Mary Frances Grant

Born at Georgetown, Ohio July 28, 1839, Mary Frances was the youngest of Ulysses Grant’s siblings. During the Civil War the majority of Grant’s letters to his Georgetown family were addressed to this younger sister or his father. Mary Frances Grant married the Rev. Michael John Cramer, D.D. on October 27, 1863. He was consul at Leipzig, Germany (1867-70), U.S. Minister to Denmark (1871-81) and U.S. Minister and Consul General at Berne (1881-85). They had 2 children, a daughter, Clara Virginia Cramer and a son Jesse Grant Cramer. Mary Frances died in 1905 and is buried in New Jersey.
CAMPAIGN SONG
BY A RECONSTRUCTED REBEL

Air.—"Bonnie Blue Flag"

1. Old Maine to California sends
   The welcome, welcome word,
   And northward, rolling to the South,
   The swelling cry is heard.
   And men of every age and race
   Have caught the glorious shout,
   Hurrah! hurrah for General Grant,
   And fling his banner out.
       Hurrah! hurrah
   For General Grant, hurrah!
   Hurrah for the Union flag
   With every Southern Star.

2. The wave of Reconstruction rolls
   From old Virginia's hills.
   Across the South, to Texas plains,
   And every bosom thrills.
   When this is done, we'll join the fight,
   And this is our intent
   To hoist the name of General Grant,
   And make him President.
       Hurrah! hurrah, etc.

3. We'll swear upon the sword of Lee,
   Beside our Jackson's grave,
   To battle only for the man
   Who can the Union save.
   By all the blood the war has shed,
   By all we hope to be,
   We'll rally to the standard now
   That keeps the people free.
       Hurrah! hurrah, etc.

4. They're rallying North, and East, and West,
   We'll rally in the South,
   With ringing shouts for General Grant
   Upon each patriot mouth.
   Hurrah for Grant! the shouts must roll
   From every Union lip,
   And every man must rally now
   To man the union ship.
       Hurrah! hurrah, etc.
At the close of my last letter I informed you that I had again established myself in business, and, as I had expected, my new enterprise resulted quite favorably. After that— all was favorable, and, to me, interesting; before—all doubt, disaster and lost time. During the latter part of the winter of 1820-21 I made the acquaintance of a young woman, the daughter of a highly respectable and somewhat well-off farmer, living about ten miles back of the village. I discovered she was a person of good sense, neat in person, industrious in her habits, amiable in disposition, and quite handsome, without the slightest appearance of vanity. Where there was such a combination of good qualities, I thought Providence would favor and not frown on my efforts to secure the person, and two or three months after, when I found that the former engagement must be broken off, I proposed, was accepted, and on the 24th of June, 1821, I was married to Miss Hannah Simpson.

In August we commenced house-keeping in a neat little one story frame cottage, with three small rooms, cellar and attic-room. After I commenced house-keeping I was allowed six and a half dollars per month for boarding myself, making my wages $318 per year. That looks like small wages to people now, but it was better then, and would go further in the support of a family than two thousand dollars would now.

Perhaps it would interest some young people to know what it cost to live forty-seven years ago, and, for their benefit I will give some of the details.

For rent of the house, with lot of half an acre of excellent bottom land for garden, I paid two dollars per month; now, such a house, here would readily bring $25 per month. Flour $1.50 per barrel, now $13; hams, 2 ½ cents, now 20 cents per lb.; butter 6 1/2 cents, now 55@60 cents lb.; eggs, 2@ 4 cents, now 20@40 cents per dozen; potatoes 12@18 cents, now $2 per bushel; oats 10@12 cents per bushel; corn 12@17 cents per bushel, now 75@$1 per bushel; dressed hogs and quarter of beef, 1 ½ cents, now 8@15 cents per lb.; cows, $7 @$8, such as will now bring $60 $80; an extra cow, that would then bring $10 @$12, would now bring $100@ $120. Chickens, 37 ½ @62 ½ cents per dozen, now 50@60 cents apiece. Groceries and dry goods were just about as high then as now, and yet it did not cost one sixth-part as much for such articles as it does now, for then we had not learned to be so foolishly extravagant as at the present. Leather was about as high then as now, and with such prices for living, paying six to eight dollars per month to a journeyman, working 12 to 14 hours per day, and with chestnut oak bark at four dollars per cord, it would be supposed a tanner might live and afford a wife, especially one that could do her own work.

I continued on at Point Pleasant for nearly two years after I was married, the force consisting only of myself and one boy, my partner's son, and occasionally a journeyman. Early in the spring of 1823, Georgetown was established as the county
seat of the new county of Brown, the next county east, and about 20 miles from Point Pleasant. The place seemed to present strong inducements for a permanent location and as I was only temporarily settled at the Point, I sold out to my partner, and went to Georgetown on the 1st of May, 1823. I took with me, as the result of my two and a half years at the Point, $1,100-$1,000 of that in silver. But that was not all; I took that interesting wife I have spoken of, and, more still I took what I thought a very interesting little boy, only a few days over a year old.

In Georgetown I sank a little tannery on a small scale, worked in a small stock, and in the fall built myself a snug little two story brick house, furnished it nicely, and put my interesting little family in it before the cold weather. When I squared up in the fall, I found I was not one hundred dollars out for my house and tan yard, over the profits of my summer's work. This may look like a small and slow business. It was so, but I had had such a surfeit of poverty that I resolved to go on a sure, rather that a fast plan.

I continued on in this way, improving a little every year. Two years after I built my house, I added a kitchen in the rear, and a few years later, when the increase of my family required and my means justified it, I built a large house in front. My object was not to get rich, but to make my family comfortable and contented, and to train up my children for usefulness.

Early in the year 1839, when my oldest son was nearly seventeen years of age, he told me he could never follow the tanning business; that he did not like it. I told him that, whatever he expected to follow through life, he should engage in now, and not waste his early life learning a business he did not intend to follow. Among other preparations for life he desired an education. Although my business had been good and reasonably successful, yet I did not feel able to spare enough out of it to support him at college. So I suggested West Point; that met his approbation, and I made application, and by the veriest accident in the world I obtained the appointment for him, and immediately started him off.

Yours, etc. J. R. Grant
Covington, Ky., 1868
The bonnet in the picture above was owned by Julia Grant. To view this Grant artifact visit the U.S. Grant House (Grant's Boyhood Home) 203 E. Grant Ave. Georgetown, Ohio 45121. For information write: U.S. Grant Homestead, 219 E. Grant Ave., Georgetown, Ohio 45121 or call 937-378-4222 or 937-378-3760

LITTLE KNOWN FACTS

Grant's life in Galena was not as drab and poverty stricken as reported. He and his family lived in a seven-room house high on a hill in the best neighborhood in town. Julia had a servant, and did none of the housework herself.
GRANT BIRTHPLACE ON NATIONAL REGISTER

The Grant birthplace, located off State Route 52 in the village of Point Pleasant, Ohio, has recently been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to that distinction, Highway 52 now has the honor of being named the U. S. Grant Memorial Highway. The Grant birthplace is open April through October, Wed. - Sat. 9:30-12:30, 1:00-5:00, and Sundays 12:00-5:00. For more information call 513-553-4911 or 1-800-283-8932.

THE GENERAL’S WARDROBE

Dr. John H. Brinton, Civil War surgeon, wrote in his memoirs, "I was the happy possessor of a gray dressing gown lined and trimmed with scarlet flannel and which I had made for me in Vienna in 1852. When I was stationed at Cairo I had it expressed to me and during the time I was living at Safford's Bank, our headquarters, General Grant saw the gorgeous garment and determined to have one like it. So it was borrowed by Mrs. Grant, taken to Chicago and served as a model for a similar gown for the general." Bruce Catton described the garment in "Grant Moves South" and added, "...somehow one would like to have a picture of the tough little general in this robe."

BACK ISSUES

The Grant Network is offering back issues of the Grant Network Newsletter. Issues available are Volume 1, numbers 1-4, Volume 2, numbers 1-4, Volumes 3, numbers 1-4 and Volume 4, numbers 1-3. Please indicate which volume and issue you would like when ordering. Price is $4.00 per issue. Please include a check along with your name and address to The Ulysses S. Grant Network, W 3547 Playbird Rd., Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085.
I remained in Springfield with my regiment until the 3rd of July, when I was ordered to Quincy, Illinois. By that time the regiment was in a good state of discipline and the officers and men were well up in the company drill. There was direct railroad communication between Springfield and Quincy, but I thought it would be good preparation for the troops to march there. We had no transportation for our camp and garrison equipage, so wagons were hired for the occasion and on the 3rd of July we started. There was no hurry, but fair marches were made every day until the Illinois River was crossed. There I was overtaken by a dispatch saying that the destination of the regiment had been changed to Ironton, Missouri, and ordering me to halt where I was and await the arrival of a steamer which had been dispatched up the Illinois River to take the regiment to St. Louis. The boat, when it did come, grounded on a sand-bar a few miles below where we were in camp. We remained there several days waiting to have the boat get off the bar, but before this occurred news came that an Illinois regiment was surrounded by rebels at a point on the Hannibal and St. Joe Railroad some miles west of Palmyra, in Missouri, and I was ordered to proceed with all dispatch to their relief. We took the cars and reached Quincy in a few hours.

When I left Galena for the last time to take command of the 21st regiment I took with me my oldest son, Frederick D. Grant, then a lad of eleven years of age. On receiving the order to take rail for Quincy I wrote to Mrs. Grant, to relieve what I supposed would be her great anxiety for one so young going into danger, that I would send Fred home from Quincy by river. I received a prompt letter in reply decidedly disapproving my proposition, and urging that the lad should be allowed to accompany me. It came too late. Fred was already on his way up the Mississippi bound for Dubuque, Iowa, from which place there was a railroad to Galena.

My sensations as we approached what I supposed might be “a field of battle” were anything but agreeable. I had been in all the engagements in Mexico that it was possible for one person to be in but not in command. If someone else had been colonel and I had been lieutenant-colonel I do not think I would have felt any trepidation. Before we were prepared to cross the Mississippi River at Quincy my anxiety was relieved; for the men of the besieged regiment came straggling into town. I am inclined to think both sides got frightened and ran away.

I took my regiment to Palmyra and remained there for a few days, until relieved by the 19th Illinois infantry. From Palmyra I proceeded to Salt River, the railroad bridge over which had been destroyed by the enemy. Colonel John M. Palmer at that time commanded the 13th Illinois, which was acting as a guard to workmen who were engaged in rebuilding this bridge. Palmer was my senior and commanded the two regiments as long as we remained together. The bridge was finished in about two weeks, and I received orders to move against Colonel Thomas Harris, who was said to be encamped at the little town of Florida, some twenty-five miles south of where we then were.

At the time of which I now write we had no transportation and the country about Salt River was sparsely settled, so that it took some days to collect teams and drivers enough to move the camp and garrison equipage of a regiment nearly a thousand strong, together with a week’s supply of provisions and some ammunition. While preparations for the move were going on I felt quite comfortable; but when we got on the road and found every house deserted I was anything but easy. In the twenty-five miles we had to march we did not see a person, old or young, male or female, except two horsemen who were on a road that crossed ours. As soon as they saw us they decamped as fast as their horses could carry them. I kept my men in the ranks and forbade their entering any of the deserted houses or taking anything from them. We halted at night on the road and proceeded the next morning at an early hour. Harris had been encamped in a creek bottom for the sake of being near water. The hills on either side of the creek extend to a considerable height, possibly more than a hundred feet. As we approached the brow of the hill from which it was expected we could see Harris’ camp, and possibly find his men ready formed to meet us, my heart kept getting higher and higher until it felt to me as though it was in my throat. I would have given anything then to have been back in Illinois, but I had not the moral courage to halt and consider what to do; I kept right on. When we reached a point from which the valley below was in full view I halted. The place where Harris had been encamped a few days before was still there and the marks of a recent encampment were plainly visible, but the troops were gone. My heart resumed its place. It occurred to me at once that Harris had been as much
afraid of me as I had been of him. This was a view of the question I had never taken before; but it was one I never forgot afterwards. From that event to the close of the war, I never experienced trepidation upon confronting an enemy, though I always felt more or less anxiety. I never forgot that he had as much reason to fear my forces as I had his. The lesson was valuable.

Inquiries at the village of Florida divulged the fact that Colonel Harris, learning of my intended movement, while my transportation was being collected took time by the forelock and left Florida before I had started from Salt River. He had increased the distance between us by forty miles. The next day I started back to my old camp at Salt River bridge. The citizens living on the line of our march had returned to their houses after we passed, and finding everything in good order, nothing carried away, they were at their front doors ready to greet us now. They had evidently been led to believe that the National troops carried death and devastation with them wherever they went.

In a short time after our return to Salt River bridge I was ordered with my regiment to the town of Mexico. General Pope was then commanding the district embracing all of the State of Missouri between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, with his headquarters in the village of Mexico. I was assigned to the command of a sub-district embracing the troops in the immediate neighborhood, some three regiments of infantry and a section of artillery. There was one regiment encamped by the side of mine. I assumed command of the whole and the first night sent the commander of the other regiment the parole and countersign. Not wishing to be outdone in courtesy, he immediately sent me the countersign for his regiment for the night. When he was informed that the countersign sent to him was for use with his regiment as well as mine, it was difficult to make him understand that this was not an unwarranted interference of one colonel over another. No doubt he attributed it for the time to the presumption of a graduate of West Point over a volunteer pure and simple. But the question was soon settled and we had no further trouble.

My arrival in Mexico had been preceded by that of two or three regiments in which proper discipline had not been maintained and the men had been in the habit of visiting houses without invitation and helping themselves to food and drink, or demanding them from the occupants. They carried their muskets while out of camp and made every man they found take the oath of allegiance to the government. I at once published orders prohibiting the soldiers from going into private houses unless invited by the inhabitants, and from appropriating private property to their own or to government uses. The people were no longer molested or made afraid. I received the most marked courtesy from the citizens of Mexico as long as I remained there.

Up to this time my regiment had not been carried in the school of the soldier beyond the company drill, except that it had received some training on the march from Springfield to the Illinois River. There was now a good opportunity of exercising it in the battalion drill. While I was at West Point the tactics used in the army had been Scott’s and the musket the flint lock. I had never looked at a copy of tactics from the time of my graduation. My standing in that branch of studies had been near the foot of the class. In the Mexican war in the summer of 1846, I had been appointed regimental quartermaster and commissary and had not been at a battalion drill since.

The arms had been changed since then and Hardee’s tactics had been adopted. I got a copy of tactics and studied one lesson, intending to confine the exercise of the first day to the commands I had thus learned. By pursuing this course from day to day I thought I would soon get through the volume.

We were encamped just outside of town on the common, among scattering suburban houses with enclosed gardens, and when I got my regiment in line and rode to the front I soon saw that if I attempted to follow the lesson I had studied I would have to clear away some of the houses and garden fences to make room. I perceived at once, however, that Hardee’s tactics- a mere translation from the French with Hardee’s name attached- was nothing more than common sense and the progress of the age applied to Scott’s system. The commands were abbreviated and the movement expedited. Under the old tactics almost every change in the order of march was preceded by a “halt,” then came the change, and then the “forward march”. I found no trouble in giving commands that would take my regiment where I wanted it to go and carry it around all obstacles. I do not believe that the officers of the regiment ever discovered that I had never studied the tactics that I used.

*Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant* Volume I, pp. 246-253
Estimates of General Grant

The following are excerpts from the first of two articles that appeared in the June, 1885 issue of Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly. Excerpts from the second article will be published in the Winter issue of the Newsletter.

The interest which pervaded the country during the anxious days of General Grant's illness recalled attention to his life, character and career. In every part of the United States men thronged to learn the latest intelligence which gave or weakened hope. It was a silent testimony to a widespread belief in his greatness. Our readers will not deem it untimely that we place before them two thoughtful estimates of Ulysses S. Grant, as General and as President — estimates in which he is studied as nearly as possible in the light that future generations will regard him.

General Grant
by Edward Everett Hale

It is well worth while to go over [the] steps by which General Grant steadily rose to the place which he holds in the love and confidence of his countrymen. He begins, a quiet citizen, so obscure that the War Department does not acknowledge his modest letter. He comes out at the end of three years Lieutenant-general of the Army, and Savior of the Country. In later years there are sometimes found people ignorant enough to speak as if his one great military quality were a certain bulldog tenacity only. "He had the country behind him," such people say; "and he had only to wait, with time with him, and the rebellion had to fall." How came he to have country behind him? How had he won the absolute confidence of all men — of Stanton and Halleck and Lincoln in the Government, and of every loyal man and woman in the North? He had won all this by deserving it. He had won it by a series of unexampled successes, not traversed by one failure, which, step by step, led the way to that position of absolute command which he occupied at the end.

Military genius is not the only thing which goes to the make-up of a great general, far less of a great man. But it is a very essential thing, if a man is to bring to an end a civil war fought by Titans. And this genius Grant had, in an eminent degree. The history of each of his campaigns shows it — in a variety of plan, a readiness and resource, which even a civilian can appreciate. It comes out the more vividly because, in those armies so suddenly raised, he often had to use green timber for his building, and had to adapt his plans to the material he had. Nothing is more interesting than the details of dispatches, written by his own hand, in the Vicksburg campaign, in which he really instructs his well-meaning subordinates as to the ways in which they shall execute his orders. He could descend to the smallest minutiae, if it were necessary, even while he was working out the largest schemes.

When in the saddle, pressing the great march at the end, by which he threw in front of Lee the force which prevented him from joining Johnston, you would say he might for once have concentrated his mind on that single affair. But at that very moment he was sending his commands to all parts of the country. That one hand held the thread which radiated everywhere, and that one head gave the instructions which throbbed along those lines. "There was not a colonel on the Arkansas River who held an independent command." That is the language which one of Grant's distinguished generals
used, in speaking to me, in his indignation at this criticism, which implies that Grant was not comprehensive in his range.

No man reads well the history of his campaigns without seeing that his one thought is his country and her success. There is never any wretched intermixture of anxiety about his own popularity or standing. He fairly seems to fight his own existence. And this modesty, this indifference to the place he fills in the newspapers of today, or the chronicles of tomorrow, often deceived the more superficial people around him. Nay, it deceives superficial people today, and they do not see the place that he is to occupy in history. When he had brought the war to a close the officers who were intimate enough with him suggested that he and they would like to see the army they had contended with so long. But Grant announced his intention of returning to Washington on the morrow, to direct the disbanding of the Union forces. "The expenses of the war amounted to four millions a day, and it was important to save this cost to the country." He was indifferent to the spectacle of his triumphs, so he could secure the reality of their result.

Grant carried into his Presidency the qualities which had given distinction to his campaigns. As before the trained politicians could make nothing of him. He offended those of his own party quite as much as he did those of the other side. As before, he gave full credit to his subordinates, and he brought on himself much more discredit than he ever deserved, by the loyalty with which he maintained his faith in them. But no man ever said that his hands were stained with any peculation— even at a time when press and public were crazy to detect fraud. And never did he draw the screen of his favor over any cause which needed searching investigation. His vetoes, once and again, show that he understood that his place was no post of ornament. His submission, once and again, to Congress, shows that he knew he was no dictator. Whatever the politicians thought, the country thought, thinks and will think, that he meant to do what was right, knew how to do it, and did it when smaller men would have failed.

It has been said to the present misfortune of his great fame that, as a Republican President, he had opposed to him nearly half the journals of the country, and half its public men, to whom it was a matter of policy, not indeed to defame him, but to make light of him, and to imply that here was a skillful general indeed, but nothing more.

But history sets right such accidents. As time goes on men will see and say more and more that the qualities which gave him success were the qualities which stand. They cannot die, and do not. Unselfishness, courage, truth, honor, modesty, simplicity, these are the traits which made him what he was in war. These are the traits which he showed as President of this nation. They are the traits which drew all admiration on him when he traveled abroad, almost like a prince. They have been the characteristics of his life as a private man.

Such qualities do not fade out from the memory of men.