

Lesson Plan for McLean House

Appomattox Court House National Historical Park
TRT Peggy Voorhees 2014

(As per NPS template and specs)-

Page Title:

McLean House

Teaser text:

There are many misconceptions relative to Lee's surrender to Grant at the end of the American Civil War. What is the true story behind this momentous occasion that signifies Appomattox as the place "where our nation reunited"?

Overview text:

Appomattox is the location of the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia which was arguably the primary military force for the Confederate States of America. It is here that General Lee admitted defeat and it is in the McLean House that the terms of surrender were drafted and agreed to by both sides in an official meeting marking what has come to be known as the end of the American Civil War. This lesson covers the situation leading to the surrender, the story of Wilmer McLean and history of the McLean House, and a description of the meeting between Grant and Lee inside the McLean House detailing the surrender event.

Standard image:



Alt. text for standard image:

The McLean House is the building officially known as the site of Lee's surrender to Grant in Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

Caption for standard image:

Many visitors to Appomattox Court House National Historical Park expect to visit an actual court house as the site where Lee surrendered to Grant but the McLean House, a private residence at the time, is the actual location of that historical event.

Credit for standard image:

Appomattox Court House National Historical Park
<http://www.nps.gov/apco/index.htm>

Feature image:



Alt. text for feature image:

This painting shows the two generals and the two tables used as Grant drafted the terms of surrender document on one table and Lee signed it on another.

Surrender at Appomattox by Keith Rocco
(Appomattox Court House National Historical Park)

Link to an external location for this lesson plan:

Downloadable file (or pdf) for this lesson plan:

Duration:

30 minute NPS Ranger talk

Group Size:

Up to 24

Location:

McLean House

Learning Objectives:

The student will be able to comprehend the context of Lee's surrender at Appomattox

The student will know this was the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, not necessarily the end of the American Civil War

The student will be able to relate to the real life circumstances of Wilmer Mclean and the practicality of the use of his home for the surrender

The student will know the details of the surrender and the steps involved for both sides, including the terms of the surrender

The student will be able to describe the actual scenario of the surrender

The student will understand the usefulness of primary sources for the study of the social sciences

The student will be able to relate past to present concerning political, social, and economic issues

Background Information:

Students should demonstrate a general knowledge of the American Civil War before this lesson is taught. Students should show a proficient understanding of the reasons for the war, conditions for both sides, and battles prior to Appomattox. This lesson is made to take place at the surrender grounds; Appomattox Court House National Historical Park. Extension activities listed below can be employed as separate lessons, anticipatory sets, or closure activities in the classroom.

Major vocabulary introduced:

COURT HOUSE

COURTHOUSE

SURRENDER

FEDERAL

CONFEDERATE

CAVALRY

CIVILIAN

TERMS

PAROLE

Procedure step display:

Step

Procedure:

(Major vocabulary is in all caps)

- **Begin outside the McLean House, preferably on the road or under the tree**

(In this way, the interpreter may point and guide for directional references, as well as, the courthouse and surrounding village.)

- **Narration prior to moving group into McLean House:**

Say "Welcome to Appomattox Court House National Historical Park"

Explain the difference between COURT HOUSE and COURTHOUSE and describe the village as it was in that time period. It is not in the courthouse building that the meeting between Grant and Lee takes place but here at the McLean House. Only days before,

General Ulysses S. Grant, general in chief of all United States forces proposed an end to the hostilities by exchanging correspondences with General of the Army of Northern Virginia, Robert E. Lee. Lee had declined the offer but did inquire as to what the conditions would be.

Ask Q: “What do you think is going to push Lee to surrendering the Army of Northern Virginia?”

- **Recount the Days Prior the Grant-Lee Meeting (see attached)**

Introduce the McLean House as the official site of the SURRENDER of the Army of Northern Virginia to Federal troops beginning the end of the American Civil War. Emphasize this took place on April 9th 1865.

Ask Q: “Do you think this is the original structure?”

- **Describe the History of the McLean House (see attached)**
- **Lead group towards the McLean House, stopping to talk from the porch**
- **Tell Wilmer McLean story (see attached)**

Explain that the location for the meeting was to be decided by Lee who had Lieutenant Colonel Charles Marshall search for an adequate place. He encountered the CIVILIAN McLean who most likely showed him the empty Raine Tavern but as that was rejected, he offered his home.

Move the group into the house, present the parlor

Describe the scenario- Lee, arrived at 1:00 and waits in the parlor. Grant arrives at 1:30. Grant is wearing his battle uniform while Lee is in an immaculate dress uniform. The two generals partake in cordial conversation for about 25 minutes until Lee brings up the reason for their meeting. The TERMS of surrender will be documented which will include PAROLE of all the Confederate officers and enlisted men.

Ask Q: “What do you think will be the attitudes of the two generals?”

- **Narrate the surrender event (see attached)**
- **Conclude by asking for questions or comments**
- **Invite students to explore the rest of the house and grounds, including the kitchen house and slave quarters (McLean owned at least 6 slaves)**

Assessment:

On-site formative questioning and observation, optional summative assessment (quiz or project) upon returning to school

Park Connections:

Clarifying and validating the story of the surrender at Appomattox thus emphasizing the importance of preserving the surrender grounds and significance of Appomattox relative to American history

Extensions:

1. Imagine an alternate ending to the known Lee-Grant meeting and surrender. Describe what could have happened to America had the surrender not occurred by creating a differentiated product (illustration, written work, electronic program, three dimensional model, etc.) using viable facts and scenarios while showing an alternate outcome
2. Explore the changing economic conditions for nineteenth century Virginia- antebellum, wartime, and post war years using one of the following ideas for Project Based Learning (PBL):
 - a. Follow the Wilmer McLean story as a reference subject, using the *Wilmer McLean: the Centreville years* [sic] article and various websites. Students will research, gather, and organize information into presentable product, and display or present to show comprehension and competency of economic situation throughout the American Civil War, including pre and post war years.
 - b. Working in groups, students will research and record information for presenting to and ultimately teaching the rest of the class. Focus should be on the nineteenth century American South with some perspective comparing it to nineteenth century American North. Suggested group subject areas: economic state of the antebellum south, the changing economic situation during the war years, and economic conditions of the post-war South(For these PBL projects- utilize USA and VA maps for analysis and enhancement)
3. Primary source lesson for students to analyze photograph and document found at <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=103>
 - a. Analyze primary sources to describe the situation for America at the time of the American Civil War by creating differentiated product (illustration, written work, electronic program, three dimensional model, etc.)
4. Create time line; Research ideas different time lines- varying time allotments, subject matter, and complexity:
 - a. American Civil War to create simple time line of battles wins and losses
 - b. Conditions and strategies of both armies during the final days (evacuation of Richmond to Appomattox)
 - c. Biography of Wilmer McLean in relationship to the American Civil War

- d. Wilmer McLean story in relationship to changing economic conditions
 - e. Appomattox Court House village history not excluding importance of stage road, event of railroad (Appomattox station) development, American Civil War (utilize maps)
 - f. Lifestyle changes enslaved and free blacks (1700s to 1900s), including Emancipation Proclamation event and Civil Rights Movement
5. Create mini biographical piece focusing on their roles relative to the American Civil War for each of the following- Abraham Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, Ulysses S. Grant, Robert E. Lee, Thomas Stonewall Jackson, and Frederick Douglas. Ideas for presenting brief summaries:
 - a. Tombstones/ graveyard
 - b. Mini biography book/ photo album
 - c. Portrayals/ with props
 - d. Puppets/ skit or facts on the back (paper bag)
 6. Discover uniqueness of the American Civil War surrender by comparing and contrasting to other civil wars and their outcomes (number of wars or specifically which wars to research should be chosen by teacher). Students will research, chart information, and present and report for whole class roundtable discussion. The chart should consist of at least the following categories: place of civil war, time period and length of war, general description of causes, how it played out, and conclusion situation. Extra: map places.
 7. Primary source lesson for students to analyze (see attached)
General Robert E. Lee's Surrender; American Horace Porter was a young lieutenant colonel and aide-de-camp to Ulysses S. Grant, was a witness to the Grant-Lee meeting and surrender of which he included in a memoir entitled *Campaigning with Grant*, published in 1897. Have students answer analytical questions, create a written work, or perform a skit following the reading of the document.
 8. Create a political cartoon(s)- pre war, during the war, and/ or post war; present to the class with discussion
 9. Write a historical research paper; formulate a historical question and defend findings based on inquiry and interpretation
 10. Hold a debate relative to the American Civil War/ Civil Rights, Federal and state rights, conclusion of American Civil War, etc. Choose enduring issue, form sides, hold classroom debate

Additional Resources:

Appomattox Court House produced by the Division of Publications, Harpers Ferry Center, National Park Service; U.S. Department of the Interior Washington D.C. 2002

The Civil War- National Park Service
www.nps.gov/civilwar/

U.S. War Dept., *The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* Series 1, vol 2, Part 1 (First Manassas Campaign) (<http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/sources/recordView.cfm?Content=002/0001>), U.S. Government Printing Office, 1880- 1901.

April 1865: The Month That Saved America by Jay Winik, Harper Collins, New York

Civil War National Battlefield Parks www.virginia.org/CWNationalbattlefields/

Civil War Trust

www.civilwar.org/battlefields/appomattox-courthouse.html

History.com for videos and information

<http://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/appomattox-court-house>

Materials Introduction:

The following materials are to be used to accompany or enhance the lesson as tools to encourage historical thinking including analysis with an emphasis on historical perspective.

Materials details:

Material #1 Days Prior the Grant-Lee Meeting document to accompany lesson plan

Material #2 History of the McLean House document to accompany lesson plan

Material #3 The Wilmer McLean Story document to accompany lesson plan

Material #4 The Surrender Event document to accompany lesson plan

Material #5 From *Campaigning with Grant* by Horace Porter primary source activity (to be used with extension activity)

Material #6 *Our Documents* #39 "Articles of Agreement Relating to the Surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia," 1865. (to be used with extension activity)

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=103>

Applicable Subjects:

Civil War

Economics

Social Studies

United States History

Related Parks:

Antietam National Battlefield

Gettysburg National Military Park

Petersburg National Battlefield
Richmond National Battlefield Park

Minimum grade, maximum grade:

Fourth grade min
Twelfth grade max

Education Standards:

National-

NS 1 for History; Grades 5-12, Chronological Thinking A- G
NS 2 for History; Grades 5-12 Historical Comprehension A- H
NS 3 for History; Grades 5-12 Historical Analysis and Interpretation A, B, C, D, E
NS 4 for History; Grades 5-12 Historical Capabilities A, B, C, F
NS 5 for History; Grades 5-12 Historical Issues- Analysis and Decision-Making A, D, E

State-

VS 1a- 1i Essential Skills, VS 7a- c American Civil War
US1.1a, 1d, 1e, 1f, 1h, 1i Essential Skills, US1.9a-9f American Civil War
CE 1a, 1b, 1c Essential Skills, CE 11a, 11b, 11c Economics
VUS 1a, 1c, 1d, 1e, 1f, 1h, 1i Essential Skills, VUS 7a-f American Civil War
Govt. 1a, 1b, 1c, 1f, 1g Essential Skills
Govt. 11e Civil Rights, Govt. 14a Economics, Govt. 15c, 15d, 15e Economics

Applicable Keywords:

American Civil War
Appomattox
McLean House

The Days Prior the Grant-Lee Meeting

The following is a brief summary of the days leading to the surrender. General Lee evacuated Richmond and Petersburg on April 2 and 3 of 1865. The plan was to move to Amelia for supplies and then towards North Carolina to meet General Johnston's Army as he was heading north from there. However, no rations were to be had in Amelia and a day was wasted trying to find provisions. This enabled FEDERAL troops under the direction of Ulysses S. Grant, general in chief of all United States forces, to catch up to the CONFEDERATES and block their route southward.

The southern army then changed their plan to one that consisted of moving westward to Farmville for supplies. On April 6th Lee's cavalry prevented the destruction of High Bridge by fighting the Federal raiding party who was there to burn the bridge down. With the Federal army blocking the way, the Confederate retreat consisted of Union attacks and an urgency for the southern army to keep moving westward onto the Richmond- Lynchburg Stage Road.

Lee's objective at this point was to reach Appomattox Station for rations from Lynchburg. From Farmville, Grant sent a note asking Lee who was near Cumberland Church to surrender, but the Confederates were not ready to declare defeat. The Federal troops made their way south and west of Appomattox.

April 8th brought the Confederates a mile northeast of Appomattox Court House. The Confederate Cavalry was flanked around the Tibb's Place and the Federal Cavalry was on the Ridge. The people of the quaint little village of Appomattox Court House found themselves in the midst of a battle as one more attempt was made by the Confederates to break through and move southward. Confederate General Gordon attacked the Union CAVALRY blocking the stage road but this last battle proved unsuccessful for the southern army and Lee knew it was finally time to submit.

McLean House History

The McLean House had been the Raine tavern (obelisk in Park cemetery= Raine family cemetery). This tavern was in addition to another tavern in the village and so in time the building went up for sale and the family moved to Lynchburg. This was about the time Wilmer McLean was outing out feelers for property in the area and he discovered this property. In early 1862, McLean bought the house and property making it for the first time a residential home. The Raine Tavern was moved to the left when Wilmer and his family moved in.

After the surrender and due to economic problems, the home was sold at auction in 1867 to John L. Pascoe and probably rented to the Ragland family. The McLeans moved back to Manassas. In 1872, Nathaniel H. Ragland purchased the property for \$1250.00 and subsequently other single family owners owned the home throughout the years. It not until is 1891 that someone took interest in the building for its historic significance. Captain Myron Dunlap of Niagara Falls purchased the property for \$10,000.00. The plan of Dunlap and partners was to disassemble the home and move it to Washington D.C. to be set up for the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition.

Then the new plan was to measure all the house dimensions, record all the details, dismantle the home, and pack it up for exhibition on Washington D.C. but the move never happened and the dismantled home sat as junk for fifty years. Unfortunately, most of the wood was gone and locals helped themselves to most of the bricks so that by 1940 when the 970 acres called Appomattox Court House National Historical Monument was instituted and acquired much of the original home was gone.

In 1941, 84 years since the surrender (though it was put on hold during World War II) archaeological work was complete and reconstruction begun on what is now open to the public as the Appomattox County National Historical Park. In 1950 a dedication ceremony was held with direct descendants of the famous American Civil War generals, Major General U.S. Grant and Robert E. Lee IV, present to cut the ribbon.

The Wilmer McLean Story

It is said: "The American Civil War started in Wilmer McLean's front yard and ended in his front parlor." Wilmer McLean was making his living as a sugar broker supplying the Confederate States Army while living in Manassas, Virginia. McLean was a profiteer and as the middle man for a sugar blockading enterprise with his brother (in Cuba), he saw that having a train nearby would be good for his business. McLean made a lot of Confederate money off his own people but by the end of the war he would be broke.

At the First Battle of Bull Run in July of 1861 Union Army artillery apparently fired at McLean's house, even sending a cannonball through the kitchen fireplace while General Beauregard was staying there. However, to refer to the war as being fought in his front yard is somewhat of stretch since the fighting was approximately three miles away.

Two reasons seemed to motivate McLean to move south- one, his commercial activities were centered mostly in southern Virginia, and two, it seemed to be a safer option. Thus, in the spring of 1863, the McLean family moved to Appomattox Court House.

The Surrender Event

Other officers present for the North were Sheridan, Ord, and Captain Robert Todd Lincoln (the President's son). Other officers present for the South were Babcock and Marshall. Lieutenant Colonel Ely S. Parker (a Seneca Indian Chief) drafted the official copies of the terms Lee and Grant signed.

The terms: parole for all officers and enlisted men, all Confederate military equipment must be relinquished, though Grant agreed to Lee's request that soldiers may keep their horses or mules since they were privately owned. Grant also ordered 25,000 rations to be given from the Federal Army to the surrendered Confederate Army.

General Grant reflected President Lincoln's view and was compassionate and generous. Lee knew the best course to take for his men. The arms would be stacked and each Confederate soldier would be allowed to return to their home free of any harassment by Federal forces.

General Grant's staff prepared two drafts of the final document and Grant signed both. General Lee signed the letter Marshall had drafted. When the terms were drafted, signed, and exchanged the meeting ended. At approximately 3:00 in the afternoon, General Lee and General Grant shook hands. Lee returned the salutes to the Federal soldiers in the yard of the McLean House, mounted his horse Traveller, and slowly rode away. As he did so, Grant and the other Union officers removed their hats and Lee lifted his in acknowledgement of their sign of respect.

Both sides showed signs of relief and jubilation. Grant had his soldiers stop their 110-gun salute but there was still much shouting and rejoicing. Some of Lee's army showed anger but most seemed to find relief in the end of such an intense week of marching hungry and fighting weary. The attitudes of both generals are commendable; Lee asked all Confederate soldiers to resist turning to guerilla warfare and Grant asked his men to be humble, thus, The American Civil War was on its way to ending fairly uncomplicated.

April 10th consisted of the Surrender Commissioners' meeting inside the McLean House, as well as, setting up the Clover Hill tavern as the location of the printing presses for the parole passes. The Committee of six, three from each side, worked together and drew up a blueprint for the ceremonial stacking of the arms which would occur two days later. Approximately 21,000 to 22,000 Confederates took part in the ceremony. The presses printed 30,000 parole passes.

At approximately 10:00am, Grant and Lee met again as Grant requested Lee to assist in encouraging the rest of the Confederate Army to surrender. Lee responded that that was for President Davis to decide. This final meeting lasted about thirty minutes and the two remained mounted on their horses for that time.

Grant departed that day for Petersburg and Lee had General Order No.9 drafted, which he revised himself, and he stayed in the Appomattox area until April 12th.