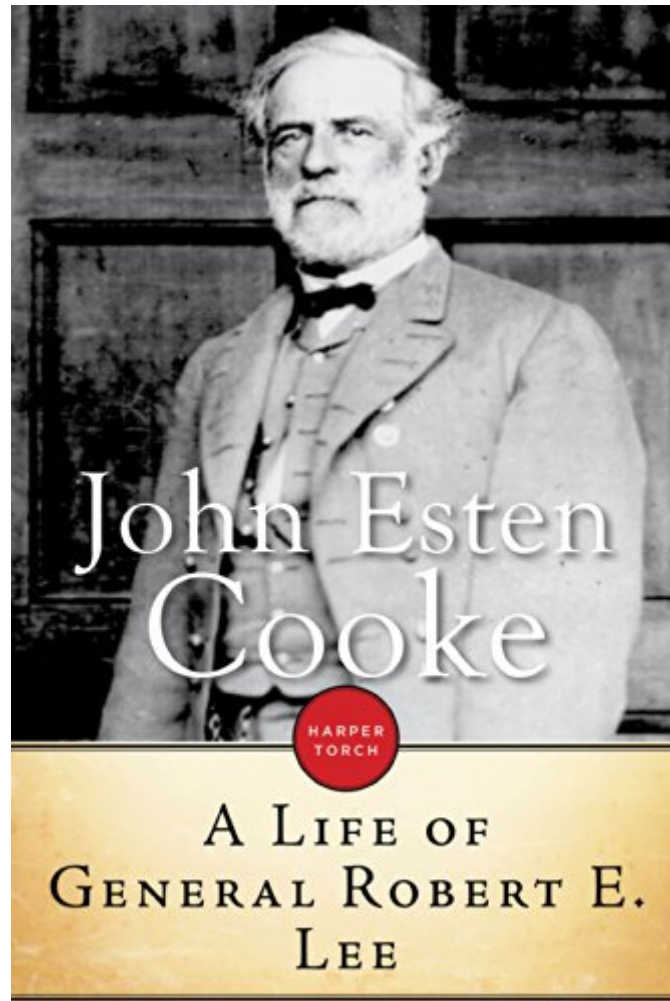




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A Life Of General Robert E. Lee



Synopsis

John Esten Cooke's *A Life of General Robert E. Lee* is a biography of the venerable commander of the army of the Confederate States of America. Offered a commission in the Union army by President Lincoln in 1861, the distinguished career officer and combat engineer opted instead to follow his home state of Virginia out of the Union. Lee quickly developed a reputation as a gifted battlefield tactician, defeating larger Northern forces again and again, although this talent was not enough to overcome the industrial and financial strengths of the North. Today, Lee is a much admired military figure and continues to be as revered in the North as he was in the South. HarperTorch brings great works of non-fiction and the dramatic arts to life in digital format, upholding the highest standards in ebook production and celebrating reading in all its forms. Look for more titles in the HarperTorch collection to build your digital library.

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“The Grand Old Duke of York,He had ten thousand men,He marched them up to the top of the hill,And he marched them down again.”

Children’s Nursery Rhyme
The Life of General Robert E. Lee is not only a biography, a study in the character of Lee, it is a blow by blow account of the American Civil War (1861 to 1865) and a fascinating record of American history. Written by John Esten Cooke who was a lawyer, poet, author and veteran of this war, writing the biography at the time Lee was still alive, the author uses direct quotes of dialogue by the principals (including Lee), official military communications and personal letters, all of which makes this book bring American history alive. The Audio Book is narrated by Joseph B. Kearns, with clear diction and characterization, the written word is cast into magic. It is interesting to note that the language of the time (1860) has morphed since the time of John Quincy Adams (late 1700’s), and much of the formality has been lost, becoming more spare and closer to the speech of the modern America. The beginning chapters introduce the history of the Lee family, originally Normans that fought with William the Conqueror, razing England and settling there in 1066, becoming the Essex family line. Having supported Charles I, who was overthrown, they emigrated to Virginia and the New World. His father was General Henry “Light Horse Harry” Lee and Lee followed in his footsteps attending West Point with a military career; he specialized in military engineering, astronomy and was a staff officer. He marries Mary Custis, daughter of an adopted son of George Washington and has three sons and two daughters, although, Mr. Cooke does not deem it important to explore the leader’s private life, an oversight, it is still a fascinating read. Mr. Cooke presents General Robert E. Lee in glowing terms, describing his physical beauty, noble bearing, and popularity, going so far as to say the Lee family was loved all over the world and Lee “was loved by his enemies.” Mr. Cooke also notes Lee had an unwavering attachment to his call to duty as a soldier and as a patriot of the Confederate Army. “His fame as a soldier, great as it is, yields to the true glory of having placed duty before his eyes always as the supreme object of life. He resigned his commission from a sense of duty to his native state; made this same duty his sole aim in every portion of his subsequent career; and, when all had failed, and the cause he had fought for was overthrown, it was the consciousness of having performed conscientiously, and to the utmost, his whole duty, which took the sting from defeat, and gave him that noble calmness which the whole world saw and admired.” Perhaps too close to his subject or the ravages of the war, Mr. Cooke’s presentation is not totally objective. He lavishes praise on someone so attached to “duty” they miss the point that enslavement of the

Blacks is against the Holy Spirit Way and against God. A *“cult of ego”* miscast, he is a good looking, intelligent, charismatic leader who does not understand that the premise of slavery is wrong. In reality, General Robert E. Lee is an impressive misanthrope, always talking about what is the right thing to do, concerned with the will of God, without a truly defined moral construct he has ended up a leader on the wrong side of a war. Having success against the American Army defending Virginia, Lee moves his army north to invade Maryland. He sends a poster to the people of Maryland, an appeal *“The people of the Confederate states have along watched with the deepest sympathy the wrongs and outrages that have been inflicted upon the citizens of a Commonwealth allied to the states of the South by the strongest social, political, and commercial ties. They have seen, with profound indignation, their sister state deprived of every right, and reduced to the condition of a conquered province.”* This missive raves on and is signed by General Robert E. Lee. *“Either their sentiment in the favor of the Union was too strong, or they found nothing in the condition of affairs to encourage their Southern feelings.”* So nothing much is wrong in Maryland according to the local people. During the last days of the war, his troops are severely depleted, the end of the war is imminent, he says, *“There is nothing left but to go to General Grant, and I would rather die a thousand deaths!”* On the last day of the war, he goes on to say, *“Human virtue should be equal to human calamity”* (as if his compulsion to duty was everything despite the grave suffering of his soldiers). General Robert E. Lee was an impressive misanthrope and dangerous. Despite being caught up in the miasma of charisma around Lee, Mr. Cooke presents the accounts of the Civil War as a detailed and an exciting presentation of military strategy in the mid-1800s. The campaign is fought with muskets and bayonets, and lines of men that fire into each other. Strategy involved troop movements and like a chess game, second guessing and outsmarting the opposing General to gain territory. The second battle of Manassas described: *“An obstinate conflict ensued, the opposing lines fighting almost bayonet to bayonet, delivering their volleys into each other at the distance of ten paces.”* The Confederate Army despite fighting with reduced numbers of soldiers compared with the Federal Army, won all the battles until the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863. Lee was a master of military strategy and his men loved and admired him, *“He was naturally simple and kind, with great gentleness and patience . . . the private soldiers . . . were the most meritorious class of the army, and that they deserved and should receive the utmost respect and consideration.”* The names of the battles follow in infamy, The Battle of Chickahominy (Lee’s Army: 75,000 men, Federal

Army: 150,000 men), the 2nd Battle of Manassas (Lee's Army: 50,000 men, Federal Army: 100,000 men), the Battle of Sharpsburg (Lee's Army: less than 40,000 men, Federal Army: 87,000 men), the Battle of Fredericksburg (Lee's Army: about 50,000, Federal Army: 110,000 to 120,000 men) and on. After the Battle of Fredericksburg, two officers of the Federal Army under General Burnside were overheard talking: "What do you think of it?" "It doesn't seem to have the ring," was the reply. "No the bell is broken," the other added. "As if predicting a turn in the fortunes of the war. The American Civil War was a divisive time in American history, pitting brother against brother, the manufacturing economy of the north against the agricultural economy of the south as well as on the moral grounds of the existence of slavery. The death toll was heavy, estimates range from 618,222 to 750,000 men died in battle. The personalities, and events in The Life of Robert E. Lee are a fascinating and intimate presentation of the American Civil War, a culturally significant work. An adventure in American history from Legacy Audio Books. Genre: AudioBooks, History, Biography, Military Memoir

I was born in the north and was taught that the Union was right and the South were the "bad guys". This book changed my mind. Also read Lincoln Unmasked for some real eye openers about North vs. South.

satisfied

Bad reader. Difficult to understand. Alters reading speed.

General LEE what else can you say!!

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