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**A House Divided: The Collapse of the
Confederacy – V**

Lead: One hundred and fifty years ago the Republic was facing its greatest crisis. This continuing series examines the American Civil War. It is "A House Divided."

Intro: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: With the prospects of Confederate defeat around Petersburg increasing with each passing day, in spring 1865 Robert E Lee planned for a last campaign. He would give up the Capital at Richmond, extract his army,

march south, connect with Joseph Johnston in North Carolina, defeat William Sherman, and with the last remaining serious Confederate army, deal Grant such a resounding blow that the North would be forced to seriously treat for peace. It was a daring plan and, of course, it failed.

At first his scheme worked brilliantly. Confederate divisions disengaged, moved on different paths and merged at Amelia Courthouse southwest of Petersburg. Yet, this was not the Army that he faced at Fredericksburg or even at Cold Harbor. The Army of the Potomac was four times larger than Lee's, it was tempered by the fighting of the previous year, and it was led by a

General-in-Chief who had the resources and the men and was determined to trap Lee and wrap up this war.

Brutal fighting came at Sayler's Creek, but by Palm Sunday, April 9th, the trap had been sprung. Near the little village of Appomattox, Lee held council with his most trusted subordinates. The subject: surrender. When General Alexander suggested that the Army break up, melt into the hills and continue the fight as guerrilla partisans, Lee said no. He knew that would only end in a level of bitterness exceeding by many degrees that which he and his men felt now. He told them he had but one choice and that was to surrender. "There is nothing left for

me to do but to go and see General Grant, and I would rather die a thousand deaths.” For him and the Confederacy it was over.

At the University of Richmond’s School of Professional and Continuing Studies, I’m Dan Roberts.

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