

Brigadier General Horace Porter (1837-1921)

Third President General

National Society Sons of the American Revolution

by

Judge Edward F. Butler, Sr., 106th President General, NSSAR

Porter was born in Huntingdon, PA, the son of David Rittenhouse Porter (1788-1863), an ironmaster who later served two terms as Governor of Pennsylvania. His father was the grand-uncle in law of President Abraham Lincoln. Horace Porter's grandfather, General Andrew Porter (1743-1813) distinguished himself as a U. S. Revolutionary War general.

Horace Porter was educated at Harvard. He graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1860 and served in the Union army in the Civil War. Horace Porter was brevetted Brigadier General, US Volunteers on March 13, 1865 for "gallant and meritorious services during the war".

Porter accompanied Grant into battle at Cold Harbor, the Wilderness, and the Petersburg campaign. Throughout the war, Porter kept extensive notes of the campaigns, and he was present at General Lee's surrender at McLean's house on April 9, 1865.

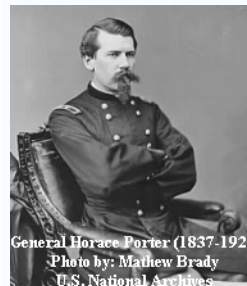
He received the Medal of Honor at the Battle of Chicamauga. In the last year of the war, he served on the staff of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, writing a lively memoir of the experience, entitled *Campaigning With Grant* (1897). From 1869 to 1872, while still on active duty with the army, Porter served as President Grant's personal secretary at the White House. Resigning from the army in December 1872, Porter became vice president of the Pullman Palace Car Company, first to make sleeping cars for trains.

In 1892, at the third annual congress of the SAR in New York City, he was elected as the third

President General of the National Society Sons of the American Revolution and was reelected in 1893 and 1894, serving three years in that position. Under his leadership, all public schools in New York City were provided with both American flags and portraits of George Washington by the SAR.

He served as the U. S. Ambassador to France from 1897 to 1905, paying for the search and recovery of the body of Commodore John Paul Jones and sending it to the United States for reburial at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis. He received the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor from the French government in 1904. In addition to *Campaigning with Grant*, he also wrote *West Point Life* (1866).

Porter was president of the Union League Club of New York from 1893 to 1897. In that capacity, he was a major force in the construction of Grant's Tomb.



General Horace Porter (1837-1921)
Photo by: Mathew Brady
U.S. National Archives