

Lee and Grant

Teaching Materials
Virginia Historical Society

Exhibition on display October 20, 2007 – March 31, 2008



Let us Have Peace by Jean Leon Gerome Ferris (Virginia Historical Society)

I. Introduction

To many Americans, generals Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee have come to represent the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War. The reputations of both men were made by the war. Before the Civil War, Lee was an army officer who, over the course of his thirty-year career, had risen to the rank of colonel. Grant was a retired soldier who was an unsuccessful farmer and businessman before becoming a clerk in the family dry-goods business. The war would make legends of both men.

As you go through the exhibition, we ask you to compare and contrast the lives of Lee and Grant.

From the Introduction, write down:

3 things to remember about Lee:

1.

2.

3.

3 things to remember about Grant:

1.

2.

3.

II. Before the War

Robert E. Lee was born at Stratford Hall in Virginia in 1807. His father Henry “Light-Horse Harry” Lee was a soldier in George Washington’s army, a patriot leader, and a governor of Virginia. Despite the family’s prominence, Henry Lee fell into debt. The Lees moved to Alexandria. Robert E. Lee’s mother, Ann Carter Lee, was deeply religious and instilled in her son an abiding faith and strong sense of duty.

Ulysses S. Grant was born Hiram Ulysses Grant in Point Pleasant, Ohio, in 1822, fifteen years after Lee’s birth. His father, Jesse Grant, was a tanner who “had a thirst for education [that] was intense.” (A tanner is someone who treats animal hides and works with leather.) Grant’s mother, Hannah Simpson Grant, was a devout Methodist.

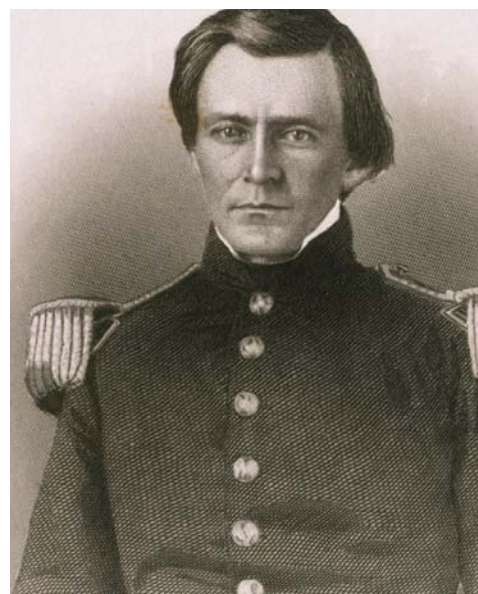
Like Lee, Grant attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and served in the army after graduation. Unlike Lee, he did not excel in school. Lee graduated second in his class and later went on to serve as superintendent of the academy. Grant was an average student but an excellent horseman.

During the Mexican War, both Lee and Grant served under General Winfield Scott. Grant was a quartermaster; Lee was an engineer. Both carefully observed their commanders, Scott and Zachary Taylor. Both were shocked by the carnage of combat.

After the Mexican War, Grant remained in the army until 1854. Then, he worked as a farmer and real estate agent before entering the family dry-goods business in Galena, Illinois. (A dry-goods business is one that deals in clothing and fabric.) Lee remained in the army, transferring to the cavalry and going to Texas. In 1859, he led a contingent of U.S. Marines and captured John Brown at Harpers Ferry, Virginia.



Robert E. Lee, 1838 (*Washington and Lee University*)



Ulysses S. Grant at age 21 (*Virginia Historical Society*)

1807	Lee born at Stratford Hall, Virginia
1822	Grant born at Point Pleasant, Ohio
1825–1829	Lee attended West Point.
1831	Lee married Mary Anna Randolph Custis, the daughter of George Washington Parke Custis, the adopted grandson of George Washington. The couple had seven children.
1839–1843	Grant attended West Point. His name was changed to Ulysses S. Grant.
1852	Grant married Julia Dent, the daughter of Frederick Dent, a merchant who later purchased a thousand-acre plantation in Missouri. The couple had four children
1846–1848	Lee and Grant served in the Mexican War
1854	Grant resigned from the army. He became a farmer.
1859	Lee commanded the assault on the firehouse at Harpers Ferry and captured John Brown.

From “Before the War,” write down:

4 things to remember about Lee:

1.

2.

3.

4.

4 things to remember about Grant:

1.

2.

3.

4.

III. Civil War

On June 1, 1862, Robert E. Lee assumed command of the Confederate forces fighting Union general George B. McClellan’s army near Richmond. Lee forced McClellan to retreat in a series of battles known as the Seven Days. Over the next year, Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia won victories at Second Manassas, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville, earning a reputation for invincibility. However, at the battle of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania, on July 1–3, 1863, Lee was defeated and forced to retreat.

In early 1862, Grant captured Forts Henry and Donelson on the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers. In April, he led Union forces to a bloody victory at the battle of Shiloh. Union strategy called for dividing the Confederacy by seizing control of the Mississippi River. In 1863, Grant accomplished this by capturing the town of Vicksburg, Mississippi. Vicksburg fell on July 4, the day Lee began his retreat from Gettysburg.

In March 1864, Grant assumed command of all the Union armies and transferred to Virginia. Over the next year, Lee and Grant fought a series of costly battles that took both armies from the banks of the Rappahannock River, south to Petersburg, and then west to Appomattox. Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865.



Study for the Lee Cyclorama at Gettysburg, c. 1884 (Chicago Historical Society)

April 1861	Lee turned down command of the Union Army and resigned his commission in the United States Army
February 1862	fall of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson
April 1862	battle of Shiloh (Pittsburg Landing)
June 1862	Lee took command of the Army of Northern Virginia
May–June 1862	Seven Days' Battles
August 1862	battle of Second Manassas (Bull Run)
September 1862	battle of Antietam (Sharpsburg)
December 1862	battle of Fredericksburg
May 1863	battle of Chancellorsville
July 1863	battle of Gettysburg
July 1863	fall of Vicksburg
April 1864	Wilderness Campaign
May 1864	Spotsylvania Campaign
June 1864	battle of Cold Harbor
June 1864–April 1865	siege of Petersburg
April 1865	Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Court House

From this section on the Civil War, write down:

4 things to remember about Lee:

1.

2.

3.

4.

4 things to remember about Grant:

1.

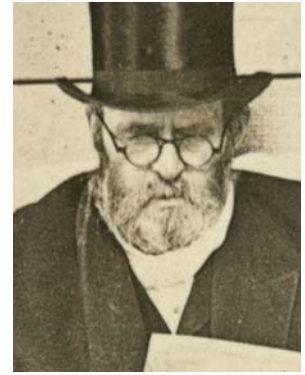
2.

3.

4.

IV. After the War

After the Civil War, Robert E. Lee was a voice for peace and reconciliation. He was named president of Washington College in Lexington, Virginia. As president, he expanded the curriculum to include additional classes in science and agriculture. The school was later renamed Washington and Lee University in his honor. He died in Lexington on October 12, 1870, at the age of sixty-three.



Left: Robert E. Lee, c. 1870 (*Virginia Historical Society*)
Right: Ulysses S. Grant, 1885 (*New York Historical Society*)

In 1868, Ulysses S. Grant was elected president of the United States. His campaign slogan was, “Let us have peace,” and he pressed for civil rights for African Americans. Grant’s two terms coincided with the period known as “Congressional Reconstruction.” Although he was not personally involved in any corruption, many in his administration were, and his second term in particular was marked by scandal. He died in New York City on July 23, 1885, at the age of sixty-three.

- 1865 Lee became president of Washington College
- 1866 Lee testified before Congress’s Joint Committee on Reconstruction
- 1868 Grant elected president of the United States
- 1870 Lee died in Lexington on October 12
- 1872 Grant re-elected president
- 1873 Financial panic and depression
- 1885 Grant published two-volume *Personal Memoirs* that became immediate best-seller
- 1885 Grant died in New York on July 23

From the “After the War” section, write down:

4 things to remember about Lee:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

4 things to remember about Grant:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Fill in the circles below. In the shaded area, write six things that Lee and Grant had in common. These may be items you have included on your lists or may be other characteristics that you think were shared by Lee and Grant.

A Venn diagram consisting of two overlapping circles. The area where the two circles overlap is shaded light gray. There are 11 horizontal lines for writing, numbered 1 through 11 from top to bottom. Lines 1 through 6 are located in the unshaded area of the left circle. Lines 7 through 11 are located in the unshaded area of the right circle. Lines 1 through 6 are also present in the shaded intersection area.