: Firearms are prohibited in the following buildings: Visitor Center, McLean House, Clover Hill Tavern, and Bookstore.

McLean House
On April 9, 1865, Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia to Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant in the parlor of this house. Lee's aide Lt. Col. Charles Marshall chose this site. The house, built in 1848, survived under several owners until 1893, when speculators dismantled it in a failed money-making scheme (*see above*).

In the 1940s, using the speculators' plans and specifications, and archeological evidence, the National Park Service rebuilt the house on its original foundation. (*Reconstructed*)

Meeks Store
Constructed in 1852, at the time of the surrender it was used as a general store and post office, both operated by Francis Meeks. (*Original*)

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. (*Original*)

Clover Hill Tavern
Built in 1819, this oldest village structure was where parole passes were printed for Confederate soldiers. Associated structures include the kitchen (now a bookstore), slave quarters, and guesthouse. In 1865 there was also an attached dining wing and a small detached bar. (*Original*)

Appomattox County Courthouse
The original courthouse was built in 1846 and destroyed by fire in 1892. None of the surrender events took place here. (*Reconstructed*)

Appomattox County Jail
The new county jail was completed by 1867; the original jail burned during the war years. (*Original*)

Jones Law Office
Office and town home of Crawford Jones, Appomattox County farmer, lawyer, and local secessionist leader. (*Original*)

Mariah Wright House
This frame house, built in the mid-1820s, is one of the older buildings in the village. The stone and brick chimneys, like those of the Jones Law Office, are typical of this region. Not open to the public. (*Original*)

Isbell House
This house was built in 1850 by two brothers, one of whom was U.S. Sen. Thomas Bocock, who later served as speaker of the Confederate Congress. Not open to the public. (*Original*)

Peers House
George Peers, clerk of the Appomattox County court for 40 years, lived in this frame house, which was built in the early 1850s. Not open to the public. (*Original*)

Stacking of Arms
On the morning of April 12, 1865, about 5,000 Federal troops lined the Richmond-Lynchburg Stage Road from just east of the Peers House to a point near the McLean House to receive the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia. The weapons, flags, and accoutrements of Lee's infantry were stacked before the Federals in a formal surrender ceremony that Brig. Gen. Joshua L. Chamberlain dubbed "Honor answering honor."

Key to numbered buildings (no longer standing)

- 1 Union Academy Dwelling House
- 2 Woodson Law Office (1865)
- 3 Raine Tavern (empty ca. 1865)
- 4 McLean Smokehouse
- 5 McLean Stable
- 6 Pryor Wright House
- 7 Meeks Storehouse (1865)
- 8 Office
- 9 Office

- 10 Office
- 11 Tavern Smokehouse
- 12 Tavern Dining Room
- 13 Tavern Bar
- 14 Carriage House
- 15 Mule Stable
- 16 Clover Hill Tavern Stable
- 17 Robertson & Glover Store
- 18 Original Jail
- 19 W. Rosser Tenant House
- 20 W. Rosser Wheelwright Shop
- 21 W. Rosser Blacksmith Shop

- 22 W. Rosser Corn Crib
- 23 W. Rosser Barn
- 24 Peers Stable
- 25 Bocock-Isbell Law Office
- 26 Inge House
- 27 Peers Cabin/Slave Quarters
- 28 Moffitt House
- 29 Union Academy Hall
- 30 J. Rosser Blacksmith Shop
- 31 Wright Stable

Chamberlain-Gordon Salute
April 12, 1865
Grant-Lee Second Meeting
April 10, 1865

