

**FREEMAN'S LEE**

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Aiming low they opened a deadly concentrated discharge upon the moving mass in their front. Staggered by the storm of lead, the charging line hesitated, answered with some wild firing, which soon increased to a crashing roar of musketry running down the whole length of their front, & then all that portion of Pickett's division, which came within the zone of this terrible close musketry fire, appeared to melt & drift away in the powder smoke of both sides.<sup>1</sup>

At Gettysburg that Friday afternoon when Pickett's men broke at their failed assault, the few survivors streamed through the hot smoke, by the thousands of newly dead and the screams of the dying, toward Robert E. Lee.

After a carnage that stunned even the victors, Lee's Confederates were drawn to him as if children. Victory under Lee had been as certain as "successive sunrises."<sup>2</sup>

Lee, who had thought his army invincible, rode alone to his straggling men, a Cavalier immaculately dressed in a grey coat and grey felt planter's hat. Lee was fifty-six years old but seemed older. The war had aged him hourly. He was about five foot eleven, though he looked taller in the saddle. He was a strongly built man with massive shoulders. His thick white hair curled down to meet a full, blunted beard that framed the face of a man once described as the handsomest in the Army.<sup>3</sup> He had a broad forehead, deep eyes, and a straight nose. Lincoln would describe it simply as a good face.<sup>4</sup>

Lee wore cavalry gauntlets, top boots and spurs. A magnificent horseman, his face impassive, Lee looked carved from

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marble. So moved were the men by the sight of him, the imposing warrior on his war horse, that even badly wounded men took off their hats to Lee and incredibly mustered a cheer.<sup>5</sup>

In that July heat, with the war's end still years off, Lee was already a hero. Later, he would be fashioned into a perfect man, a myth.

No one person was more responsible for nourishing the myth than his preeminent biographer, Douglas Southall Freeman, who saluted the Lee statue in Richmond as he went to work each day at The Richmond News Leader. Freeman's four volume work, published in 1934-35, is considered the definitive Lee biography. The Pulitzer Prize winning work, which became the Lee bible particularly in the South, canonized the Confederate general, encasing the Lee myth in an almost impregnable armor.

Freeman grew up in the shadow of the old South. He was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, but his family moved to Richmond when he was a boy. Although the young Freeman almost became a minister, he went instead to the University of Richmond and later received a Ph.D. in history and economics at Johns Hopkins University. At the age of twenty-nine he became the editor of the News Leader, a post he held until he was sixty-three. During his time there he also began the daily radio broadcasts that made him so well known in Virginia.

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His days were long. He arose at 2:30 a.m. and did his newspaper work and radio broadcasts before lunch. After a brief nap he spent the afternoons on historical research. Freeman even carefully recorded the six thousand one hundred hours he spent researching and writing R. E. Lee during the last seven years of the twenty it took to finish. Although he restricted his social engagements, Freeman still found time to deliver speeches, teach journalism, and serve on various boards.

Freeman kept up his staggering work schedule to the day of his death. He had just finished the last chapter in the sixth volume of his next great biography - one of George Washington - shortly before his fatal heart attack. He died forty years ago in 1963 at the age of sixty-seven.<sup>6</sup>

Freeman was a consummate Southern gentleman who styled his life after Lee, his idea of a supreme hero. It was Freeman who described Lee as "one of the few, the very few of her sons, whom America offers at the altar of the ages as worthy by reason of his character to be exempted from the else universal sentence of death."<sup>7</sup>

Despite the considerable evidence in his work to the contrary, Freeman maintained that Lee was what he seemed, a simple, uncomplicated man, guided by self-denial and spirituality. This was the heart of the intricate Lee myth that

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grew like a tangled vine from the rich misery of the Civil War. The myth portrayed Lee as a simple, religious man who was also a quietly satisfied family man. It portrayed him as a flawless leader and soldier, as a perfect husband, father and son, and as a god. The Lee of legend was always calm, loving, silent, and free of ambition and resentments.<sup>8</sup>

Freeman probably had several reasons for idealizing Lee. Both were Southern gentlemen. Both stood for the old, aristocratic South. As a young man Freeman went to Confederate reunions and saw many of Lee's lieutenants, old but full of romanticized, glorious memories. Freeman's unqualified praise of Lee may have also been homage to his father, Walker B. Freeman, one of the rugged few in Lee's army who survived.

Though born sixteen years after Lee's death, Freeman knew Lee as intimately as any biographer ever will, a knowledge which was to pose problems for Freeman as he set about solidifying the myth. Freeman, in fact, knew Lee so well he unconsciously intuited the truth about Lee's personality structure and emotional life, both of which were enigmatic and complex and not in keeping with the version Freeman or the South or even the country desired. His idealization of the General and his own traditional Southern upbringing precluded this conscious acknowledgment of deeper knowledge. But Freeman's deep-seated understanding of Lee still

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wove its way, however unwilling, into the texture of his great biography. A trained eye can see how good a psychohistory Freeman really wrote.

This is so, even though Freeman himself expressed a deep disdain for psychological exploration, even going so far as to explicitly deride any attempts to delve deeply into Lee's character. The biographer warned off those who would "seek deep meaning in [Lee's] silence." They would "labor in vain to make him complicated."<sup>9</sup> Derisive of any psychological approach to history, Freeman called such attempts the worst of "all the frauds that ever have been perpetrated on our generation."<sup>10</sup> He insisted that he never dared to construct what a figure from history was thinking at a given moment - though he did it often with Lee.

But when asked late in his life what he had learned most from his arduous study of history, Freeman replied, "the impact of personality on history."<sup>11</sup> If personality is so crucial, then so are the forces that shape personality. But it would be unfair to harshly criticize Freeman's defensive contempt of psychohistory. The discoveries of the twentieth century about the origins of personality were still new and controversial. Not until after Freeman's death did these findings become a more accepted part of human understanding and biographical study.<sup>12</sup> Writing today, perhaps Freeman would give a more considered judgment about the

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theories of personality formation in his study of Robert E. Lee.

What were those truths about Lee which Freeman perceived and wove unconsciously through his massive biography? A fresh, psychological reading of Freeman shows that though Freeman attempted to bar the door to psychological inquiry, he is an unerring mine to Lee's soul. Freeman intuitively laid out the origins of Lee's crucial internal conflicts in his biography.

He does it in the very beginning of R.E. Lee. He writes of a tragic scene viewed through the eyes of then three-year-old Robert E. Lee:

They had come so often, those somber men from the sheriff. Always they were polite, but they asked so insistently of the General's whereabouts, and they talked of Court papers with strange Latin names. Sometimes they lingered about, as if they believed Henry Lee were in hiding. That was why Ann Carter Lee's husband had placed those chains there on the doors in the Great Hall at Stratford. The horses had been taken, furniture had been attached, and tract after tract had been sold to cancel obligations. Faithful friends still visited, and whenever the General rode to Montross or to Fredericksburg, the old soldiers saluted him and told their young children that he was "Light-Horse Harry" Lee, but she knew that people had whispered that he had twice been in jail because he could not pay his debts. She could not help him, because her father had put her inheritance in a trust. Robert Morris, poor man, had died without returning a penny of the \$40,000 he owed Mr. Lee, and that fine plan for building a town at the Great Falls of the Potomac had never been carried out, because they could not settle the quitrents. If General Lee had been able to do that, or to get the money on that claim he had bought in England, all would be well. As it was they could not go on there at Stratford... So the only thing to do was to go to Alexandria where they

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could live in a simple home... that was why they had Smith and three year old Robert in the carriage and were driving away from the ancestral home of the Lees.<sup>13</sup>

The tragic forces which shaped Lee are all present in that tableau. Confusion in a child's mind opened the graphic scene. A father, a hero, was being hunted down. He was shamefully in hiding. Their home, in all its meanings, was in ruins. Lee's mother was humiliated, the object of whispered pity. Robert's father had debts as large as his grandiosity; the old war hero was a criminal and denial of reality still fueled false hope.

Then, incredibly, Freeman wrote: "Perhaps it was well that Robert was so young: he would have no memory of those hard, wretched years since the General had started speculating."<sup>14</sup> Of course we know today that children even at that age do remember, if only unconsciously. Although Freeman believed young Lee had no memory of those years, why does Freeman open his life of Lee with such a poignant scene? Freeman knew in spite of himself that this was a pivotal time. His need to idealize Lee did not keep his knowledge from finding expression.

As Freeman realized, the key to the man is the child, and the key to the child is his family, especially his parents. The picklock to Robert E. Lee's heart, to the man of great silences and a marble countenance, lies in his past, in the influence of his famous father, long-suffering mother, and his brothers.



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Robert E. Lee's father, Henry Lee III, better known as "Light-Horse Harry" Lee, carved a tragic path through life beginning with his birth in 1756 as a pampered scion of the aristocratic Lees in Westmoreland County, Virginia.

"Light-Horse Harry" Lee was a Revolutionary War hero, a dashing horseman given to fine clothes and hit and run sorties against the British. He eventually became an intimate of George Washington. Harry was also a bankrupt, a cheat, a philanderer and to some, a fool.<sup>15</sup> He was eventually jailed for his debts. Given his personality traits and his fate, he likely drank excessively, especially in his later years when his favorite Madeira did not leave his side. His sole belongings at his death consisted of a broken down hair trunk and a cask of Madeira. "Light-Horse Harry" Lee's emaciated, ill, and threadbare appearance in his last days was that of a man broken by the effects of alcohol and poverty.<sup>16</sup>

Harry had a reputation for a wild temper that stretched back to his school days at the fledgling Princeton. He exploited others shamelessly and was a man with an annoying sense of entitlement, grandiosity and self-adoration - all classic facets of a narcissistic personality disorder.<sup>17</sup>

"Light-Horse Harry" Lee also had a sadistic streak. Some of his acts during the Revolutionary War were breathtaking in their savagery even in a war notable for its cruelty.<sup>18</sup> In July of 1778,

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"Light-Horse Harry" Lee was assisting General Anthony Wayne in the storming of the British Fort at Stony Point, New York when Lee and his men captured three deserters. One of the deserters was decapitated at Lee's order, a very untypical and gruesome punishment. The beheading shocked George Washington, especially when the bloody trophy was sent back to headquarters by Lee as a macabre warning to other potential deserters. In North Carolina he ordered a prisoner with a fractured skull tortured with a red-hot shovel to extract information.<sup>19</sup>

On February 25, 1781 the most brutal incident of "Light-Horse Harry's" career occurred. The British, under Banastre Tarleton, were enlisting North Carolina loyalists to fight. When Lee's troops captured two of Tarleton's staff, he decided to use them as a ruse to allow his men to pass as reinforcements for Tarleton in front of a Colonel Pyle and several hundred loyalists moving to join the British. Pyle and his men drew up along the road as if they were to be reviewed. Lee later claimed he planned, as soon as he met Pyle, to reveal his deception and order them to either disband or join the Army of General Nathanael Greene. Lee's Americans commenced firing; his legion drew its swords and almost one hundred of the loyalists were killed. The loyalists did not defend themselves, thinking Lee and his legion were allies making a terrible mistake. Lee's legion suffered no casualties in what

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became known as "Pyle's Hacking Match."<sup>20</sup>

When "Light-Horse Harry" wrote his memoirs, he admitted the degree he had anticipated this bloody result, but still tried to shift blame to the loyalists. He even went so far as to assert "humanity" guided him. To heed the loyalists' cries for mercy would put his men at risk.<sup>21</sup>

Lee resigned from Nathanael Greene's army before the Revolutionary War ended, citing, among other reasons, insufficient recognition of his deeds.<sup>22</sup>

Returning to Virginia, he married his second cousin, Matilda Lee. With her came the great Virginia estate of Stratford on the Potomac River. He had four children with Matilda, two of whom survived. One of them, Henry Lee IV, was to become known as "Black-Horse Harry" Lee.

Early in his marriage Harry began a bout of ruinous land speculation. Matilda Lee, frightened by his financial recklessness, managed to secure Stratford and her remaining properties for her two surviving children before she died in childbirth in 1790.

"Light-Horse Harry's" Federalist position, his charms, and his ties to the planter class allowed him to continue to serve in public life as governor of Virginia and as a United States congressman. In 1793, while governor, he married Ann Hill Carter,

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the nineteen-year-old daughter of Charles Carter, then one of the richest men in America. He married Ann only after her friend, whom he had been courting, spurned him. Ann's parents reluctantly gave their permission to the marriage after Harry promised to abandon a wild fantasy to fight in the French Revolution.

Ann Hill Carter began her marriage to the thirty-seven-year-old Harry with the naive hope that her life would continue in the ease and comfort she had known as a girl. She was quickly disappointed. Within a fortnight of their marriage Harry resumed his profligate ways and was soon also unfaithful.<sup>23</sup> Over the course of the next ten years, Ann Hill Carter Lee bore him four children, three of whom survived. Early in the new century, she was writing family that she wished no more children by Harry Lee.<sup>24</sup> When Robert E. Lee was conceived in 1806, it was an unwanted pregnancy. Ann was thirty-four. "Light-Horse Harry" was almost fifty-one. Writing to her sister-in-law who was also expecting, Ann gave "my best wishes for your success my dear and truest assurances that I do not envy your *prospects* nor wish to *share in them.*"<sup>25</sup>

"Light-Horse Harry," hero and scion of one of the finest families in America, ended up a hounded debtor. His final five years were spent as a lonely, decrepit exile in the Caribbean. In a last attempt to return to America, he died in March, 1818,

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suffering an agonizing death at Cumberland Island, Georgia, the home of the widow and daughter of his old commander, Nathanael Greene.<sup>26</sup>

In his biography Freeman never mentions "Light-Horse Harry's" infidelity or savagery and minimizes his financial turmoil and the deceit involved in most of the business dealings. Freeman acknowledges "Light-Horse Harry's" surly resignation from Nathanael Greene's army and its element of wounded narcissism. "Resentment may have been at the bottom of it, the resentment that is so easily aroused in the heart of a young man whom praise has spoiled."<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Freeman recognizes "Light-Horse Harry's" grandiose financial schemes, his unsuccessful attempt to procure insider information from then Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, and his cheating of even George Washington.<sup>28</sup>

Although Freeman cites William Johnson's massive biography of Greene - which details incidences of "Light-Horse Harry's" cruelty, cowardice and imperiousness - he essentially ignored it.<sup>29</sup> In an indirect admission of Harry's character problems Freeman wrote that it was only after the Revolutionary War that Harry "became sensitive, resentful, and imperious." But Freeman insists, in the face of what even he documented, that Harry was merely "unfortunate" and "there never was anything vicious in his character or dishonest in his purposes."<sup>30</sup> Intuitively Freeman

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must have known differently or he would not have had to deny those very striking traits of Henry Lee III.

Instinctively Freeman understood the cloud which overhung Ann Carter Lee and the birth of Robert E. Lee. "Ann Lee's pregnancy was not happy. Too many shadows hung over it ...Henry Lee had been more and more frequently absent for long periods; the pinch of poverty had taken from her the comforts she had known in girlhood; she had lost even her carriage; life had grown gray on the narrowed, untilled acres of Stratford."<sup>31</sup>

At the age of four Robert and his siblings were taken by their mother from Stratford to Alexandria, Virginia where they would be among friends and family. "Light-Horse Harry," who had recently ended his two years in a debtor's prison, followed. At that time Harry was penniless. The family survived on a trust created for Ann by her father. The trust was to be "...free from the claim, demand, let, hindrance or molestation of her husband, General Lee."<sup>32</sup>

"Light-Horse Harry" was probably a violent man. His proclivity for abusing others was noted by his cousin George Lee when Harry was a young man.

A Lee does not brawl with his fists in the gutter, but Harry creates in everyone the feeling that he would not hesitate to lower himself to such pastimes if in the mood. He is learned, but there is in him a wild and

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savage humor that neither the gracious living at Leesylvania nor his years at the College of New Jersey have tamed. M\_\_\_ has said to me privately that she pities the girl Harry will some day marry, for he is certain to beat her if she disputes his word in any matter.<sup>33</sup>

Before "Light-Horse Harry" Lee abandoned his family that spring of 1813, there were violent scenes.<sup>34</sup> Robert E. Lee would have watched his father's alcohol-fueled rages when he was a very young child.<sup>35</sup> By the fall of 1812 "Light-Horse Harry" Lee was also in pain from severe injuries suffered in a political riot in Baltimore. Another Alexandria resident recorded in her memoirs the childhood memory of Harry's bandaged head and frightening countenance as he sat in church one Sunday morning.<sup>36</sup> Little Robert would have remembered forever his father's raging against his fate, despite his young age. The scenes of domestic turmoil, which certainly included verbal and possibly physical abuse of Ann, burned themselves into his unconscious mind. He would have felt especially powerless as he watched his father shame his mother without being able to stop it.<sup>37</sup>

Robert E. Lee would grow up, not to repeat the act of shaming, but to take the only other alternative - to never shame anyone at almost any cost. This psychological trait would affect the very way he would command his army.

Lee never saw his father after the age of six when "Light-

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Horse Harry" left, though it is unclear whether the old General abandoned his family or was forced by his wife Ann to leave. Freeman wrote of the mix of emotions at such a parting in a noble scene that is more wish than reality:

So, one day in the early summer of 1813, Robert must have shed tears with the rest, as he shared the final embraces of his father. Behind him, in his own household, "Light-Horse Harry" left only sorrow. For, with all his financial follies, he had never lost the respect, much less the affection, of his family. Fully conscious of his failings, which they pitied, they still were awed by his dignity and fascinated by his conversation. On the youthful mind of Robert, his father's vices made no impress, but always in his memory the picture of his sire was glamorous with charm.<sup>38</sup>

If "Light-Horse Harry's" family were fully conscious of his failings, would they never lose their respect or affection? The record suggests Ann was relieved he was gone. Would pity and awe be the only emotions felt? Robert may have felt some awe and have wistfully painted a glamorous picture, but he would have known the truth in his heart. Children will idealize a parent and idealize them desperately to defend against confusion, disappointment, and rage. A father's vices, even if consciously denied, hardly make no impress on a son.

Robert E. Lee suffered a triple tragedy with his father. "Light-Horse Harry" Lee was destructive to the family while at home, he abandoned Robert at the height of the Oedipal period, and he died when Robert was entering adolescence. "Light-Horse Harry"



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died when his son was eleven. But what Lee experienced of his father's difficult personality prior to his departure would have affected him deeply. In addition, the abandonment by his father, whether voluntary or not, would have had a profound psychological impact. We now know that children who lose a parent, even a destructive parent, grow up to be adults who are vulnerable to depression, suicidal thoughts, anxious attachment and acute sensitivity to others' feelings at the expense of their own. They also become overly solicitous of others, and rarely have their own needs and fears truly attended to. These children develop an outer shell of equanimity which hides their fear, their longings, their hurts and their loneliness. Robert E. Lee was no exception.<sup>39</sup>

A never before published mini-memoir by James H. Causten, the man who transported "Light-Horse" to Cumberland Island in 1818 provides a telling view of Lee's father at the end of his days. It also reinforces evidence that "Light-Horse Harry" and Ann were totally estranged and provides a glimpse of Robert's homelife after his father's death. Causten's account dovetails with what is known of "Light-Horse" and of his character traits.

On business in Nassau, in the Bahamas, in the winter of 1817 Causten was approached by "Light-Horse Harry" whose reputation as a war hero he knew well. Within a few weeks Causten said he realized that "Light-Horse Harry" Lee was a scoundrel. "Light-

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Horse Harry" had defrauded several widows - who had taken care of him on the island - of hundreds of dollars and had lived by deceit and confidence games. He described "Light-Horse" as a "man who had not for years possessed a dollar but had lived on his wits and the donations of credulous persons."<sup>40</sup>

Causten also related his attempt to eventually retrieve money from Ann Lee that was owed to the widows by "Light-Horse Harry." She spurned his attempts at collecting the money. Causten said he came to the Lee home in Alexandria, Virginia and told Mrs. Lee's daughter "...I desire to repeat to (Ann Lee) the dying words of her husband; and she returned for answer that she did not wish to hear me. I left the House in deep disgust..."<sup>41</sup>

Freeman intuited the tension between "Light-Horse" and Ann and unconsciously understood the pressure she would bring to bear on the son she wanted to be perfect. Despite writing, "although there is no evidence that Mrs. Ann Lee had any secret dread that her son would develop the recklessness of his father," Freeman certainly suspected she did.<sup>42</sup> Freeman noted the contrast between the "ease of her girlhood and the adversity of her married life."

He insisted "this did not embitter her," but then said "she was determined that his grim cycle of promise, overconfidence, recklessness, disaster, and ruin should not be rounded in the lives of her children."<sup>43</sup>

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Despite the psychological distance Robert E. Lee tried to put between himself and the man who abandoned him, his mother, his brothers and his sisters, the two were alike in many ways. Both were military men, revolutionary leaders, and keen admirers of George Washington, though for different reasons. Both "Light-Horse Harry" and his son were fine horsemen with a penchant for public style. They each married women not out of love but for social advancement. Both died unfulfilled and unhappy.

But Robert E. Lee, spurred by his mother's watchfulness, would always spurn drunkards and drunkenness and had a horror of debt or of any stain on his honor - as his father most certainly did. Lee would also struggle, though sometimes fail, to control his temper. In the final analysis, after "Light-Horse Harry" went into exile, Robert was raised not to be like his father but like George Washington, a virtuous contrast to "Light-Horse Harry" Lee.<sup>44</sup>

Freeman wrote in what can be read as an argument with himself:

"...because (Lee) was calm when others were frenzied, loving when they hated, and silent when they spoke with bitter tongue, they shook their heads and said he was a superman or a mysterious man. Beneath that untroubled exterior, they said, deep storms must rage; his dignity, his reserve, and his few words concealed somber thoughts, repressed ambitions, livid resentments. They were mistaken."<sup>45</sup>

Those who "shook their heads," including Freeman, were not

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mistaken. There were somber thoughts; Lee suffered depression, welcomed death, and felt himself a failure. There were repressed ambitions; he longed to be - felt a guilty obligation to his mother to be - another George Washington.<sup>46</sup> And there were livid resentments, the fury of a son spurned by his father, which stoked his battle ire and led to bloody offenses.

Lee had a penchant for self-abnegation. He envied the dead.<sup>47</sup> Lee, who possibly made several battlefield suicide attempts, openly expressed suicidal thoughts at Appomattox. Freeman described the scene on April 9, 1865 after Lee heard General John Gordon's gloomy battlefield report:

Lee heard in silence this report, which was the more conclusive because Gordon was one of the most daring leaders in the Army of Northern Virginia. If Gordon could "do nothing," unless "heavily supported by Longstreet's corp," which was already holding off two corps on Lee's rear, then..."Then," said Lee, oblivious to the presence of his staff officers about him, "there is nothing left me to do but to go and see General Grant, and I would rather die a thousand deaths."

His words meant the end! When Lee, the resourceful, the everstriking, saw nothing ahead but surrender, who else could cherish hope longer? Restraint was broken under the weight of the tragedy. Men spoke in the grief of their hearts. "Oh, General," said some one who doubtless had proudly fed his soul on the thought that the Confederates, like Washington and his comrades-in-arms, had been writing the story of a new nation, "Oh, General, what will history say of the surrender of the army in the field?"

"Yes," answered Lee simply, "I know they will say hard things of us: They will not understand how we were overwhelmed by numbers. But that is not the question, Colonel: The question is, is it right to surrender this army. If it is right, then I will take all the

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responsibility."

But he did not take it as calmly as his brave answer indicated. He looked over the field, about the time the fog was lifting, and he exclaimed as though he were tempted to a desperate act: "How easily I could be rid of this, and be at rest! I have only to ride along the line and all will be over!" His voice was almost hopeless, and he was scarcely able to control his feelings, but he stopped and gripped himself and, after an inward struggle, said with a deep sigh: "But it is our duty to live. What will become of the women and children of the South if we are not here to protect them?"<sup>48</sup>

Perhaps Robert E. Lee and Freeman each had been one of those who "proudly fed his soul on the thought that the Confederates, like Washington and his comrades-in-arms, had been writing the story of a new nation."

And, Robert E. Lee, unlike his father, would never abandon his wife and children.<sup>49</sup>

There were other psychological forces at work on Lee as well. In the lonely mother and the dutiful son, the Oedipal Complex - one of the most significant molding experiences of human life - went awry, shaping him more than any battlefield loss. The boy's desire to replace his father in his mother's heart is an old one in the human race, a universal experience. But to win the contest, as Lee did, is to be forever guilty. Lee would throughout his adult life feel unworthy, at times to the point of absurdity. "Life is indeed gliding away and I have nothing of good to show for mine," Lee, the most beloved man in the South, wrote after the

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war. "I pray I may be spared to accomplish something for the benefit of mankind and the honor of God."<sup>50</sup>

Ann was a woman of incredible resilience, who in fact did describe Robert as "son, daughter, and every thing to me."<sup>51</sup> She was filled with a deep, almost smothering love for her son and a bitterness for his father, the husband who betrayed her in so many ways. She was humiliated by the family's circumstances, especially as the daughter of a rich family reduced to living in a plantation house with doors chained to keep out the men sent to force her husband to pay his debts. Later in life she would call herself a widow, though "Light-Horse Harry" was still alive.<sup>52</sup> She suffered unremitting disappointments, social humiliation and near financial ruin before Robert, her third son, was born. Later, when she retreated into a prolonged illness, it was perhaps to cover her humiliation and depression and even guilt over having emotionally seduced her son. She may have also felt uncomfortable about being happy with "Light-Horse Harry's" departure. She would always watch her children, especially Robert, for any signs of the legacy of "Light-Horse Harry."

A rich woman turned into a pauper and a figure of pity by Harry Lee, Ann found in her son all that she had not found in her husband. Robert E. Lee had already come into this world as a "replacement child."<sup>53</sup> Shortly after discovering she was pregnant

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with an unwanted child, Ann returned to her family home to discover her beloved father and protector, Charles Carter, was dead. She went into deep mourning. When Robert was born in January of 1807, he was named after two of her beloved brothers, Robert and Edward. Her favorite, Robert, was a physician who died tragically and young. Another blow fell on Ann shortly after Robert E. Lee's birth, when her closest sister died.

Robert would have to stand in for all of them. Children born in these circumstances are under enormous pressure from the parent, sometimes consciously and overt, and always unconsciously, to be perfect, to compensate for the lost one who is usually encased in an idealized, brittle aura. Even before "Light-Horse Harry" abandoned the family, Robert was under enormous pressure from his mother to serve as a replacement for all she had lost. And once "Light-Horse Harry" was gone, and Robert's two older brothers had left home, Robert became not just father, brother, and sister to her, but the replacement and compensation for her failed marriage.

She eventually became an invalid whom Lee - who had already become the compliant person attuned to the needs of others - nursed. Lee was a boy without a childhood, prematurely assuming the burdens of caring for adults and children, duties that planted the seeds of resentment and later depression. That childhood

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produced a kind and considerate adult but also one who was very self-conscious and ruled by self-denial and a masochistic submission to fate.<sup>54</sup>

Feeling shame at his father's acts, he was branded again later in his life by the disgrace of his half brother, "Black-Horse Harry" Lee, who repeated his father's scandalous ways. "Black-Horse Harry" acknowledged seducing and impregnating the sister of his wife, an orphan girl who was his ward. Fourteen-year-old Robert was a witness to this scandal.<sup>55</sup> Freeman wrote about the incident as it affected Robert E. Lee in 1830 when a national controversy arose with Andrew Jackson's attempt to appoint "Black-Horse Harry" to a government post. Robert E. Lee was already graduated from West Point and working on his first assignment at Cockspur Island, near Savannah, Georgia.

This affair must have been an intense humiliation to Lieutenant Lee. Much as he had cherished the memory of his father, he could not have been ignorant of "Light-Horse Harry's" financial reputation, and now to have his father's name disgraced by the son who bore it was to add the blush of shame to the ruddy complexion of the young engineer. ...Significantly, Robert Lee failed, in later years, to name any one of his three sons Henry, perhaps in the belief that to do so would be to revive the scandal. Doubtless as he read by the candle of his crude quarters on Cockspur Island the story of his brother's misdeeds, he was strengthened in his resolution to efface by his own conduct the blot on the proud scutcheon of the Lees. Such things in a man's life are not to be proved by citation or confirmed by footnotes, but there is every reason to believe that the stern morality of Robert Lee was stiffened by the warning of his brother's fall.<sup>56</sup>



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Freeman dared construct what a historical figure was thinking at this time and probably came close to the truth. Lee would certainly have been affected as a teenager witnessing "Black-Horse Harry" Lee's public embarrassment. Idealizing his father as a child may have been one way Robert E. Lee attempted to cope with what he knew of his father's misconduct. Henry IV's misdeeds may well have stirred up feelings of shame again. But would a sexual and financial scandal only remind him of his father's monetary misdeeds? Would refusing to name any of his sons Henry have more to do with his half-brother or his father? Stationed at Cockspur Island, Robert E. Lee was then close to his father's grave, the first in the family to be within travelling distance. But he couldn't bring himself to go. He would only finally visit the grave thirty-two years later, in 1862.<sup>57</sup>

If his father's and half brother's behavior were not sufficient reminders to Lee, there was always his oldest full brother, Charles Carter Lee, to provide a hint of "Light-Horse Harry's" legacy. There was a trace of "Light-Horse Harry" in Charles, who would pursue dreams of wealth until old age. But, Charles Carter Lee could at times see himself for who he really was, a capacity for self observation wholly lacking in "Light-Horse Harry" and "Black-Horse Harry." Much of Robert's correspondence to Charles Carter over the middle of the 19th

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century survives. The letters describe incidences of Robert sacrificing for and reigning in his older brother's ambitious and foolish schemes.<sup>58</sup>

The undeserved shame Lee would have felt from this tumultuous upbringing would strongly affect his personality, his view of the world, his relationships with women, especially his wife, and his shaping of not only his children but, we suggest, of history. While on his first assignment in Georgia, Lee met the Mackay sisters. Freeman insists Lee "was not in love with Eliza Mackay and she had suitors enough."<sup>59</sup> Perhaps Freeman sensed something he needed to deny. The evidence regarding Lee's feelings about the MacKay sisters of Savannah suggests Lee felt otherwise and indeed did deeply care for her.<sup>60</sup>

But shortly after his assignment in Georgia, he married Mary Anne Randolph Custis. Lee's marriage, like his father's, appears to have been an unhappy one much of the time.<sup>61</sup> Mary was the spoiled great-granddaughter of George Washington. Freeman did not hide his puzzlement at the attraction between the two. "Loving her, he saw her best qualities, not her worst."<sup>62</sup> In a heretofore unpublished letter written to his oldest full brother, Charles Carter Lee, two weeks before the wedding, Robert is fatalistic and fearful of impending sexual intimacy.

I can tell you I begin to feel right funny when I count my days, especially when I consider the novel situation

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in which I shall be placed. However Byron [?] says, "Things must be as they may and that's the certain of it" which is a good doctrine too.<sup>63</sup>

Writing to his commanding officer several weeks after the wedding, Lee described how the minister "had few words to say, though he dwelt upon them as if he had been reading my Death warrant...I am told I looked `pale and interesting' which might have been the fact...But I felt as `bold as a sheep' & was surprised at my want of courage(?) in so great a degree as not to feel more excitement than at the Black Board at West Point."<sup>64</sup>

It seems possible that she knew Lee married her more out of opportunity than love. She was the sole heiress to a large fortune and even Freeman acknowledged the marriage would make young Lee the representative of the family of George Washington.<sup>65</sup> She, like Lee's mother, would suffer psychosomatic illness and become an invalid later in her life. Lee would relive his childhood burdens of taking care of another incapacitated woman.<sup>66</sup>

In Mary Lee's defense, no one has ever considered that perhaps her well-known difficult personality and psychosomatic suffering were, in part, an unspoken reaction to sensing a not so silent disdain for her by her husband.

Though considered a great leader of men, Lee preferred the society of women.<sup>67</sup> Despite a dutiful love for his wife, Lee was apparently unfulfilled at home. Lee may have found the love of

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his later life in a remarkable young woman, Martha Custis "Markie" Williams. "Markie" Williams was a great-granddaughter of Martha Washington and a cousin of Lee's wife. He would consummate the affair only through a lifelong correspondence full of longing. They would become so close, she would not marry until after Lee's death.<sup>68</sup>

In the closing chapter of his biography of Lee, Freeman used a story and a note to illustrate his idea of Lee's character. He related an incident of a mother bringing a child to Lee to be blessed. Lee told the mother: "Teach him he must deny himself."<sup>69</sup>

Lee's self-denial was certainly one of his chief characteristics, but it was hardly as noble or as free from emotional pain as Freeman wished.

Freeman also refers to two paragraphs Lee wrote during the war on a scrap of paper which no one saw until after his death.

The forbearing use of power does not only form a touchstone, but the manner in which an individual enjoys certain advantages over others is a test of a true gentleman.

The power which the strong have over the weak, the employer over the employed, the educated over the unlettered, the experienced over the confiding, even the clever over the silly - the forbearing or inoffensive use of all this power or authority, or a total abstinence from it when the case admits it, will show the gentleman in a plain light. The gentleman does not needlessly and unnecessarily remind an offender of a wrong he may have committed against him. He cannot only forgive, he can forget; and he strives for the nobleness of self and mildness of character which imparts sufficient strength to let the past be

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but the past. A true man of honor feels humbled himself when he cannot help humbling others.<sup>70</sup>

Freeman was correct in seeing self-denial and restrained power as central to Lee's personality, but those traits hardly make Lee uncomplicated. Lee's scribbled, exalted sentiments represent his desperate desire never to shame or humiliate others. They describe the foundation of his inability to assert himself with close subordinates, an inhibition which had decisive impact on his leadership at Gettysburg. Freeman documented each instance of Lee's difficulty with his subordinates and was clearly puzzled and irritated with this weakness.<sup>71</sup>

In his own need to see Lee as an unqualified hero, Freeman failed to see Lee's actions as a glimpse into the puzzle's solution - one of Lee's attempts to come to terms with the legacy of "Light- Horse Harry" Lee. "Light Horse" was hardly a true gentleman, but a strong, educated, and clever man who abused his power, never forgave or forgot, and lived in the past.

Seen in this light, Lee's actions that day at Gettysburg seem almost preordained. A paradox of Robert E. Lee was his inability at crucial moments to truly command. Often he had great difficulty confronting his lieutenants with their failings. Despite being hailed as one of history's greatest soldiers, a West Point graduate who had been battle-tested before Gettysburg at Seven Days, Second Manassas, Antietam, Fredericksburg, and

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Chancellorsville, Lee struggled to reprimand subordinates.<sup>72</sup>

Freeman, searching about for a noble reason for this weakness in his hero, claimed it was because Lee was too much of a Christian gentleman and because of excessive amiability.<sup>73</sup>

Military theorists praised Lee for his discretionary theory of command. The theory holds that the general-in-chief should mass his army at the right time and place and leave combat decisions to the division and brigade commanders. Discretionary orders enable field officers to respond to Clausewitz's "chance and uncertainty" in the midst of battle. They worked well for Lee in many instances, and especially while Stonewall Jackson was alive. But those who tout Lee's discretionary theory of command fail to realize that this was neither a theory nor a virtue nor a consequence of his being a true Southern gentleman. For Lee it was a psychological necessity.

Shame witnessed and shame felt were the source of his inability to control his subordinates. Lee could not confront his wayward lieutenants for fear of shaming them. He would never, if at all possible, make them feel humiliated as he had painfully watched his mother be mortified. The few times he ever lost his temper as a commander were distressing lapses to him.<sup>74</sup> Never would he treat others as his father had. "A true man of honor feels humbled himself when he cannot help humbling others." The

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ghost of "Light-Horse Harry" Lee rode with his son those agonizing days at Gettysburg, bridling the son's response as each of his principal officers failed him. Harry's legacy would reach from the grave to turn the tide of battle at Gettysburg and the course of American history.

Shame, whether deserved or not, is a powerful emotion whose effects are still not fully charted. Some believe it may even be the "master emotion." Shame has been identified as an important element in aggression, a sense of failure and depression. Hidden shame, which seemed to inhabit Lee, along with early abandonment, can also create an unconscious self-loathing, a belief that at the core one is fundamentally unlovable and unworthy. Shame was a source of Lee's inhibitions and his strong dutiful code of "shoulds" and "should nots."<sup>75</sup>

Years before, Jefferson Davis, then United States Secretary of War, visited West Point and felt Lee's overconcern for the cadets was an impediment to Lee's superintendency of the institution.<sup>76</sup> His first combat command in the Civil War in West Virginia, where he earned the nickname Granny Lee, was a disaster because he could not bring his warring subordinates into line. There were serious questions in Richmond then about his fitness to lead.<sup>77</sup>

Even after establishing himself as the commander of the Army

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of Northern Virginia the pattern plagued his generalship. Stonewall Jackson, a ruthless commander of his own men, was a key to Lee's success, compensating for Lee's inhibition. When Jackson was killed at Chancellorsville in May, 1863, Lee's Achilles' heel was fully exposed and had its greatest impact at Gettysburg. He was unable to forcefully lead his subordinates throughout the second invasion of the North that summer.

As Lee rode about the field at Gettysburg among Pickett's shattered men, he offered solace to his soldiers. "All this will come right in the end. We'll talk it over afterwards. But in the meantime all good men must rally. We want all good and true men just now." To all he met, Lee made clear he considered the assault's failure his alone. "It's all my fault," "The blame is mine...", he said over and over again.<sup>78</sup>

George Pickett, who had watched in disbelief as his division of Virginians was annihilated, tearfully said, "General Lee, I have no division now, Armistead is down, Garnett is down, and Kemper is mortally wounded." The destruction included Major General James L. Kemper's brigade, George Washington's original unit.

"Come, General Pickett," Lee interrupted, "this has been my fight and upon my shoulders rests the blame. The men and officers of your command have written the name of Virginia as high today as



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it has ever been written before." Some survivors crowded around the two generals, and Lee repeated, "Your men have done all that men could do; the fault is entirely my own."<sup>79</sup>

Hidden in Lee's self-blame was bitter disappointment at the failure of his subordinates. Since the beginning of the campaign into Pennsylvania his most trusted generals had let him down. General Jeb Stuart had utterly failed in his assignment to shield the army on its move to the north and provide intelligence about the movements of the Army of the Potomac. Lee moved blindly until soldiers scavenging for shoes encountered Union cavalry in the town of Gettysburg. During the first days of the battle Generals Richard Ewell and Jubal Early balked where Stonewall Jackson would have fiercely tread. General James Longstreet opposed the battle plan from its inception that May.<sup>80</sup> On the second and third days Longstreet's persistent and stubborn refusal to help Lee would become legendary. The echoes of Lee's childhood sounded through Gettysburg. Lee, at that most crucial juncture of the war, could not command any of his lieutenants to do his bidding.

Neither in his sad days after Gettysburg nor after the war did Lee ever confront his officers with their failure. But he took personal charge of the retreat from Gettysburg, overseeing the line of march and issuing specific written orders, as if in silent rebuke.

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It also seems likely that Lee had symptoms of angina and even a heart attack at Gettysburg, a medical condition that seems to have been overlooked by historians. Suppressing his emotions took their toll on Lee. The ravages of Lee's internalized rage at his life of rigid control, marked later by a retreat into religious fatalism, may have manifested itself in heart disease, an unusual disease in Lee's day, and in a premature if welcome death.<sup>81</sup>

After Gettysburg, Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia would never again take the offensive. Within a year Ulysses S. Grant would assume command of the Army of the Potomac and begin his relentless pursuit of Lee which ended with surrender at Appomattox. Describing the last five years of Lee's life Freeman told how men would see "new lines in his face and sadness in his eyes..." and how Lee would grieve "to the end of his days, sometimes so deeply that he had to get up from his bed and pace the floor until he was weary..." But Freeman, intent on protecting Lee, quickly reassured the reader this would "not come from any rage at his defeat or from any personal humiliation over the surrender."<sup>82</sup>

But what else but defeat would cause such deep grief? And who would know better than Freeman, a Richmonder who immersed himself in the glory of the old South's past? Lee knew painfully well just how close he had come that summer of 1863 to winning a

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decisive battle and the war, how near to fulfilling his triumphant wish of being the George Washington of the Confederacy.

Freeman ends his biography with the story of Lee, Christ-like, taking up a child into his arms from a suppliant mother, one of the many comparisons between Lee and Jesus made in Civil War writings. The comparison is superficially a strange one, almost sacrilegious. If the Lost Cause and its adherents were so noble, why did the South not make the more likely comparison with a noble military leader of a noble cause? Why choose Jesus Christ, who died for the sins and iniquities of his people? By selecting the Christ imagery for Lee, might Freeman and those Southerners who subscribed to it have been unconsciously and indirectly admitting guilt? The supposed noble cause was an ignoble one, a war to preserve human bondage and destroy the Republic.<sup>83</sup>

Using Freeman as a springboard to reexamine the historical record, we can make the following fresh assertions about Lee:

- Lee's father, "Light-Horse Harry," had a severe narcissistic character disorder which, coupled with alcohol abuse, would have profoundly influenced Lee;

- The psychological reasons Lee had difficulty commanding his subordinates are found in his fear of ever shaming them as he had seen his father shame many, particularly his mother. This often-

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described trait of Lee has never before been psychologically explained;

-Lee's known identification with George Washington was motivated by a fear of ever identifying with his father or half-brother;

-Lee's depression can be understood as the consequence of early childhood abandonment with unresolved mourning for that loss and Oedipal guilt.

-Lee's legendary self-denial and masochistic self-control can now be understood in light of his psychological development;

-Lee behavior at Wilderness and Spotsylvania was suicidal, literally. This fits with Lee's own statements at Appomattox and after the war;

-Lee's heart disease, rare for that time, was another consequence of suppressed rage and his ruthless self-control and self-denial. It also seems likely that Lee had symptoms of angina and even a heart attack at Gettysburg.

Freeman intuited all of these psychological traits of his beloved Robert E. Lee. He unconsciously hid the real Lee in the myth he helped nourish, not out of selfishness, but out of love for the South, for his culture, and for his father.

Ultimately the South's denial failed as a defense against the unwanted and unacceptable truth that protecting slavery was at the

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heart of the Lost Cause.<sup>84</sup> So, too, Lee's denial of his past broke down, leaving him to suffer depression, masochistic self-denial, an envy for the dead, and an incapacitating fear of bringing shame to subordinates. In the end Freeman's denial of the complexities at the heart of his great hero yields to his intuited knowledge of the man he revealed in his incomparable biography.

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1. Edmund Rice, "Repelling Lee's Last Blow at Gettysburg," in Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, eds., Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, 3 (New York, 1887-88), p. 388.

2. Gary W. Gallagher, ed., Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander, (Chapel Hill, 1989), p. 222.

3. Margaret Sanborn, Robert E. Lee: A Portrait (New York and Philadelphia, 1966) p. 93.

4. Marshall Fishwick, Lee After The War (New York, 1963) p. 95. At Lincoln's breakfast table the morning of his last day, his son Robert brought him a photograph of Robert E. Lee. After putting it on the table and studying it carefully, he said, "It is a good face. I am glad the war is over at last."

5. The Gettysburg battle has been written about extensively. For our work we have used numerous sources, but particularly those that detail the Southern side of the battle. Douglas Southall Freeman, R.E. Lee: A Biography, 3 (New York, 1935), pp. 53-134;

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Clifford Dowdey, Death of a Nation, (New York, 1958); Margaret Sanborn, Robert E. Lee: The Complete Man: 1861-1870 (Philadelphia and New York, 1966), pp. 124-137; Shelby Foote, The Civil War: A Narrative, 2 (New York, 1963), pp. 428-581.

6. Our biographical sketch of Freeman is based on Dumas Malone, "The Pen of Douglas Southall Freeman," the forward to Douglas Southall Freeman, George Washington: A Biography, 6 (New York, 1954), pp. xi-xxxii.

7. James M. McPherson quotes Freeman in his preface to the recent reissue of the one volume abridgment of Freeman's R.E. Lee, (New York, 1991), p. xii.

8. It is important to note that the Lee myth is unraveling, though only a few threads at a time. Margaret Sanborn gave Lee a more human dimension in her two volume biography (Robert E. Lee: A Portrait and Robert E. Lee: The Complete Man, New York and Philadelphia, 1966 and 1967). A similar portrayal can be found in Nancy Scott Anderson and Dwight Anderson, The Generals: Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee (New York, 1988).

The late Thomas Connelly traced the history of the

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idealization of Lee in great detail, but only briefly asserts that Lee was depressed, envied the dead and would not criticize his lieutenants. He gives no full psychological formulation for these symptoms and actions in the brief biographical sketch which concludes his study. (The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society, New York, 1977.)

Alan T. Nolan's Lee Considered: General Robert E. Lee and Civil War History (Chapel Hill, 1991) addressed four aspects of the Lee myth: Lee's alleged anti-slavery attitude, anti-secession sentiment, reluctance to accept command of the Confederate forces, and his supposed unblemished generalship. Nolan does not attempt a character study or any psychological analysis of Lee.

9. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 4:501.

10. Richard Harwell quotes Freeman in his introduction to the one volume abridgment of Freeman's R.E. Lee, ( New York, 1961), p. xii.

11. Mary Wells Ashworth quotes Freeman in her "Prefatory Note" to Freeman, George Washington, 6:xliv.



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12. Peter Gay, the historian, makes the most forceful case for including psychoanalysis as an important tool for the historian. One by one, he rebuts those who would exclude psychoanalysis from historical research. Gay regards psychoanalytic exploration as "an informed style of inquiry, supplying answers no one had thought were available before or - even more important - suggesting questions no one had thought to ask" (Freud for Historians, [New York and Oxford, 1985], p. 33).

13. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 1:1.

14. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 1:2.

15. Our understanding and characterization of "Light-Horse Harry" Lee comes from our own research of primary sources and the standard biographies and biographical sketches of Robert E. Lee's father. Though others have not drawn the same conclusion we have, we think the evidence in their works supports our judgment of "Light-Horse Harry" Lee's character. They acknowledge some of his less admirable traits, but fail to see them as part of a larger picture of a malignant and destructive narcissistic personality disorder.

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Unbeknownst to us, Paul Nagel reached a similar view at about the same time and we wholeheartedly agree with his assessment of "Light-Horse Harry" Lee in his The Lees of Virginia: Seven Generations of an American Family (New York and Oxford, 1990). We also greatly appreciate his encouragement and assistance.

"Light-Horse Harry" Lee's life is covered in: Thomas Boyd, Light-Horse Harry Lee (New York and London, 1931); Burton J. Hendrick, The Lees of Virginia (Boston, 1935); Ethel Armes, Stratford Hall: The Great House of the Lees (Richmond, 1936); Noel B. Gerson, Light-Horse Harry (Garden City, 1966); and Charles Royster, Light-Horse Harry Lee and the Legacy of the American Revolution (New York, 1981). The standard biographies of Robert E. Lee also have biographical sketches of his father of varying lengths and degrees of scrutiny.

Ms. Jeanne Calhoun, the research scholar at the Jesse Dupont Library at Stratford, Virginia, has been researching "Light-Horse Harry" Lee, has a comparable view of him, and has been helpful.

16. Charles C. Jones Jr., Reminiscences of the Last Days, Death and Burial of General Henry Lee, Albany, 1870.

17. Salman Akhtar, M.D., Broken Structures: Severe Personality

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Disorders and Their Treatment (Northvale, New Jersey and London, 1992), pp. 47-78. Salman Akhtar, M.D. and J. Anderson Thomson, Jr., M.D., "Overview: Narcissistic Personality Disorder," The Journal of the American Psychiatric Association, 139:12-20, 1982.

The diagnostic criteria for narcissistic personality disorder as defined by The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 3rd edition, revised (DSM III-R) (Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Association, 1987) are:

A pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), lack of empathy, and hypersensitivity to the evaluation of others, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by at least *five* of the following:

- (1) Reacts to criticism with feelings of rage, shame, or humiliation (even if not expressed);
- (2) Is interpersonally exploitative: takes advantage of others to achieve his or her own ends;
- (3) Has a grandiose sense of self-importance, e.g., exaggerates achievements and talents, expects to be noticed as "special" without appropriate achievement;
- (4) Believes that his or her problems are unique and can be understood only by other special people;
- (5) Is preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power,

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brilliance, beauty, or ideal love;

- (6) Has a sense of entitlement: unreasonable expectation of especially favorable treatment, e.g., assumes that he or she does not have to wait in line when others must do so;
- (7) Requires constant attention and admiration, e.g., keeps fishing for compliments;
- (8) Lack of empathy: inability to recognize and experience how others feel, e.g., annoyance and surprise when a friend who is seriously ill cancels a date;
- (9) Is preoccupied with feelings of envy.

"Light-Horse Harry" Lee had all these characteristics.

"Light-Horse Harry" Lee may also have had what is termed "malignant" narcissism, a narcissistic personality disorder which is worse than narcissistic personality disorder proper and yet not reaching the level of psychopathology of a sociopath. Harry shares with such malignant narcissists the pathological self-love, including self-centeredness, over ambitiousness, and grandiosity and the pathological relations with others spoiled by greed, envy, entitlement, appropriation of their property, and lack of concern. There is a striking absence of nonexploitative relationships in malignant narcissism. These individuals have a severely defective conscience, revealed by lying, swindling, and physical

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aggressiveness and an inability for self-reflective sadness, guilt, or remorse. (See Otto Kernberg, "The narcissistic personality disorder and the differential diagnosis of antisocial behavior." The Psychiatric Clinics of North America, 12:553-570, 1989.)

18. Royster, Light Horse Harry Lee, pp.37-38; Examples abound in William Johnson, Sketches of the Life and Correspondence of Nathanael Greene (2 vols.; Charleston, 1822).

19. Alexander Garden, Anecdotes of the American Revolution, Illustrative of the Talents and Virtues of the Heroes and Patriots Who Acted the Most Conspicuous Parts Therein, 2nd se. (Charleston, S.C., 1828) p. 130-131.

20. "This was a day of tears and lamentations to that neighbourhood. Many a son, a husband, and a father met with a most sudden and unexpected fate. The soul sickens at such an instance of unrestricted slaughter and it has called down the severest animadversions upon the conduct of the American part. It is enough to be said of it, that there cannot be found such another instance of military execution inflicted by the American arms in the whole

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history of the revolution." (William Johnson, Sketches of the Life and Correspondence of Nathanael Greene, p. 454.)

21. Henry Lee, Memoirs of the War in the Southern Department of the United States (New York, 1870) p. 258.

22. Much of the correspondence between Nathanael Greene and Henry Lee can be found in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California. Of particular interest is General Nathanael Greene's long, patient letter of February 18, 1782 to "Light-Horse Harry" Lee (HM 22706).

23. Burton Hendrick, The Lees of Virginia: Biography of a Family (Boston, 1935) p. 381.

24. Clifford Dowdey, Lee (New York, 1965) p. 22.

25. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 1:12.

26. Charles C. Jones Jr., Reminiscences of the Last Days, Death and Burial of General Henry Lee, Albany, 1870.

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27. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 1:4.

28. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 1:5.

29. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 1:3-5, footnotes 3 and 4.

30. Freeman, R.E. Lee, I:1-17.

31. Freeman, R.E. Lee, I:11.

32. Margaret Sanborn, Robert E. Lee: A Portrait:1807-1861  
(Philadelphia and New York, 1966) p. 23.

33. Gerson, Light Horse Harry, p. 14.

34. Sanborn, A Portrait, p. 31.

35. After studying "Light-Horse Harry" Lee, we came to the conclusion that he drank excessively, especially in his later years. We were gratified to learn that one of Robert E. Lee's biographers, Margaret Sanborn, speculated, when researching Harry, that he drank heavily. (Personal communication to the authors,

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36. Mary G. Powell History of Old Alexandria in Virginia (Richmond, 1928), p. 99.

37. In the months between his injuries and his exile, "Light Horse Harry's" groans filled the house and his temper knew no bounds" (Sanborn, A Portrait, p. 31). We contend, where others have not, that there was verbal and maybe even physical abuse of Ann. Our contention is based on the family's strained situation; Harry's alcohol abuse and narcissistic character disorder; and the inevitable eruption of spousal abuse in such circumstances. One need not be a psychiatrist to understand how witnessing such violence has repercussions for even a young child. Additional evidence is Robert E. Lee's later wariness of alcohol and disgust with drunkenness and his own struggles with any show of even reasonable anger.

38. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 1:16.

39. John Bowlby, Loss: Sadness and Depression (New York, 1980), pp. 301, 366. This book reviews the considerable evidence of how



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children - as young as Lee was when he lost his father and even younger children - are profoundly impacted in these ways for the remainder of their lives.

40. An April 11, 1818 letter from James Causten to Ann Lee about the death of her husband has been long known and resides in the collection of the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond, Virginia. In 1993, Causten's heretofore unknown and unpublished memoir titled "General Henry Lee: Narrative," came to light. The memoir was sent to Paul Nagel, the most recent chronicler of the Lee family. Paul Nagel recognized its importance and kindly sent it to us.

The memoir was written in 1865, late in Causten's long life, after he discovered that Robert E. Lee was the son of the man he had transported back to America fifty-seven years earlier. The memoir was handed down to his descendants, and ultimately to a family friend of one of them. Its existence was unknown to scholars until M.L. Thorpe of Santa Barbara, California sent copies of the document to Paul Nagel for authentication. M.L. Thorpe generously gave unrestricted use of the document and copies are now at the Virginia Historical Society at Richmond, Virginia and the Dupont Library at Stratford, Virginia. It appears to be

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the only known record of an adult witness to "Light-Horse Harry's" last days. Even considering the time it took before Causten recorded the memories and despite his inflamed opinion of Robert E. Lee, the memoir complements the description in Causten's 1818 letter of "Light-Horse Harry's" last days. The memoir is also supported by descriptions given in Phineas Nightengale's recollections of the dying General's last days. (Charles C. Jones Jr., Reminiscences of the Last Days, Death and Burial of General Henry Lee, Albany, 1870).

41. Causten, "General Henry Lee: Narrative."

42. Freeman, R. E. Lee, 4:496.

43. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 1:22-23.

44. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 1:22.

45. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 4:494.

46. George Washington was of paramount importance in Lee's life. His influence actually began before Lee's birth. Robert E. Lee's

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paternal grandmother, Lucy Grymes, was an early love of Washington, but she turned down his marriage proposal according to legend. Washington's patience with Harry may have been influenced by his earlier love for "Light-Horse Harry's" mother.

Though Robert E. Lee never explicitly stated a wish to be like George Washington, his actions reflected that ambition.

"In the home where Robert was trained, God came first and then Washington," Freeman wrote. (R.E. Lee, 1: 22.)

Others saw Lee consciously emulate Washington. "General Lee, you certainly play Washington to perfection," General Henry Wise once twitted Lee. (Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, eds., Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, 2:277. For discussions of the popular perceptions of Lee as another Washington see the Andersons, The Generals, pp. 187, 216, 317; and Robert E. Lee's emulation of George Washington, pp. 9, 110, 188, 273.)

Herman Melville wrote in his "Lee in the Capitol":

Who looks at Lee must think of Washington;

In pain must think and hide the thought,

So deep in grievous meaning is it fraught.

47. Connelly, The Marble Man, pp. 191-192.

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48. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 4:120-121. Our contention that Lee made battlefield suicide attempts has brought sharp protests from several scholars. They argue that desperate situations led many Civil War commanders to behave similarly so as to rally their men. Several paid the ultimate price. As examples they note that James McPherson was killed at Atlanta, Albert Sidney Johnston at Shiloh and Joseph E. Johnston was badly wounded at Seven Pines. They have angrily questioned whether we think all these men harbored death wishes. Obviously, we do not know those officers' individual motivations. And, yes, risking death to rally troops has always been the mark of gallant officers. However, we think Lee's position as general-in-chief, his actions, their timing, his history, the reaction of his men, and his own statements are sufficient evidence to raise such a speculation.

That third day at Gettysburg Lee rode forward without his staff or couriers as Pickett's assault foundered, joining E.P. Alexander, who commanded the artillery. Alexander believed Lee assumed the Union defenders on Cemetery Ridge would pursue, and had deliberately left his staff behind so that he might, without hindrance from them, personally lead a "desperate defense." (Gallager, Fighting for the Confederacy, p. 265.) The Union line stayed on the Ridge, but later at the Wilderness and at

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Spotsylvania Lee would attempt personally to lead charges that would have most likely resulted in his death. He was stopped by his distraught men both times. "Lee go back. Lee to the rear," they called at the Wilderness. (Freeman, R.E. Lee, 3:287-288;318-319;320-321.) Was it just the fervor of war? At Appomattox the man who rarely revealed his emotions would openly voice a suicidal wish. After the war Lee would say he wished he had been killed in battle. (Charles Bracelen Flood, Lee: The Last Years [Boston, 1981] p.51.)

49. It's interesting that none of his daughters ever married. Given his personality traits and his history, Lee was likely too anxiously attached and possessive to free them. Margaret Sanborn believes he also wanted to spare his daughters "the grief and disappointment which he knew first-hand from his own marriage and that of his parents." (Personal communication, July 25, 1993) Lee was constantly writing his daughters Mildred and Agnes to come home to Lexington whenever they were visiting friends. "Experience will teach you that...you will never receive such a love as is felt for you by your father and mother," Lee wrote Mildred. He wrote Agnes, who was at a wedding in Baltimore, that

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"I miss you very much and hope that this is the last wedding that you will attend." (Charles Bracelen Flood, Lee: The Last Years [Boston, 1981] p.130.)

50. Gamaliel Bradford, Lee the American (Boston, 1929), p. 265.

51. Nancy Scott Anderson and Dwight Anderson, The Generals: Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee (New York, 1989), p. 20.

52. Sanborn, A Portrait, p. 45.

53. Vamik Volkan, Linking Objects and Linking Phenomena: A Study of the Forms, Symptoms, Metapsychology, and Therapy of Complicated Mourning (New York, 1981), pp. 318-321.

54. John Bowlby, Loss: Sadness and Depression, see endnote 38.

55. The adultery and unrepentant response of Henry Lee IV are detailed by Paul Nagel, The Lees of Virginia, pp. 207-208. Fourteen-year-old Robert E. Lee's presence at Stratford Plantation during this time period has recently been established by Ms. Jeanne Calhoun, the research librarian at Stratford.

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56. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 1:98.

57. Eventually there may have been some measure of reconciliation, for in 1862, forty-four years after his father's death, Lee would finally visit his father's grave on Cumberland Island, Georgia. Armistead Long accompanied Lee and described the visit in his Memoirs of Robert E. Lee: His Military and Personal History (New York, 1886). Lee's own version of the pilgrimage can be found in a January 18, 1862 letter to his wife. The next day he wrote a letter to one of his sons which towards the end simply says, "I was also at Dungeness. The garden was beautiful. Filled with roses &c., which had not so far been touched with frost this winter. The place is deserted." He did not mention his son's grandfather. (Clifford Dowdey and Louis Manarin, eds. The Wartime Papers of R.E. Lee, Boston, 1961, pp. 103-106.)

Like other adults who are children of alcoholic or otherwise destructive parents, the trials and suffering of Lee's life may have led to a forgiveness not possible when the emotional wounds inflicted by his father were still fresh. Lee would make one last pilgrimage to his father's grave in April of 1870, a few months before his own death.

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58. Nagel, The Lees of Virginia, p. 232. Many of Robert E. Lee's letters to Charles Carter Lee from 1830-1860 are in the manuscript division of Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville. They seemed to have either escaped the notice of previous Lee biographers or were thought inconsequential. We think they provide new insights about Lee.

59. Freeman, R.E. Lee, I:102.

60. Sanborn, Robert E. Lee, I:72.

61. Connelly, The Marble Man, pp. 172-176.

62. Freeman, R.E. Lee, I:109.

63. Robert E. Lee to Charles Carter Lee, June 13, 1831, ALS, University of Virginia.

64. Anderson, The Generals, p.40.

65. Freeman, R.E. Lee, I:110.



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66. Robert's nursing duties began immediately. Mary and her mother were sick on their honeymoon trip visiting relatives. (Anderson, The Generals, p. 41.) Five years later, in another long, unpublished letter to his brother Charles Carter, Robert E. Lee hints at the strain on him and perceives the emotional component to much of her suffering. "During this time she suffered extremely, and what I then experienced could never be repeated...She has improved somewhat since our arrival, though as far as I am able to judge the waters have contributed very little, or indeed nothing towards it...Her nervous system is much shattered. She has almost a horror of crowded places, an indisposition to make the least effort, and yet a restless anxiety which renders her unhappy and dissatisfied." (Robert E. Lee to Charles Carter Lee, August 2, 1836, ALS, University of Virginia.)

67. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 1:119.

68. Avery Craven, "To Markie": The Letters of Robert E. Lee to Martha Custis Williams (Cambridge, Ma., 1933). Even taking into account the style of correspondence of the day, a reader not blinded by the idealized image of Robert E. Lee will see these as

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love letters.

69. Freeman, R.E.Lee, 4:505.

70. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 4:499.

71. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 3:20-22.

72. One exception was at the Wilderness and Spotsylvania in May of 1864. On May 12 Lee pushed aside the ineffective Richard Ewell who had assumed Stonewall Jackson's command after Jackson's death at Chancellorsville. Ewell had failed Lee a year earlier at Gettysburg. Relieving Ewell, despite the general's pathetic request to stay with his corps, Lee took charge himself. This was late in the war and the situation was dire. Interestingly, Lee overcame his usual reticence to humiliate a subordinate at a moment when we believe he may also have been suicidally desperate. (Endnote 48)

73. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 4:167.

74. Connelly, The Marble Man, p. 204.

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75. Leon Wurmser's The Mask of Shame (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1981) is a superlative and comprehensive psychoanalytic study of shame. An excellent review of current theories about shame is Robert Karen's, "Shame," The Atlantic Monthly, February 1992, pp. 40-70.

76. Freeman, R.E.Lee, 1:339.

77. Freeman, R.E.Lee, 1:541-578.

78. Foote, The Civil War, 2:568.

79. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 3:128-130.

80. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 3:20-22.

81. Richard D. Mainwaring, M.D. and Curtis G. Tribble, "The Cardiac Illness of General Robert E. Lee," Surgery: Gynecology and Obstetrics 174 (1992): 237-234.

During the night of July 2, 1863, Lee had a severe attack of diarrhea, though no one else on his staff with whom he shared food and water suffered similarly. One of Lee's biographers, Clifford

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Dowdey, believed this was a sign of emotional strain. (Clifford Dowdey, Lee [New York, 1965], p. 381.) Lee had no known prior history of stress-induced gastroenteritis or irritable bowel syndrome. Gastrointestinal distress is often an accompanying symptom of coronary artery disease. Given that he had a myocardial infarction (heart attack) in the spring of 1863, Lee may well have been suffering severe myocardial ischemia (lack of oxygen to the heart) that night at Gettysburg. After the battle Lee would write that he could no longer exert himself as vigorously as before, another indication he may have suffered from his heart disease at Gettysburg.

82. Freeman, R.E. Lee, 4:194.

83. The portrayal of Southern war heroes as religious saints and martyrs and the Christ imagery of Lee is detailed in Charles Reagan Wilson's Baptized In Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause 1865-1920, Athens, 1980.

Kenneth Stampp in his "The Southern Road to Appomattox" argues that guilt about slavery contributed to the South's defeat, keeping many from wholehearted and unqualified support of the Confederacy and leading to an unconscious welcoming of defeat

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which would rid them of the moral burden of human bondage. (The Imperiled Union, New York, 1981, pp 246-269.)

84. "...On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil-war. All dreaded it - all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to *saving* the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to *destroy* it without war - seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would *make* war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would *accept* war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

One eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war, the magnitude, or the duration, which

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it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease..." From Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address," March 4, 1865.

The evidence slavery was *the* issue, and recognized as such by the people and their political leadership at the time, and what followed was an attempt to minimize or deny the fact, is reviewed by Nolan, Lee Considered, pp. 25-29, 154-157.