



## Robert E. Lee

Given by Virginia to the National Statuary Hall Collection

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BORN INTO A FAMOUS VIRGINIA FAMILY ON January 19, 1807, Robert E. Lee served his state with great devotion all his life. His family lived at Stratford and later Alexandria, Virginia. At the United States Military Academy he distinguished himself in both scholastics and martial exercises. He was adjutant of the corps and graduated second in the class of 1829. As a career officer, he served in posts in Georgia and Virginia and as commander of the light batteries, with General Scott, in the Mexican War. He served as superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy from 1848 to 1852. Although he was made lieutenant colonel of the Second Cavalry, family problems forced him into inactive duty for over two years.

When the South seceded, Lee reluctantly resigned from the army, hoping to avoid participation in the war he deplored. However, a sense of duty to his state made him accept command of the Virginia forces. His successful strategy, his tactical skill, and the confidence of his troops earned him the respect of the Confederate leaders. President Jefferson Davis appointed him commander of the Army of Northern Virginia on April 1, 1862.

The next three years demanded all Lee's strength until he was forced to surrender to General Ulysses S. Grant on April 9, 1865. Lee was paroled and accepted the presidency of Washington College (now Washington and Lee) in Lexington, Virginia. He served in that capacity from September 1865 until his death on October 12, 1870.

April 2011

**Bronze by Edward V. Valentine**  
Given in 1909; located in Crypt.

