

Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885) won his first victories in the West. In March 1864 he was made Commander of all Union armies, and pressed the campaign against Lee's army in Virginia until its surrender at Appomattox. Grant served as President from 1869 to 1877.

Executive Mansion  
Washington, Nov 21, 1864

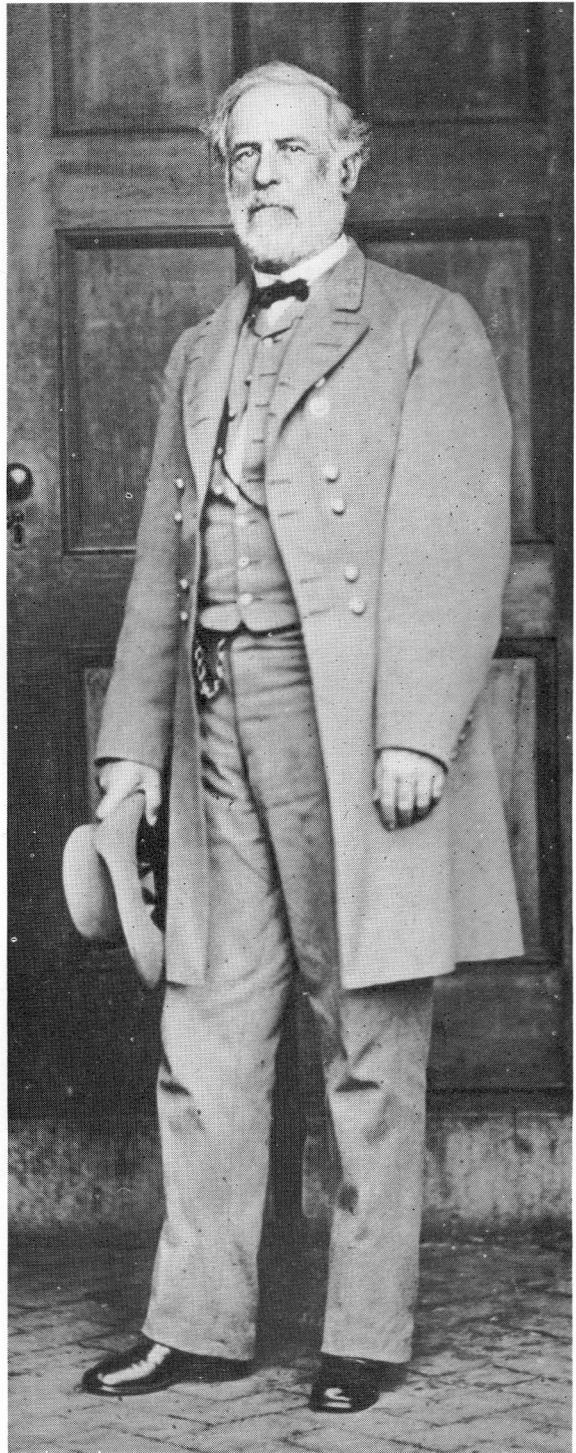
To Mrs. Bixby, Boston, Mass.

Dear Madam,

I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously in the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,  
Abraham Lincoln.

The Bixby Letter.



Robert E. Lee (1807-1870) led Confederate forces in the East to a series of victories in the first two years of the war. After surrendering in 1865, he became President of Washington College in Virginia—now Washington and Lee, where in defeat his conduct added to the fame he won in war.