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

My dear Sir,

The mail of the 20. brought me your favor of the 26. For which, the popular expression you have had the goodness to transmit the tale of Vespasian in New York, I feel extremely much obliged, and thank you accordingly.

Having seen several of the new Congress, the authors, have a great and anxious solicitude for the Theatre of Business. For myself, the delay may be compared to a newspaper, for in confidence you may, I am sure it would obtain wide credit that my movements to the chair of Power, great as it is, accompanied with feelings that none can more affect than those of a culprit who is exposed to the plan of his execution! To an ill-concealed, the over top of a life nearly consumed in public cares, to quit a peaceful abode for a group of difficulties, without that competency of political ability, which is necessary to manage the helm. I am sensible, that I am embarking in the course of my Country, and a good name at any other time is a purchase, but what actions can be made for the future? Heaven alone can decide. The only fortune is in my way. Here, in the theatre of empire, I am forced to take the advice of the wise and experienced, not to be deposed by the people. For the constitution, which are to be derived from these states, are my own creation. The world cannot defeat me. Will you strengthen the resolution I have formed to proceed. I have determined to take for yourself. I owe you affectionately,

The Box

George Washington
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.
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.
Other 1789 candidates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Electoral Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Adams</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Jay</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Rutledge</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert H. Harrison</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Hancock</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Clinton</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Huntington</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Milton</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Armstrong</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Lincoln</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Telfair</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Votes</strong></td>
<td><strong>69</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
George Washington to Henry Knox, April 1, 1789
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.”
“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

Gilder Lehrman Collection
Why?

How?

Did you know?

Who?
Robert E. Lee to Ulysses S. Grant, 1865

Gilder Lehrman Collection
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

Gilder Lehrman Collection
Duplicate

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

Commanding U.S. Armies

Very respectfully

Your obt servt.

R E Lee

Genl

9th April 1865
April 9th 11.55 am
The
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
Coming Soon! New Educational Program
What’s next?

1. We will send you a packet with the documents we talked about today.

2. Please complete a 2-minute feedback survey: surveymonkey.com/r/Vault_Apr17

1. Visit gilderlehrman.org for
   - Documents
   - Essays
   - Digital Exhibitions
   - Videos
   - Lesson Plans
   - Hamilton Education Program

Thank you!