

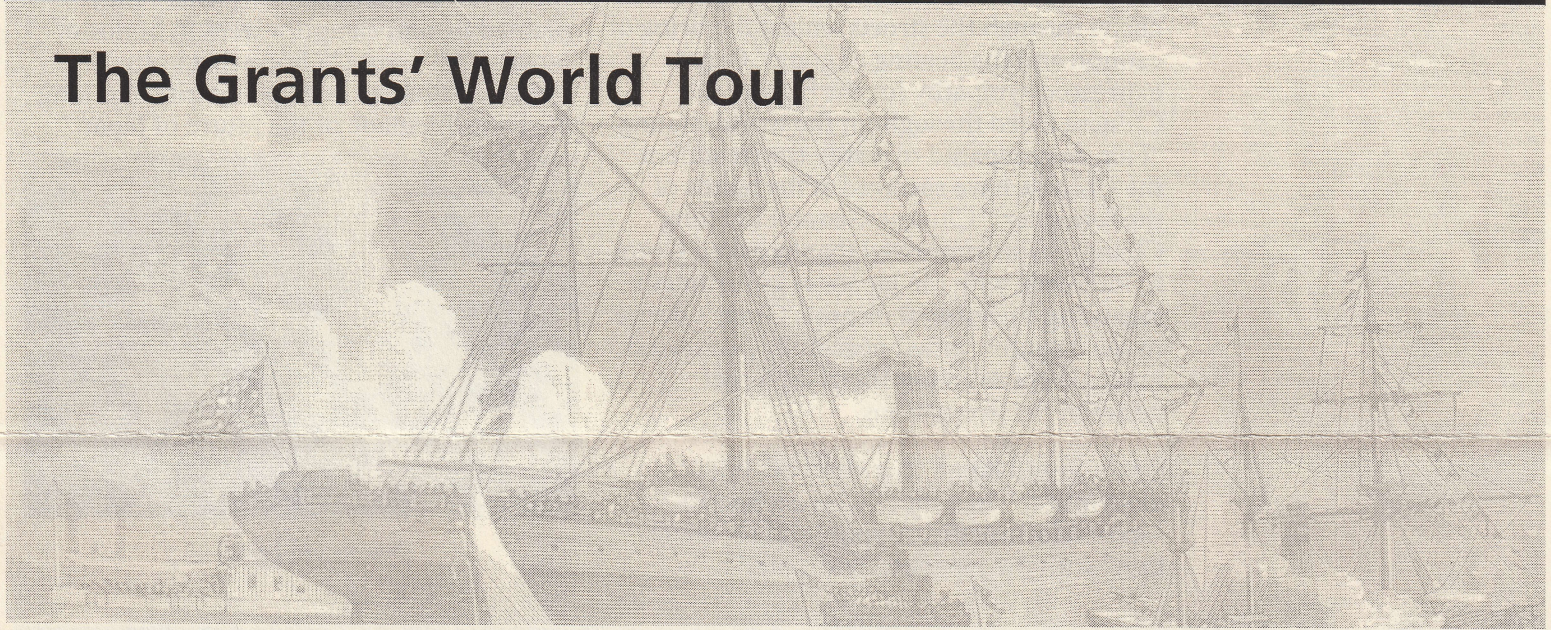
Ulysses S. Grant

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site
7400 Grant Road
St. Louis, MO 63123

The Grants' World Tour

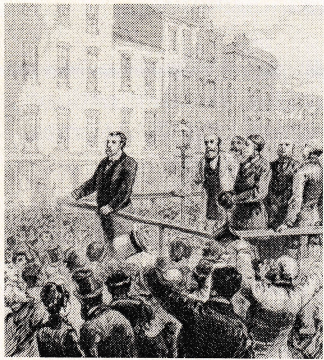


"Embarkation in Delaware Bay" (John Russell Young)

Introduction

Ulysses S. Grant served as President of the United States from 1869-1877, during the Reconstruction period. It was a stressful eight years, marked with challenges, frustration, and disappointment. Upon leaving the White House, the Grants sought a quieter life as private citizens, so they planned a vacation to England to visit their daughter Nellie. But this voyage quickly mushroomed into an unprecedented two-and-a-half year tour through Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and North America. They were greeted with parades and thunderous applause from common citizens, they dined with royalty, and lavish gifts were bestowed upon them. It was not only the grandest tour an American couple had ever made, it also signified international recognition of the United States as an emerging world power.

England



“Address at Newcastle”
(John Russell Young)

On May 17, 1877, Ulysses and Julia Grant left Philadelphia on the steamer *Indiana* with their son Jesse and *New York Herald* journalist John Russell Young (who later documented the trip in *Around the World with General Grant*). They arrived in Liverpool 11 days later, where immense crowds welcomed them. Similar scenes occurred in London, Birmingham and Newcastle, where workers enthusiastically greeted the former American President. In the textile city of Manchester, Grant was moved by the reception he received in a city that had supported the Union’s efforts

during the Civil War despite its need for Confederate cotton. The working class found a hero in Ulysses S. Grant.

The English aristocracy lauded the General and Mrs. Grant as well. The Grants attended the Royal concert at Buckingham Palace, enjoyed the horse races with the Prince of Wales, and dined with Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle. They toured Shakespeare’s Stratford and Sheffield’s steel mills, then went to France, Italy, Spain, and Russia. Wherever they went, citizens from all walks of life greeted them warmly.

Germany

While in Germany, the Grants travelled with British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli and were treated to music written and performed by Richard Wagner. Another highlight was the meeting between Grant and Germany’s Prince Bismarck. Smoking together at Radizwall Palace, Grant and Bismarck discussed America’s Civil War. They both declared their admiration for General Phillip Sheridan, as well as the necessity of preserving the Union. Despite their vastly

different characters and political beliefs, they found some common ground.

Bismarck remarked that Grant “had to save the Union just as we had to save Germany.” Grant added, “Not only save the Union, but destroy slavery.” “It was a long war,” said Bismarck, “and a great work well done—and I suppose it means a lasting peace?” “I believe so,” stated Grant.

The Middle East and India

The Grants were particularly captivated by Egypt and India, as well as the city of Jerusalem. It was an exotic world which held the ancient mysteries of pyramids and ruins, and the modern realities of staggering poverty. They rode elephants, sailed on the Nile, explored sacred caves and temples, and Julia treated herself to jewelry and trinkets at the bazaars.

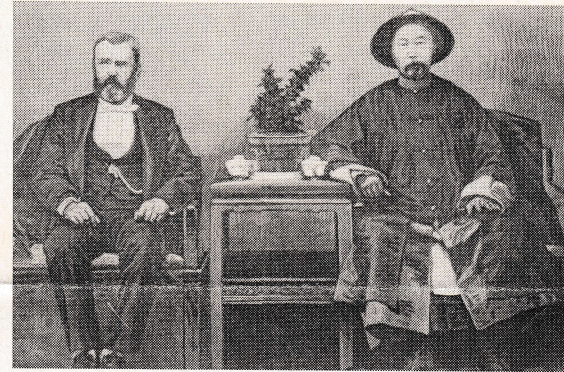
There was much here to excite the mind and spirit. Julia was deeply moved in Jerusalem, and visited the Christian holy sites at Bethlehem and Gethsemene. Ulysses marveled at the Hindu religion and its kindness and respect for man and animals, declaring it was “a good system of morals for the guidance of its followers.”

The Orient

Like the Middle East, there was an exotic flavor to China and Japan. In China, huge crowds greeted the Grants, carrying them in chairs through the streets amidst the firing of cannon and the beating of gongs. Grant expressed sympathy for the bigotry the Chinese faced throughout the world, stating "I am not prepared to justify the treatment the Chinese have received at the hands of the foreigner." Chinese General Li Hung Chang was so impressed that he asked Grant to intercede with the Japanese government regarding a territorial dispute. Grant's desire to see disputes settled peacefully persuaded him to serve as an unofficial diplomat between the two nations.

Grant found Japan "beautiful beyond description." In a speech, he declared a "spirit of sympathy, support and reconciliation" with the Japanese, and stated how

much America could learn from the East. The Grants visited the Nagasaki Art, Industrial and Science Fair, where they planted fig and camphor trees in honor of Japan. They wrote "I hope that both trees...in their growth, prosperity and long life be emblematic of the future of Japan."



(John Russell Young)

A Triumphant Return



Buck, Julia, and Ulysses Grant (standing center), Virginia City, Nevada, 1879. (Library of Congress)

The Grants landed in San Francisco, California on September 20, 1879. They then traveled to Yosemite Valley and East

officer over twenty-five years earlier. The Grants also explored the silver mines of Nevada where Ulysses lost a bet that Julia would not descend into the mine. They were honored with parades in Mississippi and Louisiana. The tour ended where it began, in Philadelphia on December 16, 1879.

Never had a former president and first lady toured the world and been received with such honors. The Grants' trip was more than a personal exploration of many diverse cultures. The General and his wife embodied the strength and character of a

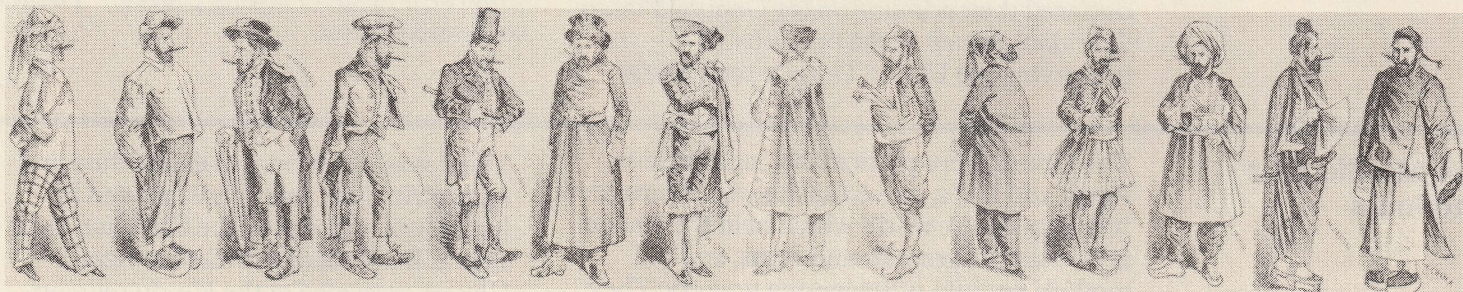
traveled to Yosemite Valley and Fort Vancouver, where the General visited the post where he was stationed as a young army

nation ready to play a vital role on the world stage, and the world took notice.

An Amazing Itinerary

The following list indicates the incredible scope of the Grants' world tour. The destinations are listed in chronological order, but include various return visits to several places. At times, the Grants traveled so much in a short period that tracking them proves difficult.

England	May-Sept. 1877	Netherlands	June 1878
	Jan. 1879	Norway	July 1878
Belgium	July 1877	Sweden	July 1878
Germany	July 1877, June-July 1878	Russia	July-Aug. 1878
Switzerland	July 1877, Sept. 1878	Poland	Aug. 1878
Denmark	Aug. 1877	Austria	Aug. 1878
Scotland	Aug.-Sept. 1877	Spain	Oct.-Nov. 1878
France	Oct.-Dec. 1877	Portugal	Nov. 1878
	May-June, Sept.-Dec. 1878	Ireland	Jan. 1879
	Jan. 1879	India	Feb.-March 1879
Italy	Dec. 1877, March-May 1878	Burma	March 1879
Egypt	Jan.-Feb. 1878	Siam	April 1879
	Jan.-Feb. 1879	Fr. Indochina	April 1879
Palestine	Feb. 1878	China	April-May 1879
Turkey	March 1878	Japan	June-Sept. 1879
Greece	March 1878		



(Library of Congress)

Further Reading

Young, John Russell. *Around the World with General Grant*. New York: American News Co., 1879.

(All images and quotes were taken from this book unless otherwise noted.)

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