



Foundation Document Overview

Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site

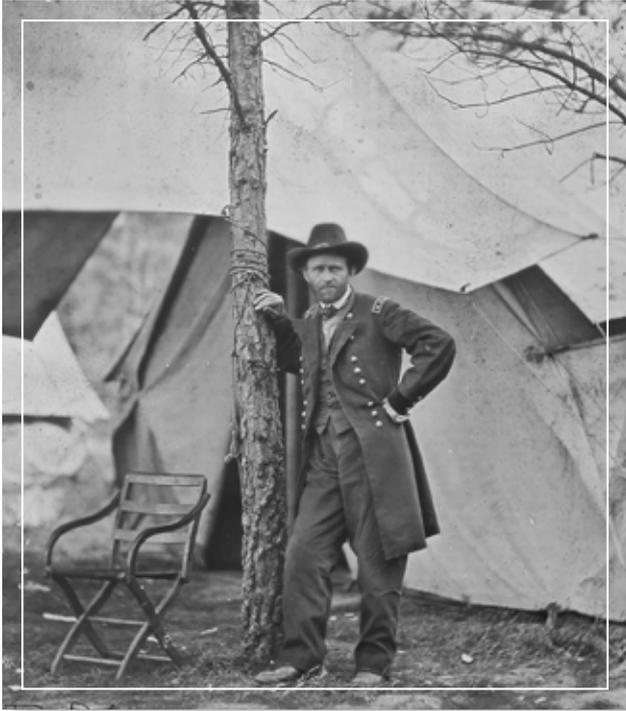
Missouri



Contact Information

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Purpose



The purpose of ULYSSES S. GRANT NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE is to educate and inspire this and future generations about the lives and legacy of Ulysses S. Grant, Julia Dent Grant, the enslaved African Americans, and other residents by preserving and interpreting White Haven within the context of American history.



Significance

Significance statements express why Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- Although Ulysses S. Grant resided in numerous locations throughout his life, White Haven (from 1854–1859) is the only place where Grant lived alongside enslaved African Americans. Grant's experiences with enslaved African Americans are crucial to understanding his views as the general who won the Civil War and as a president who championed civil rights.



Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Historic House**
- **Stone Building**
- **Stable**
- **Outbuildings – Chicken House and Ice House**
- **Cultural Landscape**
- **Collections/Artifacts**

Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **The Library and John Y. Simon Collection**
- **Other Significant Contributing Features (fence, flagstone walk, historic trace, cistern)**



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- Ulysses S. Grant’s experiences at White Haven confronted him with political and social values different from his own, influencing his actions and beliefs as he rose to military and political prominence.
- Ulysses S. Grant’s and Julia Dent Grant’s loving partnership enabled them to meet tremendous personal and political challenges, resulting in a long and successful marriage.
- During Julia’s childhood and her early years married to Ulysses, the White Haven estate served as the place they called home, while providing an emotional touchstone that sustained them throughout their lives.
- Life at White Haven estate was a microcosm of the social, political, and economic turmoil facing the nation during the antebellum, Civil War, and Reconstruction eras.
- The enslaved African American men, women, and children who lived and worked at White Haven exemplify how enslaved people created family and community relationships that enabled them to endure the inhumanity of enslavement.



Description

Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site, established in 1989, preserves 9.65 acres of an estate that once encompassed an 862-acre slave plantation associated with Ulysses S. Grant, Julia Dent Grant, and enslaved African Americans from 1854-1859 (the period of significance). The site's significance is drawn not from a specific event, but rather from the interaction of Ulysses S. Grant with African American slavery, and how that experience impacted him personally and influenced decisions he made as a Civil War general and as a civil rights president.

The Dent-Grant ownership of the property began with the Dents' purchase in 1820 and continued until 1885, when the Grants transferred the land to new owners. Ulysses S. Grant first became acquainted with the property in 1843, when he met his future wife, Julia Dent. Over the years, his career took him from a 2nd Lieutenant newly graduated from West Point to farming, business, and re-entry in the military at the start of the American Civil War, where he rose to become a Lieutenant General before being elected 18th president of the United States. Throughout their lives, he and his wife and children remained attached to the Missouri property, historically known as White Haven.

The present-day historic site includes two buildings and three structures from the 19th-century: a two-story main residence; a stone outbuilding housing a summer kitchen, laundry room, and possible slave living space; a chicken house; an icehouse; and a stable.

