

Name: _____

Date: _____

Surrender at Appomattox Court House

After four long years of war, the armies of both the Union and the Confederacy had lost thousands of men. During a ten-month siege of Richmond, Virginia, the capital of the Confederacy, supplies for the Confederate troops became scarce. Many were ill. Thousands deserted. Finally on the night of April 2, 1865, General Lee ordered his troops to retreat west across the James River. Union troops took Richmond and continued a running battle with the rear guard of the retreating troops.

General Lee and his disheartened troops expected to find food waiting at the village of Amelia Courthouse. There they found military supplies, but no food. They continued retreating.

General Grant realized that if he continued to push his advantage, there was a good chance General Lee would surrender. President Lincoln agreed and gave the order to proceed.

For six days, Lee's men continued to fight as they fled west 90 miles. When they arrived at the small village of Appomattox Court House, they again discovered supplies of food had not arrived.

Virginia Colonel Magnus Thompson described the troops: "The few men who still carried their muskets had hardly the appearance of soldiers—their clothes all tattered and covered with mud, their eyes sunken and lusterless ..."

General Grant sent a message under a flag of truce offering to accept Lee's surrender. On April 9, 1865, General Robert E. Lee sent his reply: "I received your note this morning ... with references to the surrender of this army. I now request an interview in accordance with ... that purpose."

Grant ordered an immediate cease-fire. The two generals met in the front parlor of a two-story brick farmhouse. According to the terms of the agreement, General Lee surrendered all men and officers and all arms, ammunition, and supplies except the horses and mules that were the personal property of the soldiers.

General Lee offered to return about 1,000 Union soldiers who were being held as prisoners of war because he had no food to feed them. Grant accepted his offer and then sent beef, bread, coffee, and sugar to feed the Confederate troops.

When Union soldiers began firing cannon salutes to celebrate the end of the war, General Grant ordered all loud celebrations ended. "The war is over, the rebels are our countrymen again," he told them.

On your own paper, describe how you think Lee felt when he was forced to surrender.

