

BENNETT PLACE



The End of War



CAROLINAS CAMPAIGN



The Carolinas Campaign began on February 1, 1865, when Union Gen. William T. Sherman led his army north from Savannah, Georgia, after the "March to the Sea." Sherman's objective was to join Gen. Ulysses S. Grant in Virginia to crush Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Scattered Confederate forces consolidated in North Carolina, the Confederacy's logistical lifeline, where Sherman defeated Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's last-ditch attack at Bentonville. After Sherman was reinforced at Goldsboro late in March, Johnston saw the futility of further resistance and surrendered on April 26, essentially ending the Civil War.

On April 17, 1865, Confederate Gen. Joseph E. Johnston and Union Gen. William T. Sherman met under a flag of truce midway between their lines on Hillsborough Road, seven miles west of Durham Station, to discuss surrender terms. Johnston suggested that they use this nearby farmhouse – the home of James and Nancy Bennett – for privacy.

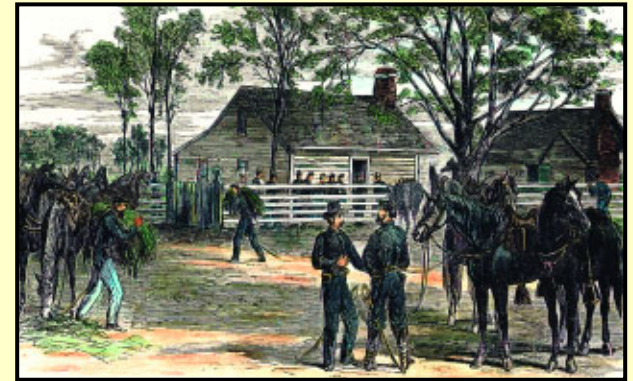


Interior of James Bennett's House, Scene of Johnston's Surrender, April 26, 1865 (Johnston resting his elbow on the table while Sherman faces the clock).

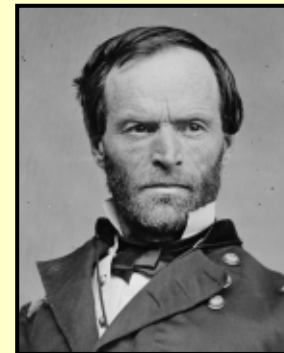
Inside the Bennett house, Sherman informed Johnston of President Abraham Lincoln's assassination. Uncertain of the consequences of this murder, the generals

began negotiations, with Sherman offering terms similar to those that Gen. Ulysses S. Grant had given Gen. Robert E. Lee at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on April 9. Johnston countered with a plan for "a permanent peace," including political terms. At their second meeting on April 18, Sherman submitted a "basis for agreement": disbanding remaining Confederate armies, recognizing existing state governments, establishing federal courts, restoring political and civil rights to former Confederates, and a general amnesty. Confederate President Jefferson Davis approved the agreement, but U.S. Secretary of War Edwin C. Stanton rejected it summarily. U.S. general-in-chief Grant ordered Sherman to meet again with Johnston and offer him the Appomattox terms.

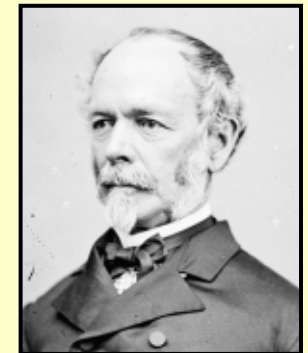
On April 26, Sherman and Johnston met here for the last time, and Johnston accepted the terms, surrendering the armies under his command including those in the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida – some 89,270 Confederates. It was the largest surrender of troops in the war.



"James Bennett's House, Where Johnston Surrendered," Harper's Weekly, wood engraving, 1865.



Gen. William T. Sherman
– Courtesy of Library of Congress



Gen. Joseph E. Johnston
– Courtesy of Library of Congress