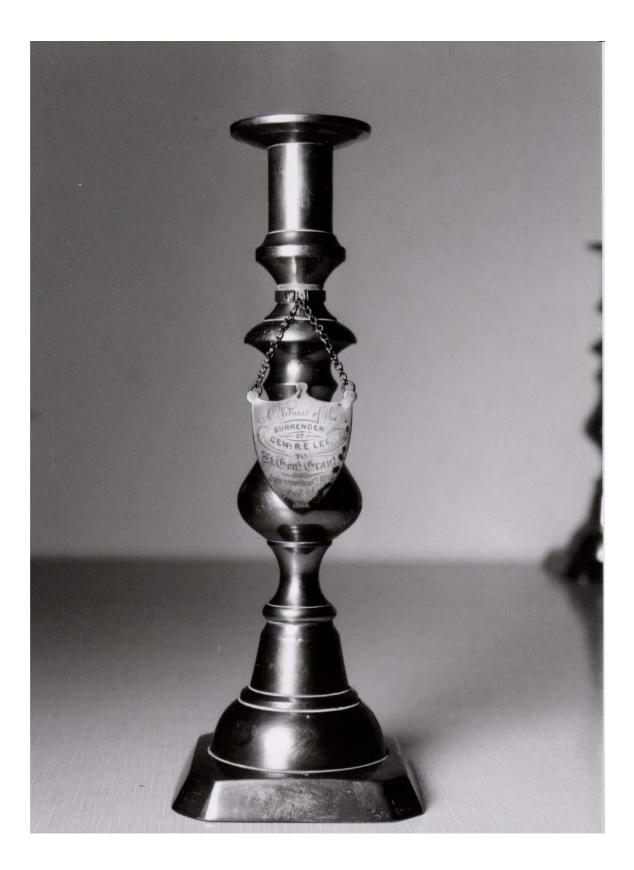


Pair of Candlesticks from McLeans' parlor



Description of what happened to various items from the McLean House

"Generals Grant and Lee were scarcely gone from the house when the craze for mementoes of the occasion seemed to spread among officers and privates. Large sums were offered Major Wilmer S. McLean for the chairs in which the generals sat duri ng the meting- for the tables on which the writing was done- for substantially eve ry article of furniture. There were two tables in the room. On one of these the mi nutes of the meeting were first made out. This table Gen. Custer obtained for twent y five dollars, and his widow still has it in her possession. The other table was the one at which Grant and Lee sat when they affixed their signatures to the final not es which completed the surrender. This table Gen. Ord purchased for fifty dollars; a nd it is still in possession of Mrs. Ord. There has been much sharp contention bet ween the families of these distinguished officers, as to which of them owned the cele brated table used on the day of the surrender.

Numerous offers were made for the chairs in which Grant and Lee sat, but Major McLean steadily refused to part with them. It seems that a couple of cavalry officers , finding they could not obtain the chairs by any other means, seized them by force and carried them away. They tried to induce McLean to accept pay for them; but he flung the 'greenbacks' on the floor indignantly. Sometime after the chairs were c arried off a cavalryman rode up, thrust a ten dollar 'greenback' into McLean's ha nds, and exclaimed as he rode away: "This is for the Major's chair." Search wa s made for the chairs, and the officers who confiscated them, but neither could be f ound."

An excerpt from Three Years with Grant as Recalled by war

Correspondent Sylvanus Cadwallader edited by Benjamin P. Thomas Copyright 195 5 by Benjamin P. Thomas

"Mr. McLean had been charging about in a manner which indicated that the excitement was shaking his nervous system to its center; but his real trials did not begin until the departure of the chief actors in the surrender. Then relic-hunters charged down upon the manor-

house, and began to bargain for the numerous pieces of furniture. Sheridan paid th e proprietor twenty dollars in gold for the table on which General Grant wrote the terms of surrender, for the purpose of presenting it to Mrs. Custer, and handed it over to her dashing husband, who galloped off to camp bearing it upon his shoulder . Ord paid forty dollars for the table at which Lee sat, and afterward presented it to Mrs. Grant, who modestly declined it, and insisted that Mts. Ord should become it s possessor. General Sharpe paid ten dollars for the pair of brass candlesticks: Colon el Sheridan, the general's brother, secured the stone inkstand; and General Capehart the chair in which Grant sat, which he gave not long before his death to Captain Wilmon W. Blackmar of Boston. Captain O'Farrell of Hartford became the possess or of the chair in which Lee sat. A child's doll was found in the room, which the younger officers tossed from one to the other, and called the "silent witness." This t oy was taken possession of by Colonel Moore of Sheridan's staff, and is now owne d by his son. Bargains were at

once struck for nearly all the articles in the room; and it is even said that some me mentos were carried off for which no coin of the republic was ever exchanged."

An excerpt from Campaigning with Grant by Horace Porter

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"As soon as Grant left the McLean House, a souvenir craze swept over the Federal Officers who were present at the surrender. Maj. Gen. P.H. Sheridan is supposed to have paid \$20.00in gold for the table on which Grant drafted the terms of surr ender. It is said that a "spirited auction" was held, and that Sheridan, given first choice, paid two ten dollar gold pieces for the table. . .

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Maj. Gen. Edward O.C. Ord is supposed to have paid \$40.00 for the table with the marble top...

• • •

Other officers either appropriated or purchased virtually all of the furnishing in th e McLean parlor. Even little "Lula" McLean's rag doll, was carried away by Sheri dan's aide-de-

camp, Lt. Col. Thomas W.C. Moore, although it is said that a Union soldier tried t o console her with a French china doll.

By the time that Matthew Brady and his assistant arrived from Petersburg there w as little in the surrender room to photograph but emptiness. Souvenir hunters had c arried away practically everything.

Members of the McLean family have denied indignantly that any kind of

sale took place and have said that the Union officers simply plundered McLean's ho me and stole what they wanted. They have resented the statement of Mrs. George

A. Custer that McLean was glad to sell his furniture, and have considered the cond uct of the Federal officers especially reprehensive after McLean graciously permitt ed the conference to be held in his home."

An excerpt from Biography of Wilmer McLean by Frank P. Cauble Copyright 1987 by H.E. Howard Incorporated