

THE GILDER LEHRMAN
INSTITUTE *of* AMERICAN HISTORY

Inside the Vault :
Highlights from the Gilder Lehrman Collection

April 17, 2020

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History

- We are the leading nonprofit organization dedicated to K–12 history education while also serving the general public.
- Our mission is to promote the knowledge and understanding of American history through educational programs and resources.
- We provide direct access to unique primary source materials.

Gilder Lehrman Staff

Panelists

- Sandy Trenholm – Collection Director
- Lois MacMillan – Gilder Lehrman’s 2006 Oregon History Teacher of the Year
- Vaughan Danvers - NYC Public School Teacher

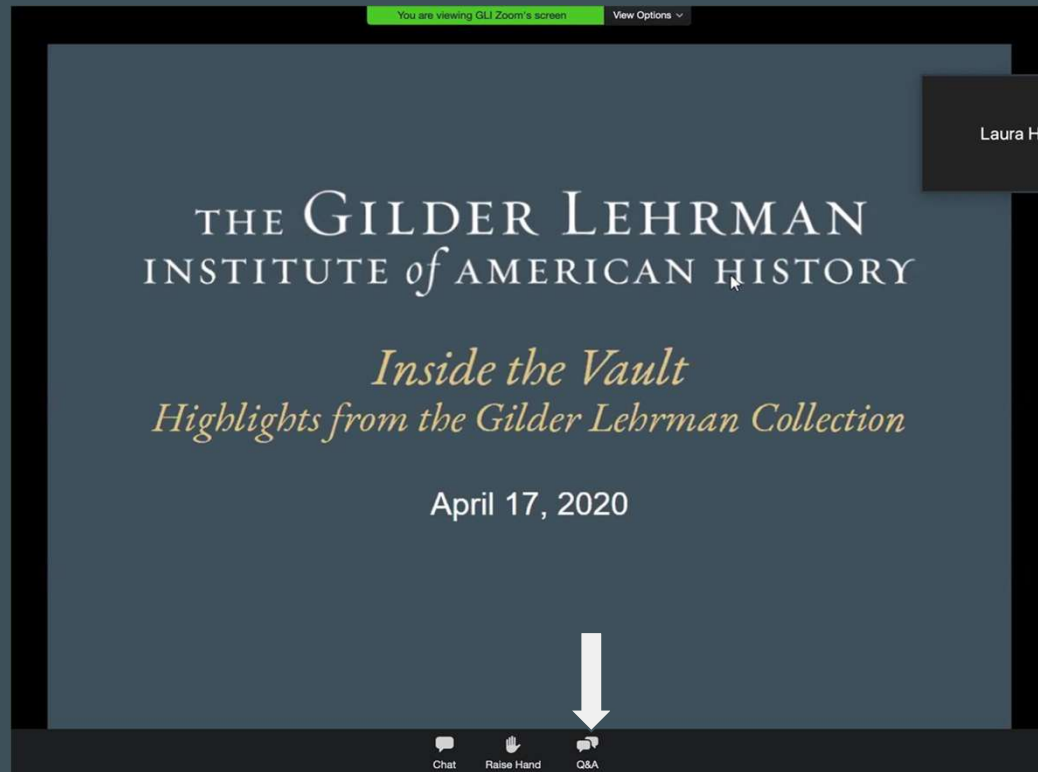
Support

- Allison Kraft – Assistant Curator
- Laura Hapke – Curatorial Assistant
- Marissa Cheifetz – Coordinator of Publications and Multimedia

For Security

- Your microphone is muted
- Your camera is automatically off
- Chat is disabled

How to Participate on PC or Mac



- In order to keep this a safe and secure meeting, your mic is automatically muted and your camera is automatically off.
- If you would like to ask a question, **you can use the Q&A feature** which can be found along the bottom of your screen.

Today's Documents

- A letter by George Washington about becoming the first President of the United States in 1789
- General Robert E. Lee's letter to General Ulysses Grant requesting a cease-fire to discuss terms of surrender

George Washington
to Henry Knox,
April 1, 1789

Mount Vernon April 1. 1789 ^{94 3795}
LIII-74

My dear Sir,

The Mail of the 30th brought me your favor of the 23rd. - For which, & the regular information you have had the goodness to transmit of the State of things in New York, I feel myself very much obliged, and thank you accordingly. -

I feel for those Members of the new Congress, who, hitherto, have given an unavailing pattern at the Theatre of business. - For myself, the delay may be compared to a reprieve; for in confidence I can assure you with the world it would obtain little credit - that my movements to the chair of Government will be accompanied with feelings not unlike those of a culprit who is going to the place of his execution! So unwilling am I, in the evening of a life nearly consumed in public care, to quit a peaceful abode for an Ocean of difficulties, without that competency of political ^{understanding} skill & abilities, which is necessary to manage the helm. - I am sensible, that I am embarking the voice of my Countrymen and a good name of my own on this voyage, but what returns can be made for them - Heaven alone can determine. - Integrity & firmness is all I can promise - these, be the voyage long or short, never shall forsake me although I may be deserted by all men. - For of the consolations, which are to be derived from these (under any circumstances) the world cannot deprive me. -

With best wishes for Mr. Knox, & sincere friendship for yourself - I remain

Your affectionate
G. Washington

The Hon^{ble}
Maj^r Gen^l Knox

Henry Knox



- Chief of Artillery during the American Revolution
- The first Secretary of War
- A close friend to George Washington

The election of 1788

- In 1788, there was no national election day.
- The election was held in ten states between December 15, 1788 and January 10, 1789.
 - New York failed to select the electors for the Electoral College.
 - Rhode Island and North Carolina had not yet ratified the Constitution.
- Each elector cast two votes for two different people. The candidate with the most votes would be president. The one who came in second would be vice president.
- On February 4, electors met in their states to cast their votes and sent them to Congress.

Washington elected President, 1789

- March 4 - The first Congress was *supposed* to begin.
 - Difficult travel conditions delayed many members' arrival in the capital of New York City.
- April 1 - enough Congressmen arrived for the session to begin.
- April 6 - Congress counted from the electoral college
 - George Washington was unanimously elected president with 69 electoral votes.
 - John Adams received 34 votes and became Vice President.

| Candidate | Electoral Votes |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| John Adams | 34 |
| John Jay | 9 |
| John Rutledge | 6 |
| Robert H. Harrison | 6 |
| John Hancock | 4 |
| George Clinton | 3 |
| Samuel Huntington | 2 |
| John Milton | 2 |
| James Armstrong | 1 |
| Benjamin Lincoln | 1 |
| Edward Telfair | 1 |
| Total Votes | 69 |

*Other 1789
candidates*

George
Washington to
Henry Knox, April
1, 1789

Mons^r Vernon April 1. 1789 ³⁷⁹⁵
LIII-74

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I feel for those Members of the new Congress, who, hitherto, have given an unavailing attendance at the Theatre of business. - For myself, the delay may be compared to a reprieve; for in confidence I can assure you - with the world it would obtain little credit - that my movements to the Chair of Government will be accompanied with feelings not unlike those of a culprit who is going to the place of his execution! so unwilling am I, in the evening of a life nearly consumed in public cares, to quit a peaceful abode for an Ocean of difficulties, without that competency of political skill - abilities, which is necessary to manage the helm. - I am sensible, that I am embarking the voice of my Countrymen and a good name of my own on this voyage, but what returns will be made for them - Heaven alone can discover. - Integrity & firmness is all I can promise - these, be the voyage long or short, never shall forsake me although I may be deserted by all men. - For of the consolations which are to be derived from these (under any circumstances) the world cannot deprive me. - With best wishes for Mr. Knox, & sincere friendship for yourself - I remain

Your affectionate
G. Washington

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Maj^r Gen^l Knox

George Washington to Henry Knox, April 1, 1789

“For myself, the delay may be compared to a reprieve; for in confidence I can assure you ... that my movements to the chair of Government will be accompanied with feelings not unlike those of a culprit who is going to the place of his execution: so unwilling am I, in the evening of a life nearly consumed in public cares to quit a peaceful abode for an Ocean of difficulties, without that competency of political skill – abilities [*inserted*: & inclination] which is necessary to manage the helm.”

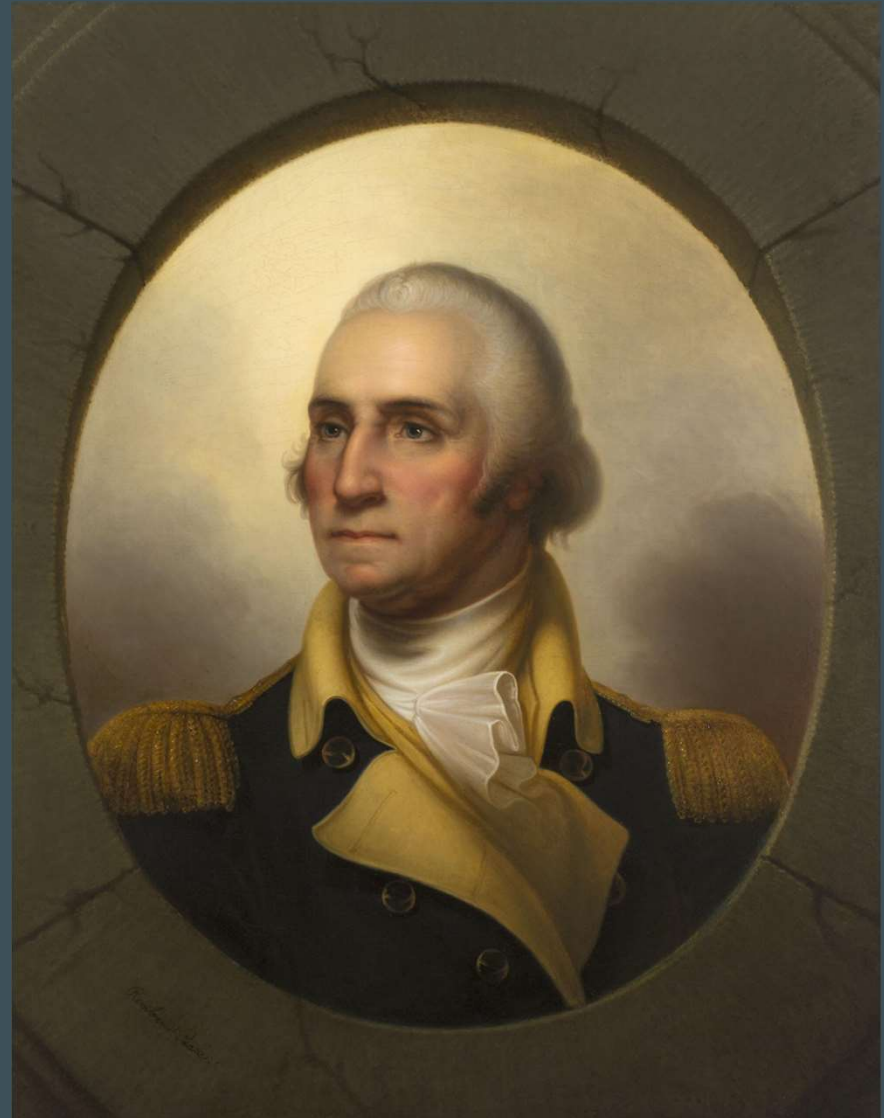
George Washington to Henry Knox, April 1, 1789

“I am sensible, that I am embarking the voice of my Countrymen and a good name of my own, on this voyage, but what returns will be made for them – Heaven alone can foretell. – Integrity & firmness is all I can promise – these, be the voyage long or short, never shall forsake me although I may be deserted by all men. – For of the consolations which are to be derived from these (under any circumstances) the world cannot deprive me. – With best wishes for Mrs. Knox, & sincere friendship for yourself – I remain

Your Affectionate

Go: Washington”

*Rembrandt Peale's
portrait of
George Washington*



How?

Why?

Q&A

**Did you
know?**

Who?

Robert E. Lee
to Ulysses S.
Grant, 1865

Duplicate

9th April 1865

General,

I ask a suspension of hostilities
pending the discussion of the terms of surrender
of this Army, in the interview which I requested
in my former communication of today.

St Gen U.S. Grant Very respectfully
Commanding U.S. Armies Appomattox

R. E. Lee
Gen

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Apr 9 11 55 AM
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and first division
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County Va 11 55
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at 11 55 AM
- copy
5000
- copy

Siege of Petersburg, 1864-1865

- June 1864 - Siege of Petersburg begins. It will last almost 10 months.
- April 2, 1865 - General Robert E. Lee informs Confederate President Jefferson Davis that he is abandoning Petersburg.
- April 3 - The Union Army occupies Petersburg and Richmond.
- Lee hopes to get supplies and wants to connect with General Joseph Johnston in North Carolina.

The Surrender Letters, April 7-9, 1865

- A series of correspondence between Grant and Lee
 - April 7 - Grant asks Lee to surrender. He states that the Confederate situation is “hopeless” and wants to avoid further bloodshed.
 - April 7 - Lee doesn’t agree that it is hopeless, but wants to hear Grant’s terms for peace.
 - April 8 - Grant outlines terms for Lee’s surrender.
 - April 8- Lee replies and says he isn’t ready to surrender, just wants to know Grant’s terms. He proposes they meet at 10 am on April 9th. He wants to negotiate peace, not surrender.
 - April 9 - Grant says he cannot negotiate peace, it has to be a surrender. He doesn’t go to the meeting.
 - April 9 - Lee writes three letters asking Grant for a ceasefire to discuss terms of surrender.

Robert E. Lee
to Ulysses S.
Grant, 1865

Duplicate

9th April 1865

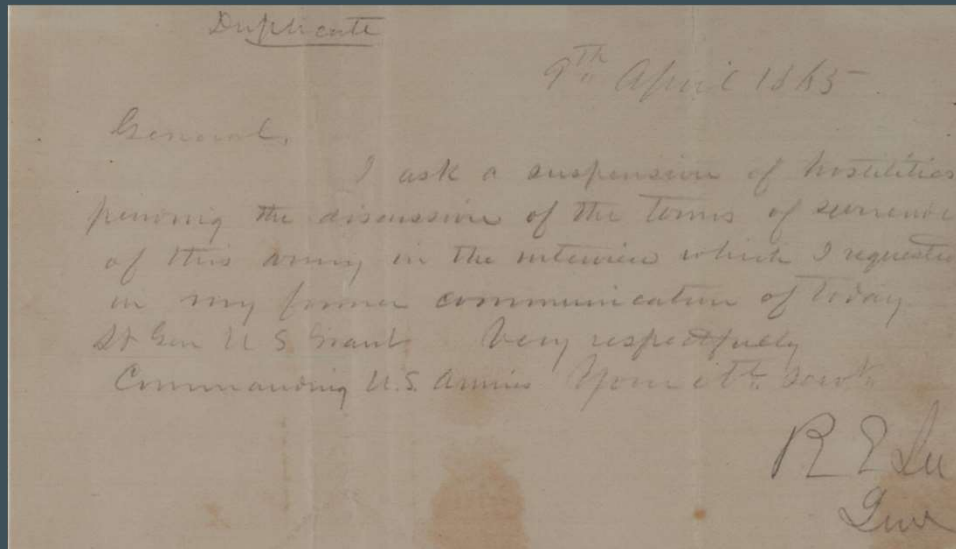
General,

I ask a suspension of hostilities pending the discussion of the terms of surrender of this Army, in the interview which I requested in my former communication of today.

Yours very respectfully,
Commanding U.S. Armies, Appomattox Court House

R. E. Lee
Genl

Recd
50000
- copies
at 11:55 AM
very - and
copy 2800
Word of Appomattox
Army 11:55
and first
at 11:55 AM
with and
the
April 9th 11:55 AM



Robert E. Lee to Ulysses S. Grant, 1865

Gilder Lehrman Collection

Duplicate

9th April 1865

General,

I ask a suspension of hostilities pending the discussion of the Terms of surrender of this army in the interview which I requested in my former communication of Today

Lt Gen U S Grant

Very respectfully

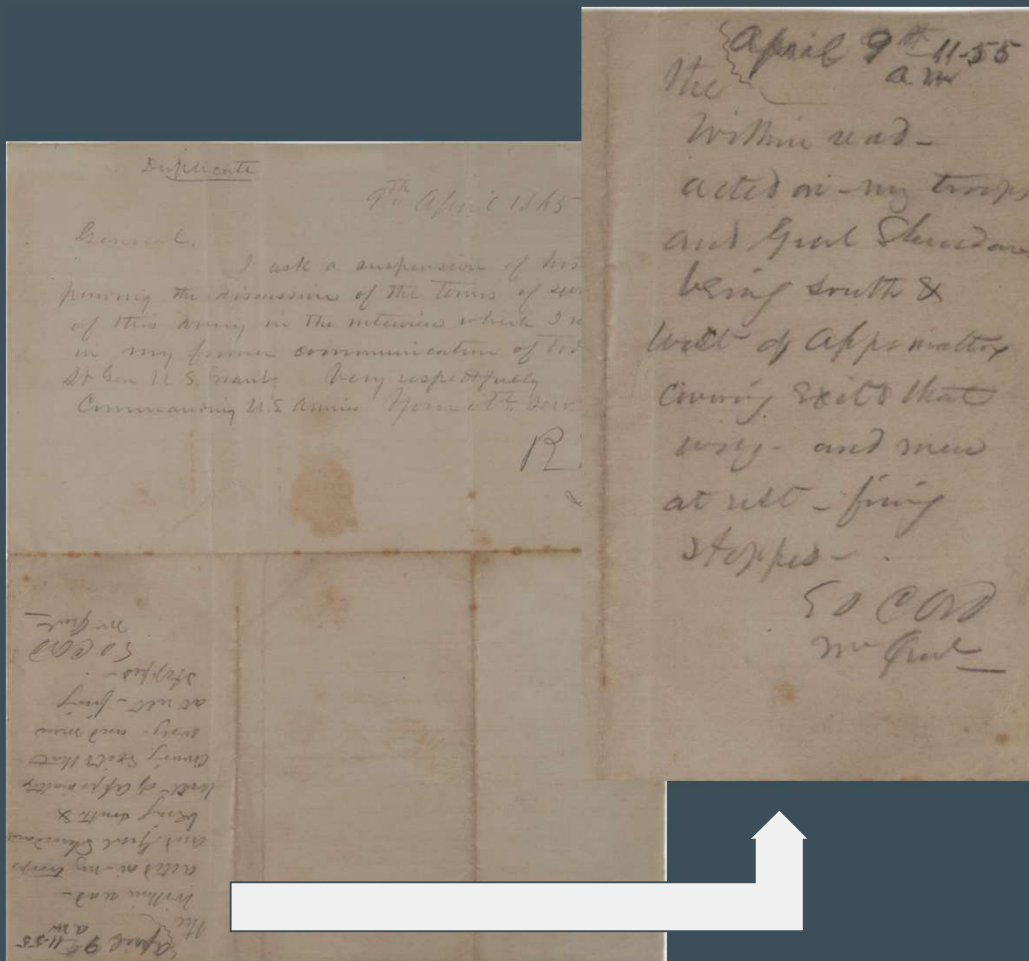
Commanding U.S. Armies

Your obt_g servt.

R E Lee

Genl

Docket by General E.O.C. Ord, 1865



April 9th 11.55 am
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Within read –
acted on – my troops
and Genl Sheridans
being south &
west of Appomattox
covering Exits that
way. and men
at rest – firing
stopped –
EOC Ord
Mjr Gen

Lee surrenders, April 9, 1865



Gilder Lehrman Collection

How?

Why?

Q&A

**Did you
know?**

Who?

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2. Please complete a 2-minute feedback survey:

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Thank you!