

THIS WAS THE CIVIL WAR

Robert E. Lee Joins the South

By MERTON T. AKERS
UPI Correspondent

The man on the railroad platform at Alexandria, Va., waiting for a Richmond train on Monday morning, April 22, 1861, wore a high silk hat and neat civilian dress, but he stood erect with a bearing that bespoke military service.

At 54, Robert Edward Lee was starting a new career, and starting it with a heavy heart. Two days before he had cut the ties of a quarter of a century by resigning his commission as lieutenant colonel in the U. S. Army.

His had been a brilliant career — honor cadet at West Point, later its superintendent; engineering genius of the Mexican War who had won the plaudits of Gen. Winfield Scott; a man "worth 50,000 soldiers" and whose life should be insured by the government for \$5 million a year, Scott said. For all that, his salary in that quarter-century never was more than \$1,024 a year.

Family Rich in Heritage
Lee was 5 feet, 11 inches tall. His trunk and head gave the impression of massiveness. In April '61 he wore a dark mustache, his brown hair was graying, but the silver was noticeable only a few feet away. The beard, which every school boy knows, he grew in future campaigning.

He came to the station that morning from Arlington Hall, a many-pillared mansion atop a hill across the Potomac from Washington and crammed with relics of George Washington. To that house, which he never would know again as home, he had come courting Mary Ann Randolph Curtis, a daughter of Washington's adopted son and an heiress.

He was a son of one of Washington's generals, Light Horse Harry Lee. He had been

born to the Virginia purple not far away at Stratford Hall. His forebears had helped to forge the nation with Jefferson, Henry, Franklin and Madison. But the Lees had fallen on bad times and when young Robert paid court to Mary it was as a sultor rich in heritage and poor in purse.

Lee had come to Washington in March from Texas where he was lieutenant colonel of the 2nd Cavalry, so-called "Confederate cadre" because it was organized by Jefferson Davis when he was secretary of war and contained a heavy percentage of southern officers.

Decision Is Difficult
The Union was breaking up. Many army officers were resigning and going South. Lee had to make up his mind. He went to see old Francis P. Blair, who lived in the Blair House on Pennsylvania Ave. in Washington and whose public services dated back to the Jacksonian era. The meeting was at Blair's request and occurred April 18, 1861. Blair offered to Lee, on President Lincoln's behalf, command of the Union armies then beginning to take shape. Lee withheld his answer, went to see his old friend, Gen. Scott, and rode back to Arlington.

The next night in his own room he made his decision. Mrs. Lee heard him pace the floor and at last drop to his knees in prayer.

After midnight he came down and showed her a letter to Gen. Scott resigning his commission in which he said: "Save in defense of my native state, I never desire again to draw my sword."

Named Major General
Lee was no secessionist. He was against slavery, believing it hurt the masters more than the slaves. But he had a deep

loyalty to his state, a common trait of the day.

The next day, Sunday after church, Lee met three strange men, presumably messengers from Richmond. On Monday he was ready to go to Richmond.

Mrs. Lee, a chronic sufferer from arthritis, remained at Arlington and began to box the Washington mementoes to send deep into Virginia, for Arlington was in sight of the White House and a prime federal target.

That evening in Richmond Gov. John Letcher made Lee a major general commanding all the state's forces. (The state's "arsenal" at the moment consisted of 60,000 muskets, 54,000 of them flintlocks, and 200 kegs of powder.)

Lee had no more than sat down at his desk in his one-room office when a delegation invited him to appear before the secession convention. There the convention president, John Janney, eulogized him in language even more flowery than was common in that day.

"Yesterday, your mother, Virginia, placed her sword in your hand . . . we know . . . you will draw it only in her defense, and that you will fall with it in your hand rather than that the object for which it was placed there shall fall," Janney said.

Lee replied briefly, "I would have much preferred had your choice fallen on an able man," and accepted the trust.

Order From Chaos
The ceremony over, Lee saw Vice President Alexander H. Stephens of the Confederacy who was concerned over Lee's rank. The Confederacy at the time offered no rank above brigadier general. Virginia technically was not yet a member of the Confederacy. There might be a clash of ranks. Lee understood and told Stephens not to worry, that his rank would not be allowed to interfere. In a few days Virginia gave the Confederacy control of its military forces.

Lee assembled a small staff, one of them, John Washington, great nephew of Gen. Washington, and started out to bring order out of the military chaos. His time was limited. A federal invasion could be expected anytime after May 23, the date when the state would vote on secession, already an accomplished fact. He shored up the defenses of the lower James river, the water gateway to Richmond and where the federals still held Fortress Monroe. He sent rapidly gathering military companies to Harper's Ferry and to Manassas to protect the northern line.

Grant Seeks Appointment
Soon after the Confederacy took over he had the military situation as well in hand as was possible amid the confusion. Also by that time another army man — an ex-captain — was writing to the adjutant general in Washington looking for a job.

"Having served 15 years in the Regular Army, including four years at West Point, and feeling it the duty of every one who has been educated at government expense to offer their services . . . I have the honor, very respectfully, to tender my services, until the close of the war, in such a capacity as may be offered."

The letter was signed "U. S. Grant." He thought he was competent to be a colonel, he wrote.

Lee would surrender to this U. S. Grant, a lieutenant general, just four years and many battles later. Grant would rise one rank at a time, starting at the level of his own estimation, colonel, but in the service of the State of Illinois, not the Regular Army. He went to the post office every day for a month for the answer that never came.

His letter was found in a War Department pigeon hole only after Grant became President and had it searched out.

Pearson, Barton 'Most Effective'

Salem — (UPI) — Sen. Walter J. Pearson (D-Portland) and Rep. Clarence Barton (D-Coquille) have been judged the two most effective members of the 1961 legislature in a poll of the legislative press corps.

The poll, conducted by the Oregon Statesman, gave Pearson six votes for most effective senator and Barton four votes for most effective representative.

Others, in order, were Sen. Anthony Yturri (R-Ontario), Speaker Robert Duncan (D-Medford), Senate President Harry Boivin (D-Klamath Falls). Mention went to Reps. George Layman (R-Newberg), Victor Aithey (R-Portland), F. F. Montgomery (R-Eugene) and William Holmstrom (D-Gearhart).

Library Services For Senior Citizens Reviewed in County

Special library services to senior citizens and other privileges for library patrons have been reviewed during National Library week by spokesmen of the Public Library of Medford and Jackson county.

Senior citizens, persons at least 65 years old, may now have books mailed to them

free, as well as be provided with materials to return the books by mail postage-paid. Books not returned within the two-week loan period will automatically be renewed.

Telephone renewals are also accepted, according to library officials. Books may be requested by telephone, by mail, or in person either by senior citizens or by someone else for a senior citizen.

Book lists are to be prepared regularly and distributed to the senior citizens. In addition, a brochure listing information concerning this service is to be distributed by local groups interested in the problems of senior citizens.

Persons at least 65 years of age wishing to take advantage of this library service should contact the library for additional information. Included in the services of the local library is an ever-increasing record collection. Records also are being accu-

mulated so branch libraries throughout the county will have records shelved.

A union catalogue with the Ashland library has recently been completed, making available to users of both libraries volumes listed only by one of the libraries.

Although the Medford-system withdrawal cards have been honored for several months in Ashland, for the first time in several years a free interchange of borrowing privileges is being resumed at the Rogue River branch.

Library personnel have reminded residents that volumes not in the county libraries may be obtained by the Medford library from the Oregon State library. Requests of this type are filled without charge.

Book patrons may also borrow or return books to any branch in the county.

Portland — (UPI) — Three escapees from the MacLaren School for Boys near Woodburn were apprehended here Saturday night.

Portland police brought the boys into custody. The youths, one 15 and two 16-years-old, were in possession of a car stolen at North Bend Saturday morning.

They escaped from MacLaren April 14. Police said they found two revolvers and a hunting knife in the car's glove compartment.

Portland — (UPI) — Bill Hauck's "Flying A" service station slashed regular gasoline prices to 16.9 cents a gallon Friday. The price was still in effect today with business picking up.

Hauck said he took the action to "shock" dealers to end the current gas price war being waged here.

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Bread NEW Skylark Western Farms large loaf 35¢
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Cigarettes Your favorite Filter or King Size Ctn. \$1.79

Ice Milk Lucerne Frozen Dessert 1/2 gal. 49¢
Coffee Nob Hill Ground fresh 2 lbs. \$1.00 at the store.
Beef-Noodle Soup Wyler's Mix 2-oz. pkg. 10¢
Reddi-Whip Instant Topping 6-oz. can 59¢
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FAMOUS KRAFT SALAD DRESSINGS
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Casino French Dressing 8-oz. bottle 39¢
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Roka Blue 8-oz. 45¢ Low Calorie French 8-oz. 43¢

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