

American History

Assignment 14

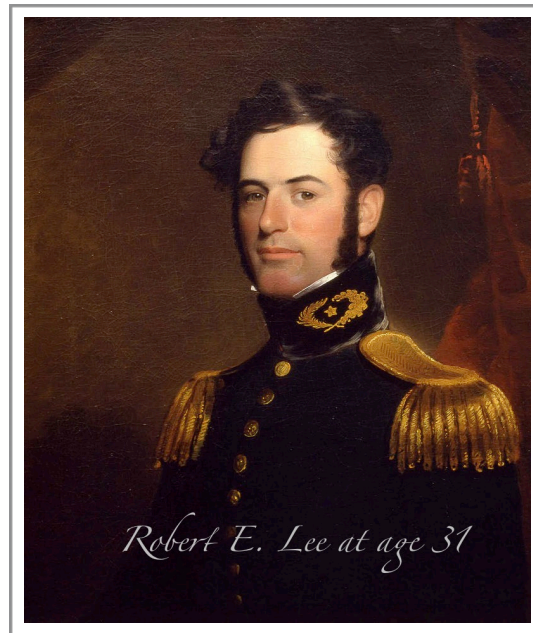
- Read Abraham Lincoln's First Inaugural Address and be ready to answer the study guide questions. The document may be found on the online assignment page under "Materials Needed."
- Study and read Chapter 16 in Abeka, "The Civil War."
- Take the third unit test posted online. *Please review the **skills that you are tested on when readers examine your DBQ**. Look at pages 7–9 of the College Board AP booklet.*
- Be ready to answer questions on the Ellis book next week.
- Read the account of Robert E. Lee written by his son (below).

Long-Range Project

- Again, I welcome any more students interested in singing either "**Tippecanoe and Tyler Too**" or "**Hail Columbia**." for extra credit on the next unit test. Next week is your last chance!

Robert E. Lee: a Boy's Impressions (Adapted)

The first strong memory I have of my father is his arrival in Arlington, after his return from the Mexican War. I can remember some events of which he seemed a part, when we lived at Fort Hamilton, New York, about 1846, but they are more like dreams, very cloudy and disconnected. This is natural, as I was at that time about three years old. But I have always remembered the day of his return to Arlington, after he had been away for more than two years. I had a frock or blouse of some light wash material, probably cotton, a blue ground dotted over with white diamond figures. I was very proud of this, and wanted to wear it on this important occasion. Eliza, my "mammy," said no and we had a contest. I won. Clothed in this, my very best, and with my hair freshly curled in long golden ringlets, I went down



into the large hall where the whole household was gathered, eagerly greeting my father, who had just arrived on horseback from Washington.

There was visiting us at this time Mrs. Lippitt, a friend of my mother's. With her was her little boy, Armistead, about my age and size, also with long curls. I cannot remember whether he wore as handsome a suit as mine, but he and I were left together in the background, feeling rather frightened and awed. After a moment's greeting to those surrounding him, my father pushed through the crowd, exclaiming, "Where is my little boy?"

He then took up in his arms and kissed—not me his own child, in his best frock with clean face and well-arranged curls—but my little playmate, Armistead. I remember nothing more connected with that time except that I was shocked and humiliated. I have no doubt that my father was immediately told of his mistake and more than made it up to me.

My next memory of my father is in Baltimore, while we were visiting his sister, Mrs. Marshall, the wife of Judge Marshall. I remember being down on the wharves, where my father had taken me to see the landing of a mustang pony which he had gotten for me in Mexico. The pony had been shipped from Vera Cruz to Baltimore in a sailing vessel. I was all eyes for the pony, and a very miserable, sad-looking thing he was. From his long voyage, cramped quarters, and lack of grooming, he was rather a disappointment to me. But I soon got over all that. As I grew older, and was able to ride and appreciate him, he became the joy and pride of my life. Jim Connally, a faithful Irish servant of my father who had been with my father in Mexico, taught me to ride him. Often he used to tell me in his odd way that he and "Santa Anna" (the pony's name) were the first men on the walls of Chapultepec. This pony was pure white, five years old, and about fourteen hands high. For his inches, he was as good a horse as I ever have seen. While we lived in Baltimore, he and "Grace Darling," my father's favorite mare, were members of our family.

Grace Darling was a large and powerful chestnut that my father had bought in Texas on his way out to Mexico. Her owner had died on the march out. She was with him during the entire campaign, and was shot seven times. At least, as a little fellow I used to brag about that number of bullets being in her, and since I could point out the scars of each one, I believe it was true. My father was very much attached to and proud of her. He always pet her and talked to her in a loving way when he rode her or went to see her in her stall. Santa Anna was found lying cold and dead in

the park of Arlington one morning in the winter of 1860-1861. Grace Darling was taken in the spring of 1862 from the White House by some Federal quartermaster, when McClellan occupied that place as his base of supplies during his attack on Richmond.

When we lived in Baltimore, I was greatly struck one day by hearing two ladies who were visiting us saying, "Everybody and everything—his family, his friends, his horse, and his dog—loves Colonel Lee." The dog referred to was a black-and-tan terrier named "Spec." She was very intelligent and really a member of the family, respected and beloved by ourselves and well known to all who knew us. My father picked up her mother in the "Narrows" while crossing from Fort Hamilton to the fortifications opposite on Staten Island. She had doubtless fallen overboard from some passing vessel and had drifted out of sight before it was discovered she was not there. He rescued her and took her home, where his children welcomed and made much of her. She was a handsome little thing, with cropped ears and a short tail. My father named her "Dart." She was a fine rat-catcher, and with the assistance of a Maltese cat, also a member of the family, the many rats which infested the house and stables were driven away or destroyed. She and the cat were fed out of the same plate, but Dart was not allowed to begin the meal until the cat had finished.

Spec was born at Fort Hamilton, and was the joy of us children, our pet and companion. My father would not allow his tail and ears to be cropped. When he grew up, he went with us everywhere and was in the habit of going into church with the family. Some of the little ones allowed their devotions to be disturbed by Spec's presence. My father determined, then, to leave him at home on those occasions. So the next Sunday morning he was sent up to the front room of the second story. After the family left for church he contented himself for a while looking out of the window, which was open, it being summer time. Soon impatience overcame his judgment and he jumped to the ground, landed safely despite the distance, joined the family just as they reached the church, and went in with them as usual, much to the joy of the children. After that he was allowed to go to church whenever he wished. My father was very fond of him, and loved to talk to him and about him as if he were really one of us.

When my father returned to Arlington from Mexico, Spec was the first to recognize him. He was very obviously delighted and left no doubt that he immediately knew his kind master and loving friend, though he had been away for three years. Sometime during our stay in Baltimore, Spec disappeared, and we never knew what happened to him.

From that early time I began to be impressed with my father's character, as compared with other men. Every member of the household respected, revered, and loved him as a matter of course. But it began to dawn on me that everyone else I associated with also held him high in their regard. At forty-five years of age he was active, strong, and as handsome as he had ever been. I never remember his being ill. I guess he was indisposed at times, but no impressions of that kind remain. He was always bright and gay with us little folk—romping, playing, and joking with us. With the older children, he was just as companionable, and I have seen him join my elder brothers and their friends when they would try their powers at a high jump put up in our yard. The two younger children he petted a great deal, and our greatest treat was to get into his bed in the morning and lie close to him, listening while he talked to us in his bright, entertaining way. This custom we kept up until I was ten years old and over. Although he was so joyous and familiar with us, he was very firm on all proper occasions, never indulged us in anything that was not good for us, and demanded complete obedience. I always knew that it was impossible to disobey my father. I felt it in me, I never thought why, but was perfectly sure when he gave an order that it had to be obeyed. My mother I could sometimes get around, and at times was free with her orders, construing them to suit myself. But exact obedience to my father's every command was a part of my life and being at that time.

In January, 1849, Captain Lee was one of a board of army officers appointed to examine the coasts of Florida and its defenses, and to recommend locations for new fortifications. In April he was assigned to the duty of the construction of Fort Carroll, in the Patapsco River, below Baltimore. He was there, I think, for three years, and lived in a house on Madison Street, three doors above Biddle. I used to go down with him to the Fort quite often. We went to the wharf in a "bus," and there we were met by a boat with two oarsmen, who rowed us down to Sellers Point, where I was generally left under the care of the people who lived there, while my father went over to the Fort, a short distance out in the river.

These days were very happy ones for me. The wharves, the shipping, the river, the boat and oarsmen, and the country dinner we had at the house at Sellers Point, all made a strong impression on me. But above all I remember my father—his gentle, loving care for me, his bright talk, his stories, his maxims and teachings. I was very proud of him and of the evident respect for and trust in him every one showed. The impressions that I received at that time have never left me. He was a great favorite in Baltimore, as he was everywhere, especially with ladies and little children. When he and my mother went out in the evening to some entertainment, we were often allowed to sit up and see them off. My father, as I remember, always in full uniform, always ready and waiting for my mother, who was generally late. He would then chide her gently, in a playful way and with a bright smile. He would then bid us good-bye, and I would go to sleep with this beautiful picture on my mind, the golden epaulets and all—chiefly the epaulets.

In Baltimore, I went to my first school run by a man named Mr. Rollins on Mulberry Street. I remember how interested my father was in my studies, my failures, and my little triumphs. Indeed, he was always interested, as long as I was at school and college. I only wish that all of the kind, sensible, useful letters he had written me had been preserved.

My memory of the move from Baltimore, which occurred in 1852, is very dim. I think the family went to Arlington to remain until my father had arranged for our move to the new home at West Point.

My memory of my father as Superintendent of the West Point Military Academy is much more clear. He lived in the house which is still occupied by the Superintendent. It was built of stone, large and roomy, with gardens, stables, and pasture lots. We, the two youngest children, enjoyed it all. Grace Darling and Santa Anna were with us, and many a fine ride did I have with my father in the afternoons, when, released from his office, he would mount his old mare and, with Santa Anna carrying me by his side, take a five or ten-mile trot.

My father was the most punctual man I ever knew. He was always ready for family prayers, for meals, and met every engagement, social or business, at the moment. He expected all of us to be the same, and taught us the use and necessity of forming such habits for the convenience of all concerned. I never knew him late for Sunday service at the Post Chapel. He used to appear some minutes before the rest of us, in uniform, jokingly

rallying my mother for being late, and for forgetting something at the last moment. When he could wait no longer for her, he would say that he was off, and would march along to church by himself or with any of the children who were ready. There he sat very straight, well up the middle aisle, and, as I remember, he always became very sleepy, and sometimes even took a little nap during the sermon. At that time, this drowsiness of my father's was something awful to me, unexplainable. I know it was very hard for me to keep awake, and often I did not. But why he, who to my mind could do everything that was right without any effort, should sometimes be overcome, I could not understand, and did not try to do so.

It was against the rules that the cadets should go beyond certain limits without permission. Of course they did go sometimes, and when they were caught, they were given quite a number of "demerits." One afternoon my father and I went out riding. While we rounded a turn in the mountain road with a deep woody ravine on one side, we came suddenly upon three cadets far beyond the limits. They immediately leaped over a low wall on the side of the road, and disappeared from our view. We rode on for a minute in silence; then my father said, "Did you know those young men? But no; if you did, don't say so. I wish boys would do what is right. It would be so much easier for all parties!"

He knew he would have to report them, but, since he was not sure who they were, I presume he wished to give them the benefit of the doubt. At any rate, I never heard any more about it. One of the three asked me next day if my father had recognized them, and I told him what had happened.

By this time I had become old enough to have a room to myself. To encourage me in being useful and practical, my father made me take care of it just as the cadets had to do with their quarters in barracks and in camp. He at first even went through the form of inspecting it, to see if I had done my duty properly. I think I enjoyed this until the novelty wore off. However, I was kept at it, becoming in time very good at it, and the knowledge so acquired has been of great use to me all through life.

My father always encouraged me in every healthy outdoor exercise and sport. He taught me to ride, constantly giving me minute instructions, with the reasons for them. He gave me my first sled, and sometimes used to come out where we boys were coasting to look on. He gave me my first pair of skates, and placed me in the care of a trustworthy person, inquiring regularly how I progressed. It was the same with swimming,

which he was very anxious I should learn in a proper manner. Professor Bailey had a son about my age, now himself a professor of Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, who became my great chum. I took my first lesson in the water with him, under the direction and supervision of his father. My father inquired constantly how I was getting along, and made me describe exactly my method and stroke, explaining to me what he considered the best way to swim, and the reasons for it.

I went to a day school at West Point, and had always a sympathetic helper in my father. Often he would come into my room where I studied at night, and, sitting down by me, would show me how to overcome a hard sentence in my Latin reader or a difficult sum in arithmetic, not by giving me the translation of the troublesome sentence or the answer to the sum, but by showing me, step by step, the way to the right answers. He was very patient, very loving, very good to me, and I remember trying my best to please him in my studies. When I was able to bring home a good report from my teacher, he was greatly pleased, and showed it in his eye and voice. But he always insisted that I should get the "maximum," that he would never be perfectly satisfied with less. I did sometimes win it, deservedly, but I know it was due to his wise method of exciting my ambition and perseverance.

As Superintendent of the Military Academy at West Point my father had to entertain a good deal. I remember well how handsome and grand he looked in uniform, how friendly and bright, how considerate of everybody's comfort of mind and body. He was always a great favorite with the ladies, especially the young ones. His fine presence, his gentle, courteous manners and kindly smile put them at once at ease with him.

Among the cadets at this time were my eldest brother, Custis, who graduated first in his class in 1854, and my father's nephew, Fitz Lee, a third classman, besides other relatives and friends. Since Saturday was a half-holiday for the cadets, it was the custom for all social events in which they were to take part to be placed on that afternoon or evening. Nearly every Saturday a number of these young men were invited to our house to tea, or supper, for it was a good, substantial meal. The misery of some of these lads, owing to embarrassment, possibly from awe of the Superintendent, was pitiable and evident even to me, a boy of ten or twelve years old. But as soon as my father got command, as it were, of the situation, one could see how quickly most of them were put at their ease.

He would put himself to the task of making them feel comfortable and at home, and his friendly manner and pleasant ways at once succeeded.

In the spring of 1853 my grandmother, Mrs. Custis, died. This was the first death in our immediate family. She was very dear to us, and was admired, esteemed, and loved by all who had ever known her.

At this time, my father's family and friends persuaded him to allow R. S. Weir, Professor of Painting and Drawing at the Academy, to paint his portrait. As far as I remember, there was only one sitting, and the artist had to finish it from memory or from the glimpses he obtained of his subject in the regular course of their daily lives at "The Point." This picture shows my father in the undress uniform of a Colonel of Engineers, and many think it a very good likeness. To me, the expression of strength peculiar to his face is lacking, and the mouth fails to portray that sweetness of disposition that his face had. Still, it was like him at that time. My father never could bear to have his picture taken, and there are no likenesses of him that really give his sweet expression. Sitting for a picture was such a serious business with him that he never could "look pleasant."

In 1855 my father was appointed as lieutenant-colonel of the Second Cavalry, one of the two regiments just raised. He left West Point to enter upon his new duties, and his family went to Arlington to live. During the fall and winter of 1855 and 1856, the Second Cavalry was recruited and organized at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, under the direction of Colonel Lee, and in the following spring was marched to western Texas, where it was assigned the duty of protecting the settlers in that wild country.

I did not see my father again until he came to my mother at Arlington after the death of her father, G. W. P. Custis, in October, 1857. He took charge of my mother's estate after her father's death, and began at once to put it in order. This was not an easy task, as it consisted of several plantations and many negroes. I was at a boarding school after the family returned to Arlington, and saw my father only during the holidays if he happened to be at home. He was always fond of farming, and took great interest in the improvements he immediately began at Arlington relating to the cultivation of the farm, to the buildings, roads, fences, fields, and stock, so that in a very short time the appearance of everything on the estate was improved. He often said that he longed for the time when he could have a farm of his own, where he could end his days in quiet and

peace, interested in the care and improvement of his own land. This idea was always with him.

About this time I was given a gun of my own, and was allowed to go shooting by myself. My father, to give me an incentive, offered a reward for every crow-scalp I could bring him. In order that I might get to work at once, he gave me a small sum in advance so that I could buy powder and shot. I would then return that loan of money from the first scalps I got. My industry and zeal were great, my hopes high, and by good luck I did succeed in bagging two crows about the second time I went out. With great pride I showed them to my father, saying in so many words that I would shortly be able to return him his loan, and that he must be ready to hand over to me very soon further rewards for my skill. His eyes twinkled, and his smile showed that he had strong doubts of my making an income by killing crows. He was right, for I never killed another, though I tried hard and long.

I saw little of my father after we left West Point. He went to Texas, as I have said, in 1855 and remained until the fall of 1857, the time of my grandfather's death. He was then at Arlington about a year. He then returned to his regiment and remained in Texas until the autumn of 1859. It was at that time he came again to Arlington, having applied for leave in order to finish the settling of my grandfather's estate. During this visit he was selected by the Secretary of War to suppress the famous "John Brown Raid," and was sent to Harper's Ferry in command of the United States troops.

My father wrote the following entry in his memorandum book:

"October 17, 1859. Received orders from the Secretary of War, in person, to repair in evening train to Harper's Ferry.

"Reached Harper's Ferry at 11 P. M. ... Posted marines in the United States Armory. Waited until daylight, as a number of citizens were held as hostages, whose lives were threatened. Tuesday about sunrise, with twelve marines, under Lieutenant Green, broke in the door of the engine-house, secured the insurgents and relieved the prisoners unhurt. All the insurgents killed or mortally wounded, but four, John Brown, Stevens, Coppie, and Shields."

Brown was tried and convicted, and sentenced to be hanged on December 2, 1859.

In February, 1860, he was ordered to take command of the Department of Texas. There he remained a year. The first months after his arrival were spent in the vain pursuit of the famous brigand, Cortinez, who was continually stealing across the Rio Grande, burning the homes, driving off the stock of the ranchmen, and then retreating into Mexico. The summer months he spent in San Antonio, and while there interested himself with the good people of that town in building an Episcopal church, to which he contributed largely.

Source:

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