




## Today in History - April 9

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## Lee Surrenders

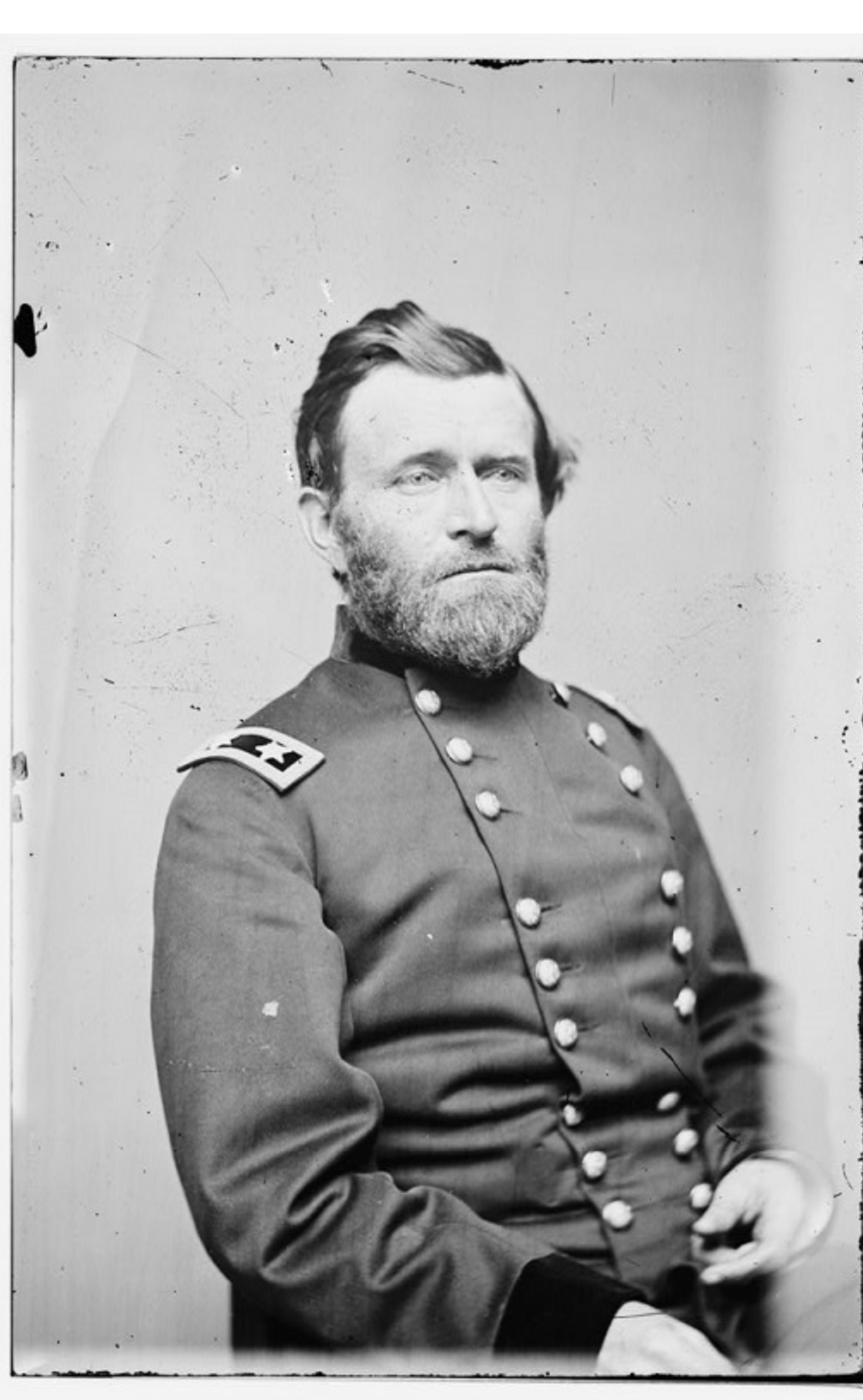
"It would be useless and therefore cruel," Robert E. Lee remarked on the morning of **April 9**, 1865, "to provoke the further effusion of blood, and I have arranged to meet with General Grant with a view to surrender."<sup>1</sup>

The two generals met shortly after noon on **April 9**, 1865, at the [home of Wilmer McLean](#) in the village of Appomattox Court House, Virginia. Lee's [surrender](#) of the Army of Northern Virginia to Ulysses S. Grant, general-in-chief of all United States forces, hastened the conclusion of the Civil War.

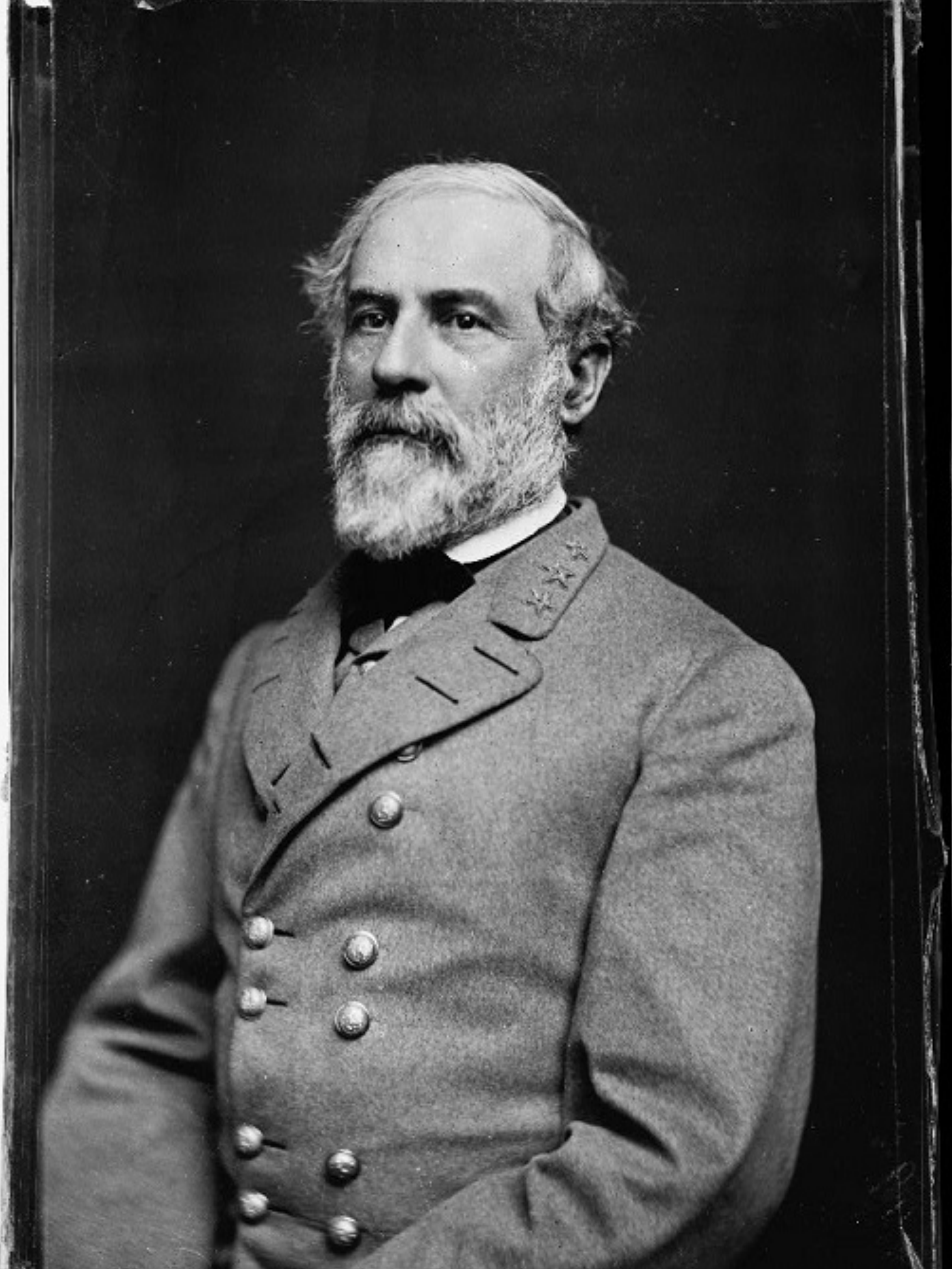


Appomattox Court House, Va. McLean House. Timothy H. O'Sullivan, photographer, April 1865. [Civil War Glass Negatives and Related Prints](#). Prints & Photographs Division

In the weeks following, other Confederate forces surrendered, and Confederate President Jefferson Davis was [captured](#). On April 14, 1865, just over four years after the bombardment of [Fort Sumter](#) that triggered the fighting, President Abraham Lincoln became one of the more than 1 million Civil War casualties (including more than 600,000 dead), and the bloody fighting that began in the corn fields of [Manassas, Virginia](#) in July 1861 finally came to a close.



Portrait of Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, officer of the Federal Army. Brady National Photographic Portrait Galleries, [between 1860 and 1865]. [Civil War Glass Negatives and Related Prints](#). Prints & Photographs Division



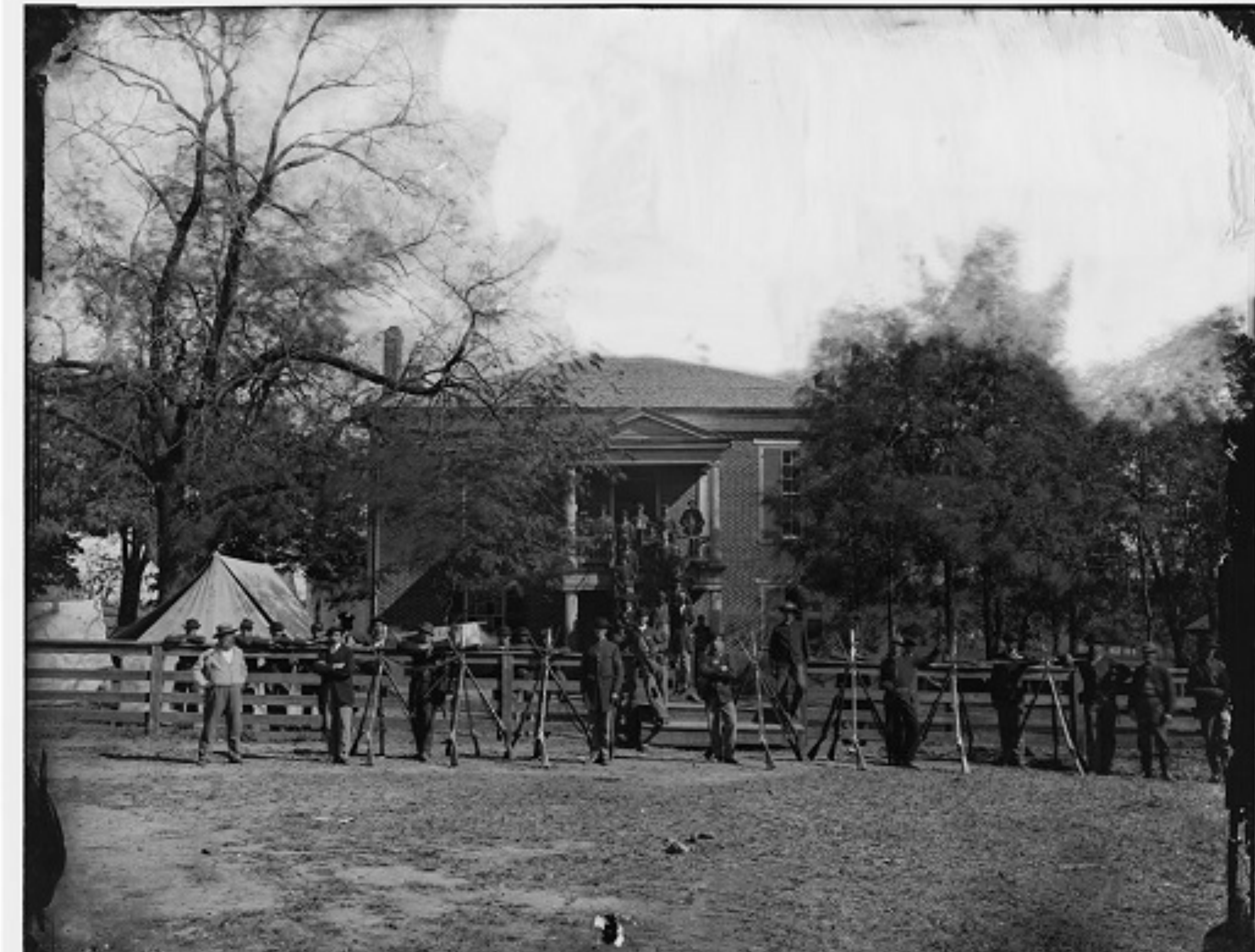
Portrait of Gen. Robert E. Lee, officer of the Confederate Army. Julian Vannerson, photographer, March 1864. [Civil War Glass Negatives and Related Prints](#). Prints & Photographs Division

After the surrender, former soldiers slowly returned home. One young Southerner despaired of seeing her husband again, when he turned up in Richmond ragged, but recognizable. Remembering the difficult years during and after the war she summed up her experience:

*We had nothing on which to begin life over again, but we were young and strong, and began it cheerily enough. We are prosperous now, ...little grandchildren cluster about us and listen with interest to grandpapa's and grandmamma's tales of the days when they "fought and bled and died together." They can't understand how such nice people as the Yankees and ourselves ever could have fought each other. "It doesn't seem reasonable," says Nellie...who is engaged to a gentleman from Boston, where we sent her to cultivate her musical talents, but where she applied herself to other matters, 'it doesn't seem reasonable, grandmamma, when you could just as easily have settled it all comfortably without any fighting. How glad I am I wasn't living then! How thankful I am that 'Old Glory' floats alike over North and South, now!*

*And so am I, my darling, so am I!*

[A Virginia Girl in the Civil War, 1861-1865](#) Myrta Lockett Avary, ed. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1903). Electronic Edition, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1997. [First-Person Narratives of the American South, 1860-1920](#)



Appomattox Court House, Va. Federal Soldiers at the courthouse. Timothy H. O'Sullivan, photographer, April 1865. [Civil War Glass Negatives and Related Prints](#). Prints & Photographs Division



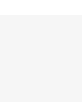
Appomattox Court House, Va. Civilians in front of the Hotel. Timothy H. O'Sullivan, photographer, April 1865. [Civil War Glass Negatives and Related Prints](#). Prints & Photographs Division

1. E. B. Long with Barbara Long, *The Civil War Day By Day: An Almanac, 1861-1865*, (1971; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1971), 670. [\(Return to text\)](#)

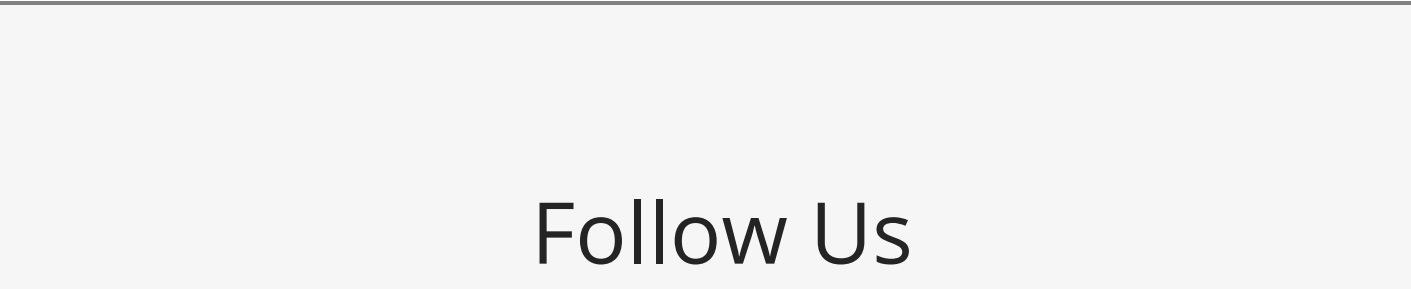
## Learn More

- The [Time Line of the Civil War](#), a Special Presentation in the collection [Civil War Glass Negatives and Related Prints](#), provides an overview of the sequence of events during the war.
- The [Civil War in America](#) exhibition assembles more than 200 unique items, many of which have never been seen by the public, to commemorate the sesquicentennial of this nation's greatest military and political upheaval.
- [First-Person Narratives of the American South](#), a 1996/97 Award Winner of [The Library of Congress/Ameritech National Digital Library Competition](#) (1996-1999), consists of 100 printed texts documenting the culture of the American South from the viewpoint of Southerners. Search the entire "Documenting the American South" collection at the University of North Carolina on [Appomattox](#) to retrieve over 50 documents referencing Lee's surrender.
- Search the Library of Congress collection [American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936 to 1940](#) on [Appomattox](#) to locate stories by [Mrs. Jennie Isabel Coleman](#) and [Mr. Leroy Dean](#) of Lee's surrender.
- For additional information about the Civil War, search [Today in History](#) on [Civil War](#) to locate features highlighting:
  - General Lee's evacuation of Richmond;
  - Military engagements at Bull Run, Gettysburg, Nashville, and Antietam
  - Other key figures from the Civil War era such as Jefferson Davis and Stonewall Jackson as well as Civil War era events including Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and the execution of Andersonville Prison's Henry Wirz.

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