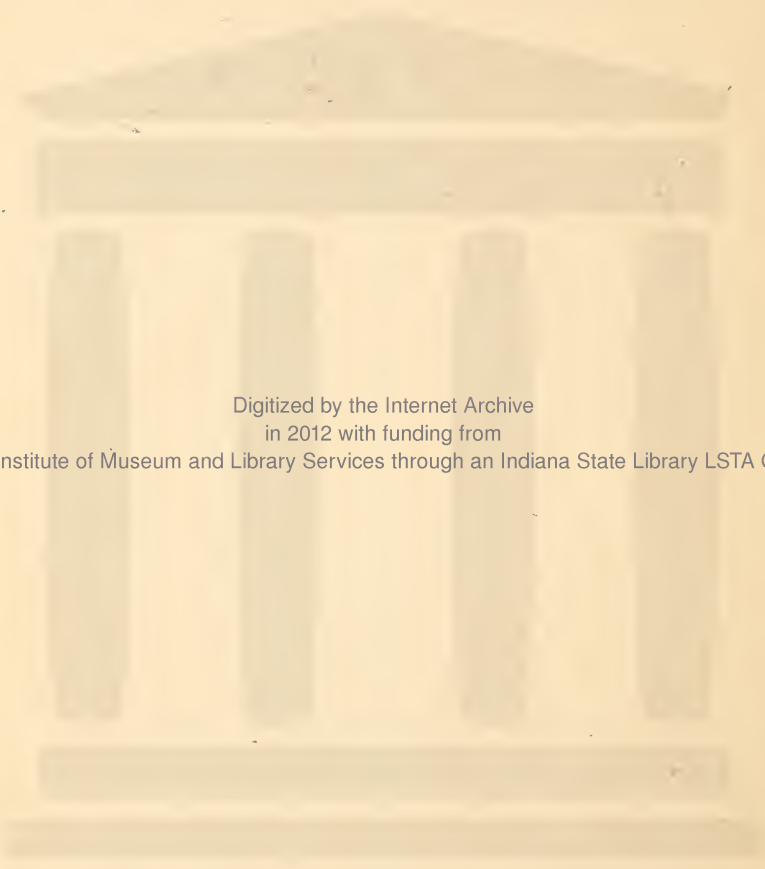


GRANT IN THE
WILDERNESS



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N.Y. May 14. 1914







GRANT

GRANT IN THE
WILDERNESS

By FREDERICK HILL MESERVE

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GRANT IN THE WILDERNESS.

FIFTY YEARS ago, in May, 1864, the Union Army under the immediate direction of Lieutenant-General U. S. Grant, was fighting its way from the Rapidan and Fredericksburg through the Wilderness of Virginia towards Richmond. There were almost daily engagements in the slow progress southward, leading to the greater and indecisive battle of Cold Harbor in the early part of June.

Late in the afternoon of the 21st of May Grant made temporary headquarters at Massaponax Church, about fifteen miles south of Fredericksburg. Soldiers removed the benches from the small church and arranged them in a circle under the trees directly in front of the building, so that General Grant and his staff and General Meade might rest after the fatigue of the day.

The army photographer, probably Brady or one of his assistants, made pictures of this historic scene, placing the camera on the steps or in the window of the church and looking down upon the group. These small photographs from the collection of the writer, show the great

leader as he appeared in the field. There are war time pictures of Grant which were taken in photograph galleries, at his headquarters at Vicksburg, Chattanooga and City Point, but with the single exception of one picture at Lookout Mountain it is believed that this series in the Wilderness is the only pictorial record of Grant in the field.

Of the group of officers under the trees only two are living to-day, General Horace Porter, then Lieutenant-Colonel and Aide to General Grant, and Captain Samuel H. Beckwith, the cipher operator who was attached to his staff. Charles A. Dana, the Assistant Secretary of War, who had been sent by President Lincoln to confer with Grant and report the course of the war, was one of the group, and Brigadier-General John A. Rawlins, then Grant's Chief of Staff, who later was to be his Secretary of War, sat on the bench with him.

This halt at Massaponax Church to rest has been incorrectly called a Council of War at Bethesda Church. The engagement known as the battle of Bethesda Church was fought later when the army was about twenty miles from Richmond. General Porter wrote in 1912: "This

story of a council of war called by General Grant is fanciful. I can say very positively there was no such council and that General Grant's record is peculiar as he never called a council of war in the field." In a more recent letter General Porter says: "I think your list of those in the picture is substantially correct. It was one of the most famous pictures taken during the war. I am glad you are preparing a monograph using these photographs of Brady. He was a perfect enthusiast in taking war pictures."

All of these pictures have been previously published. The original negatives are in the possession of The Review of Reviews Company and the War Department. A few prints have been made from them in recent years, but early prints made at the time or soon after the war are scarce, and may be found only in public or large private collections.

The writer is indebted to Mr. David Homer Bates, of New York, manager and cipher operator of the War Department telegraph office at Washington during the war, for the names of the officers who were present.

New York, May 12, 1914.

VIEW No. 1.

Seated on the bench at the base of the two trees in the centre of the picture, right to left:

Brig.-Gen. John A. Rawlins, Chief of Staff.

Charles A. Dana, Asst. Sec. of War.
Lt.-Gen. Grant.

Lt.-Col. Frederick T. Dent, Aide.

Seated on the bench at the left of the circle, left to right:

Maj.-Gen. George G. Meade.

Lt.-Col. Cyrus B. Comstock, Aide.

Lt.-Col. Adam Badeau, Military Secretary.

Lt.-Col. Horace Porter, Aide.

Seated on the bench facing Gen. Grant, left to right:

Lt.-Col. Orville E. Babcock, Aide.

Lt.-Col. Ely S. Parker, Military Secretary.

Lt.-Col. Peter Todd Hudson, Aide.

Standing behind Gen. Grant at the left of the trees:

Lt.-Col. Theodore S. Bowers, Acting Adjutant-General.

Capt. Samuel H. Beckwith, Cipher Operator, arms folded.



1

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VIEW No. 2.

Here General Grant may be seen at the left of the picture leaning over General Meade's shoulder apparently inspecting the map which is held flat by another officer standing in front.

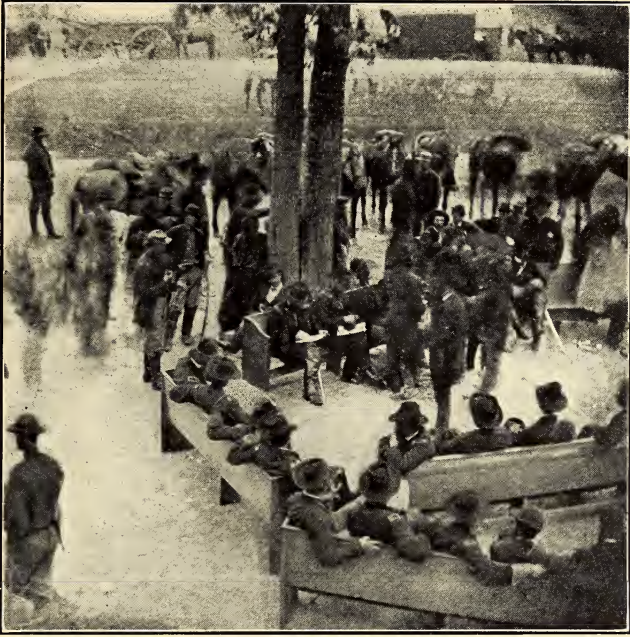


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VIEW No. 3.

General Grant has returned to his first seat in View No. 1, and may be seen writing. General Meade is still studying the map. Other officers appear to be talking with General Rawlins. The scene about the central group has changed in each view, but the horses, attended by orderlies, are seen in each ready for instant motion.



3

11

VIEW No. 4.

The general view of the church.



4

13

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200 copies are printed for the members of the
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