

## Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, Volume 1 by Ulysses S. Grant

Underlined words are on the vocabulary list.

At the break of day on the 9<sup>th</sup> [May 9, 1846], the army under Taylor was ready to renew the battle; but an advance showed that the enemy [Mexican Army] had entirely left our front during the night. The chaparral before us was impenetrable except where there were roads or trails, with occasionally clear or bare spots of small dimensions. A body of men penetrating it might easily be ambushed. It was better to have a few men caught in this way than the whole army, yet it was necessary that the garrison [at Fort Texas] at the river should be relieved. To get to them the chaparral had to be passed. Thus I assume General Taylor reasoned. He halted the army not far in advance of the ground occupied by the Mexicans the day before, and selected Captain C. F. Smith, of the artillery, and Captain McCall, of my company, to take one hundred and fifty picked men each and find where the enemy had gone. This left me in command of the company, an honor and responsibility I thought very great.

Smith and McCall found no obstruction in the way of their advance until they came up to the succession of ponds, before described, at Resaca. The Mexicans had passed them and formed their lines on the opposite bank. This position they had strengthened a little by throwing up dead trees and brush in their front, and by placing artillery to cover the approaches and open places. Smith and McCall deployed on each side of the road as well as they could and engaged the enemy at long range. Word was sent back, and the advance of the whole army was at once commenced. As we came up we were deployed in like manner. I was with the right wing and led my company through the thicket wherever a penetrable place could be found, taking advantage of any clear spot that would carry me towards the enemy. At last I got pretty close up without knowing it. The [cannon] balls commenced to whistle very thick overhead, cutting the limbs of the chaparral right and left. We could not see the enemy, so I ordered my men to lie down, an order that did not have to be enforced. We kept our position until it became evident that the enemy were not firing at us, and then withdrew to find better ground to advance upon.

By this time some progress had been made on our left. A section of artillery had been captured by the cavalry, and some prisoners had been taken. The Mexicans were giving way all along the line, and many of them had, no doubt, left early. I at last found a clear space separating two ponds. There seemed to be a few men in front, and I charged upon them with my company.

There was no resistance, and we captured a Mexican colonel, who had been wounded, and a few men. Just as I was sending them to the rear with a guard of two or three men, a private came from the front bringing back one of our officers, who had been badly wounded in advance of where I was. The ground had been charged over before. My exploit was equal to that of the soldier who boasted that he had cut off the leg of one of the enemy. When asked why he did not cut off his head, he replied: "Someone had done that before." This left no doubt in my mind that the battle of Resaca de la Palma would have been won, just as it was, if I had not been there. There was no further resistance.

**Answer the following questions.**

1. Highlight the title of book and the year and place published.
2. Ulysses S. Grant wrote his memoirs 39 years after the Battle of Resaca de la Palma. How do you think this affected his account of the battle? Explain your answer.
3. What did Grant say was "an honor and responsibility I thought very great?" In 1866, Grant becomes the Major General of the Union Army during the Civil War and in 1868 is elected President. In your own words, how did his experience in the Battle of Resaca de la Palma affect his future?
4. How did Grant describe the terrain at Resaca de la Palma? Include direct quotes in your answer.
5. What did Grant order his men to do? Include direct quotes in your answer.
6. Imagine being in Grant's company. How would you feel about having to obey the "order that did not have to be enforced"? Do you agree with Grant's decision? Why or why not?
7. What happened to the Mexican artillery?
8. Grant wrote "My exploit was equal to that of the soldier who boasted that he had cut off the leg of one of the enemy. When asked why he did not cut off his head, he replied: "Someone had done that before." This left no doubt in my mind that the battle of Resaca de la Palma would have been won, just as it was, if I had not been there."  
In your own words, how does 2nd Lieutenant Grant feel about his involvement in the battle? Do you agree? Why or why not?
9. Look at the image of Captain Charles May and General Rómulo Díaz de la Vega. Compare and contrast Grant's account with this image. Do the images tell the same or different story? Explain your answer using quotes from Grant's Memoirs and what the artist drew.
10. Why do you think the artist drew the painting that way?
11. What do you think the true story is – Grant's Memoirs, the image, a combination of the two or none of these? Explain your answer.