

During the march of the 7th and 8th, General Lee had received correspondence from General Grant stating that further bloodshed was unnecessary and asking for the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia.

The first of these was dated 5:00 PM, April 7 and was received by General Lee shortly after nightfall. Longstreet states that he was sitting with the general when it was received and that Lee silently read the note, then, without comment, handed it to him. After reading it, General Longstreet handed it back, saying, "Not yet."(11)

Lee responded to Grant stating that he did not feel that the situation for him was hopeless but, "Ask the terms you will offer on condition of its surrender."(12)

On April 8, additional correspondence between Lee and Grant took place. Grant did not ask for "Unconditional Surrender" and Lee wrote back that he did not believe his emergency was as bad as Grant felt it was, he nevertheless would be pleased to meet him at 10:00 AM tomorrow [April 9] on the old stage road to Richmond.(13)

General Lee spent the night of April 8 with Longstreet and the rear guard. Gordon's advance was in the village of Appomattox Court House and the rest of the army was back along the road.

Longstreet's and Gordon's orders were to march at 1:00 AM with Longstreet moving up to the village and to stand there to protect from any attack from the rear. Somewhere among "Old Pete's" men were the remnants of Kershaw's Brigade including a few men from Cobb's Legion and a very few from Company B, the Bowdon Volunteers.

Longstreet had his men up and ready but Gordon did not or could not move, so Longstreet stopped and entrenched, expecting an attack on him soon after daylight.

General Lee sent a member of his staff, Colonel Venable, to General Gordon to determine why he had not moved. The reason was that Union cavalry along with two corps of infantry were in his front. Gordon sent back his famous reply, "Tell General Lee I have fought my corps to a frazzle and I can do nothing unless I am heavily supported by Longstreet's Corps." Longstreet had more than he could handle on his front.

When the colonel gave Gordon's message to the general, Lee said, "There is nothing left for me but to go see General Grant and I had rather die a thousand deaths."(14)

Flags of truce were sent out all along the lines with the information that a meeting was being arranged between the two top generals.

One incident worth noting was that once Longstreet learned that Lee was to meet with Grant, he sent word to Gordon to call a truce. Longstreet sent Captain Sims of the Third Corps staff but who now answered to Longstreet and he was asked by Gordon to deliver the message to the Union side opposite which happened to be commanded by General Custer. When Custer learned that Sims was of Longstreet's staff he asked to be taken to him. Custer arrived at Longstreet's location at a fast gallop with his golden locks flowing over his shoulders and in an excited manner said, "In the name of General Sheridan I demand the unconditional surrender of this army!" Longstreet scolded the brash young cavalryman and told him that he could go to Sheridan and do as they pleased and he would teach them a lesson they would not forget. "Old Pete" let Custer know in no uncertain terms that negotiations were underway between Generals Grant and Lee and that, "We will certainly not recognize any subordinate." Custer quickly calmed down and suggested that all observe the truce.

Arrangements were made for the meeting and the story of the surrender is well recorded. Lee, in his best dress uniform and sword, rode Traveller to meet Grant who had had to ride hard to get to Appomattox Court House and was wearing a mud spattered field uniform. They met at the McLean house where Grant

was gracious in his terms of surrender. Longstreet had told Lee that he knew Grant well enough to know that he would offer the kindest of terms.

It was 2:30 in the afternoon after General Lee's meeting at the McLean House with General Grant and other Federal officers had concluded when Lee rode back through his loyal Confederate troops. All wanted to touch him and Traveller and many of the men were crying. The men were bewildered. They of course were sad but one would believe that there was a sense of relief.

By nightfall that April 9, 1865, the Union commissary was issuing rations to the hungry Rebels. It would finally be a night of peace between the two armies.

The next day it rained and more rations were received. Details were worked out for the surrender and officers appointed to a commission to carry out the terms. Longstreet was one of the Confederate officers appointed and, while at the McLean house on this duty, General Grant noticed him, called him into his room and an old friendship was renewed. Grant offered "Old Pete" a cigar which was gratefully received.(15)

The next two days were spent resting, eating and even some fraternizing with the former enemy.

It was decided that on April 12 the Army of Northern Virginia would march by divisions to the field near the court house, deploy into lines, stack their arms and fold their colors and, later, after signing their parole, walk away to their distant, blighted homes.(16)

The honor of receiving the surrender was given to the great Union educator and hero of Gettysburg, Major General Joshua Chamberlain of Maine. Lt. General John B. Gordon would lead the Southern troops to the ceremony. There would be no bands playing or salutes fired. How ironic that our men from Bowdon and Bowdon College would surrender to the man from Bowdoin. Chamberlain was a professor at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine before the war and later in his career after serving as governor of Maine returned to the college as its president.

As the ragged Rebel soldiers marched by on this gray, early morning of April 12, 1865, the Union men came to attention in silent respect to the men they had fought for four long years.

General Chamberlain, in describing the gray columns as they approached the Union troops that were to receive the surrender, wrote, "On they came with the old swinging step and swaying battle flags. In the van, the proud Confederate ensign-----. As we hear the head of the division approach our bugle sounds and regiment by regiment we give the soldier's salutation from the 'order arms' to the old 'carry', the marching salute. When General Gordon, who was riding at the head of the column with a heavy spirit and downcast face, catches the sound of the shifting arms [realizes the meaning] drops the point of his sword to the boot and turning gives word for his brigades to pass us with the same position of the manual, honor answering honor."(17)

In describing various divisions or units as they approached, he states, "Here comes Cobb's Legion, which held the stone wall at Marye's Heights at Fredricksburg, close before we piled our dead for breastworks so that the living might stay alive."(18)

The number "Surrendered and Paroled" that day was 28,356. Kershaw's Division, which had been McLaw's, surrendered 805 men.

The surrender list for Cobb's Legion at Appomattox shows a total of 55 enlisted men as follows:

- Company A- 2 sergeants; 9 privates
- Company B- 1 corporal; 3 privates
- Company C- 9 privates
- Company D- 12 privates

Company E- 1 corporal; 2 privates
 Company F- 1 corporal; 5 privates
 Company G- 1 sergeant; 1 corporal; 7 privates
 1 hospital steward who was not assigned to a company.

I do not know who was in command of Kershaw's Division. The men of the division were probably consolidated into another division, possibly Field's. The officer commanding Dubose's Brigade was Captain J. F. Espy of the 18th Georgia. The captain had enlisted on August 8, 1861. He was a corporal by October, 1861 and had passed through the ranks until, in March, 1863, he was made captain of Company C.

The officer in command of Cobb's Legion was 1st Lieutenant W.G. Steed of Company G. He had enlisted at Jefferson, Georgia on July 20, 1861 for the duration of the war and was sworn in by James Barrow, the cousin of Private James R. Barrow. He was given command of Company G in November, 1864 but was never promoted to captain.

The four surrendering men of Company B were Corporal J. H. Thornton and Privates J. J. Thornton, V. C. Vickery and J. L. Wilkins. The hospital steward was J. A. Hardeman.

General Lee's report to President Davis, dated April 12, 1865, gives his final organization chart as follows:

Army of Northern Virginia	Gen. Robert E. Lee
First Corps-	Lt. Gen. James Longstreet
Kershaw's Division-	Maj. Gen. Joseph Kershaw
Dubose's Brigade-	Brig. Gen. Dudley Dubose
Cobb's Legion-	1st Lt. J. G. Steed
16th Georgia-	Lt. William Montgomery
18th Georgia-	Capt. J. F. Espy
	Lt. Gideon J. Lassiter
24th Georgia-	Capt. J. A. Jarrod
Phillip's Legion-	Lt. A. J. Reese



There was no officer present for Company B; therefore, either Corporal Thornton or Lt. Steed (of Cobb's Legion) was in command of the company.

We do not know how or why these men of Company B were at Appomattox. They could possibly have escaped from the disaster at Sailor's Creek or, more probably, they might not have been with the rest of the company there. They could have been stragglers who joined up with some of the other units after being left by the roadside or, possibly, they were a part of foraging parties which could not get back to their units. They could quite possibly have been teamsters or guards of the wagon train or they could have been ill or working with a hospital unit.

The war was over for the men of Cobb's Legion and Company B, the Bowdon Volunteers, with every man a casualty. All the men were either dead, discharged due to wounds or disease, captured or surrendered.

After the men of Cobb's Legion had stacked their arms, they had no colors to fold, they returned to the ranks and were marched back to their camp. They came to a halt, did a right face, came to attention and then heard Lt. Steed give his final command, one that they had heard so many times before, "COBB'S LEGION, FALL OUT!"

