



Magnanimity, Gratitude, and Terms of Surrender in the Civil War - A Primary Source Analysis

Below are the terms of surrender offered by Ulysses S. Grant to Robert E. Lee at Appomattox Courthouse, VA on April 9, 1865.

Ulysses S. Grant to Robert E. Lee Appomattox Court-House, Virginia April 9, 1865.

General: In accordance with the substance of my letter to you of the 8th instant, I propose to receive the surrender of the army of Northern Virginia on the following terms, to wit: Rolls of all the officers and men to be made in duplicate, one copy to be given to an officer to be designated by me, the other to be retained by such officer or officers as you may designate. The officers to give their individual paroles not to take up arms against the government of the United States until properly exchanged; and each company or regimental commander to sign a like parole for the men of their commands. The arms, artillery, and public property to be parked and stacked, and turned over to the officers appointed by me to receive them. This will not embrace the side-arms of the officers nor their private horses or baggage. This done, each officer and man will be allowed to return to his home, not to be disturbed by United States authority so long as they observe their paroles and the laws in force where they may reside.

U.S. Grant, Lieutenant-General. General R. E. Lee.

Robert E. Lee to Ulysses S. Grant Head-Quarters, Army of Northern Virginia April 9, 1865.

General: I received your letter of this date containing the terms of the surrender of the army of Northern Virginia, as proposed by you. As they are substantially the same as those expressed in your letter of the 8th instant, they are accepted. I will proceed to designate the proper officers to carry the stipulations into effect.

General Grant chose to be generous in victory. Do you think this was the right choice? Write about what his actions teach us about leadership, forgiveness, or grace. You may also share a time in your own life (or a story you know) when someone chose to be kind instead of vengeful. Write your response on the next page

