

PAROLED PRISONER'S PASS

Appomattox Court House, Va.,

April 10th. 1865.

THE BEARER, *Major Genl J. E. Lee* of Co. the Army Regt. of *Northern Va.*, a Paroled Prisoner of the Army of Northern Virginia, has permission to go to his *home*, and there remain undisturbed.

By Command of *Lieut Col G. G. Smith*  
*George W. Searcy*  
*Apt. Appomattox*

Appomattox Court House  
April 10th 1865

Paroled Prisoners Pass

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By Command of Lieut. Genl Grant  
George H Sharpe  
Appointed Provost Marshall General

Head-quarters, Twenty-fourth Army Corps,  
APPOMATTOX C. H., VA., April 11th, 1865.

GENERAL ORDERS, }  
No. 43. }

By agreement between the officers appointed by Generals LEE and GRANT to carry out the stipulations of the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia the evidence that an officer or enlisted man is a paroled prisoner is the fact of his possessing a certificate of parole issued at Appomattox Court House, Va., April 10th, 1865, by his Commanding Officer or Staff Officer of the same.

All guards, patrols, officers and soldiers of the United States' forces, will respect such certificates, allow free passage to the holders thereof, and observe, in good faith, the provisions of the surrender, that the holders shall remain unmolested in every respect.

By Command of Major General JOHN GIBBON.

EDWARD MOALE,  
*Lieut. Col. and A. A. G.*

OFFICIAL:

*Assistant Adjutant General.*

*Major General Fitzhugh Lee Reading*

**Longacre, Edward G . Fitz Lee** Cambridge, Da Capo Press.  
2005

*On April 12, 1865, Major General John Gibbon commanding the XXIV Corps, Army of the James, whose troops had ended Robert E. Lee's hope of escaping a surrender at Appomattox Court House, was told by a sentry that General Lee was outside and wished to see him. Gibbon supposed the commander of the Army of Northern Virginia had a question about the cavalry unit that had been detailed to escort him to his home in Richmond. The corps commander left the room he had appropriated for an office in the house of Wilmer McLean . . . As he later recalled, "I found General Fitz Lee seated on his horse, and looking, I thought, somewhat uneasy. He had been a cadet under me at West Point, and I had not seen him for years. As I looked at him a vision of the past came up before me, and I could only think of a little rollicking, fellow dressed in cadet gray, whose jolly songs and gay spirits were the life of his class. My salutation of 'Hello, Fitz! Get off and come in,' seemed to put him at his ease at once."*

*Accompanying his former instructor to his office, Fitz took a chair and told the story of how he and his officers had avoided surrender on the ninth. They had reached Lynchburg safely, but after a few days of uneasy freedom Fitz and many others convinced themselves that the war was over and that they had to deal with their army's defeat. Leaving Lynchburg with five members of his staff, Fitz slipped through Union lines to Farmville, twenty-three miles east of Appomattox, the home of one of his aides, Captain Charles Minnigerode, who had been severely wounded during an exchange of gunfire minutes before the cessation of hostilities on the ninth. After visiting the young officer, who later recovered his health, Fitz and his staff reported to the local provost marshal and gave themselves up. They were advised to return to Appomattox to be paroled.*

*Having relinquished his "fond, though forlorn, hope" of further cavalry service, Fitz did as suggested, signing the papers that made him a paroled prisoner of the U. S. government. Under the terms of the agreement, he was free to return to his home, bound only by the pledge he had made never again to bear arms against the Union. But he spent the night of the twelfth not at home but as Gibbon's guest, sharing the rude accommodations available to them both. "Lying on the floor," wrote Gibbon, Fitz "slept as soundly as a child, after, as he said, having had no sleep for a week. Nothing could dampen his high spirits, and with us he seemed to rejoice that the war was over." Fitz proved as much the next morning when, "with a grim humor, he took from his pocket a five dollar Confederate note, and writing across its face, 'For Mrs. Gibbon, with the compliments of Fitz Lee' he said: 'Send that to your wife, and tell her it's the last cent I have in the world.'"*

*Readings of the Parole Passes of Appomattox Court House*

**Gibbon, John.** Personal Recollections of the Civil War, New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1928

*. . . After talking a little while, Gen. Grant beckoned me forward . . . Gen. Grant said "Gen. Lee is desirous that his officers and men should have on their persons some evidence that they are paroled prisoners, so that they will not be disturbed," upon which Gen. Lee remarked that he desired to do simply what was in his power to protect his men from anything disagreeable. I said I thought that could be arranged, as I had a small printing press and could have blank forms struck off which could be filled in and one given to each officer and man of the army, signed by their own officers and distributed as required. To this he assented. . .*

*. . . My corps press was at once set to work to print off the requisite number of blank paroles but it soon became apparent that our few printers would speedily break down at the task, some 30,000 blanks being required. The Adjutant General reported that the press would have to be run all night and probably all the next day. I, therefore, directed him to send out and make a detail of the necessary number of printers to supply relays for the press until the job was finished. This was done; we obtained all the printers we wanted and the next day the paroles were ready for distribution. If we had needed fifty watch makers or blacksmiths, I presume we could have had them just as readily. . .*

*. . . By the 12<sup>th</sup>, nearly the whole army had been paroled and most of the officers and men had left for their homes. Polls in duplicate had been prepared of the different commands and on the backs of these was placed a printed slip duly filled out and signed by the commanding officer. The statement was then signed by General Geo. H. Sharpe the Assistant Provost Marshal, each party keeping a copy. Such officers as did not belong to any particular organization, signed the parole for themselves.*

*In addition, each officer and man, when he separated from his command, was given one of the paroles to which I have referred after it was properly filled out and signed by his immediate commanding officer. . .*