



# News from White Haven

Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site educates the American people regarding the lives and legacies of Civil War General and 18th President Ulysses S. Grant, his wife, Julia Dent Grant, the enslaved African Americans and other residents of White Haven.

News from White Haven is a quarterly publication of Ulysses S. Grant NHS. It is also available online by visiting [www.nps.gov/ulsg/](http://www.nps.gov/ulsg/).

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## 4th Graders Explore U.S. History



### 4th Graders from Gotsch Elementary earn their Every Kid in a Park pass

The National Park Service is pleased to participate in the Every Kid in a Park initiative. The program, now in its second year, offers all fourth graders across the country an opportunity to earn a pass that allows their families free entrance into more than 2,000 federal public land sites managed by the NPS and other federal agencies like the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Forest Service. Last year roughly two million fourth graders registered online for their pass, and many others received one on an EKIP field trip.

Recent studies show that children who are exposed to parks and historic sites before age 11 are more likely to take an interest in nature and history. The National Park Foundation, seeking to promote EKIP in underserved and impoverished communities, awarded special grant funds to nine metropolitan cities throughout the country for the 2016-2017 school year, including St. Louis.

Ulysses S. Grant NHS is one of four St. Louis sites to receive grant funds for EKIP. The sites include Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (National Park Service), National Great Rivers Museum (United States Army Corps of Engineers), and Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge (United States Fish and Wildlife Service). These grant funds will cover the transportation costs for 4,000 area students to visit these four sites. The park also hired an intern through the Student Conservation Association to assist with community outreach, contacting local schools, and setting up EKIP programs.

Hundreds of students from the Affton, Mehlville, and St. Louis Public School Districts have already visited the site, and many more are scheduled through April and May. If your family includes a student who is currently in fourth grade, visit [www.everykidinapark.gov](http://www.everykidinapark.gov) to learn more about this exciting initiative and how he or she can earn a pass today.



## **Bike Through History on Grant's Trail**

The park will be hosting its very first historic bike tour on the popular Grant's Trail bike route on Saturday, April 29th at 10:00 AM (reservations required). The park is partnering with the Thomas Sappington House and the Sappington Concord Historical Society for this event. Park Guide David Newmann will lead the four-mile tour and offer participants an informative presentation on the history of the trail and numerous historic spots along the route, including the Thomas Sappington House Museum.



***Bikers on Grant's Trail parallel to the Park's Entrance***

Grant's trail is an eight-mile trail that extends from Union Road and Interstate 55 northwards towards Kirkwood and Interstate 44. The trail was originally a part of the Kirkwood-Carondelet branch of the Missouri Pacific Railroad. Many Missourians before the Civil War supported the construction of rail lines connecting the state to the west and the Pacific Ocean. Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton gave a speech at the National Railroad Convention in 1849 calling for a railroad with St. Louis as its terminus that would be "a band of iron, hooping and binding the States together east and west, from the Atlantic to the Pacific."



***Grant's Trail***

The Missouri Pacific railroad was one of the first lines to have been built west of the Mississippi River, with construction starting in 1851. The railroad eventually connected St. Louis to Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas. The Kirkwood-Carondelet branch was added during Grant's presidency after he approved the line's construction through his White Haven property. The line ceased operation in 1990. Ranger David commented that "most visitors are unaware of the history of the Kirkwood-Carondelet railroad spur. I hope participants will gain a better understanding of the trail's history and the influential figures who lived nearby."

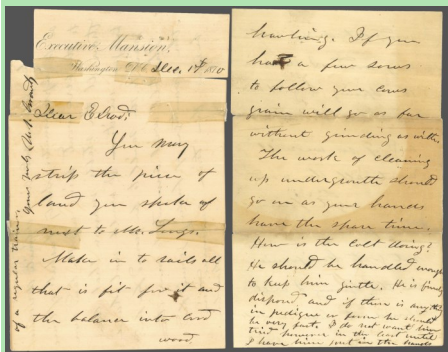


***Thomas Sappington House Museum***



## Spotlight on the Park: Donated Grant Letter

Part of the mission of Ulysses S. Grant NHS includes taking care of historic documents and artifacts connected to Ulysses S. Grant's life. Most of Grant's papers are preserved at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. and the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library in Starkville, Mississippi, while some remain in private ownership. A few documents, however, are housed in the park's curatorial collection. One historic document in private hands was recently donated to the park. The document is an 1870 letter President Grant wrote from the White House to his caretaker at White Haven, William Elrod.



Elrod was hired by Grant in 1867 to run the White Haven farm in Grant's absence. Elrod was born in the same Ohio county as Grant and stated in an 1872 interview that "the Grants and Elrods were always pretty thick."

In this December 17, 1870 letter, Grant asks Elrod to clear out a piece of land on the property and use the wood to "make in to rails... and the balance into cord wood." Grant also expresses his hope to use some of this wood to build a lime kiln and asks about a young colt on the farm.

This letter was generously donated to the park by Elrod's Great-Grandchildren Janis Elrod Caraker, Beverly Elrod Virobik, and Barbara Elrod Schaefer.

## Historian to Speak on Civil War Politics

Civil War historian Timothy S. Huebner will be speaking at the park on Friday, April 21st at 7PM. The topic of his talk is "The Civil War and the Birth of Human Rights in the United States." Dr. Huebner will discuss the country's political debates over rights before the Civil War, how the war transformed American social and political life, and why ongoing debates over the rights of the nation's recently freed African American population took center stage during President Grant's eight years in office from 1869-1877. The changing nature of citizenship and civil rights in American history will also be discussed.



Dr. Huebner is the Sternberg Professor of History at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, where he has taught since 1995. He has written numerous scholarly journal articles, essays, and newspaper op-eds for national publications such as the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, and *The Weekly Standard*. Dr. Huebner has also written three books that

focus on legal practices during the Civil War era. His latest book, *Liberty and Union: The Civil War Era and American Constitutionalism*, was published last year by the University Press of Kansas.

Reservations are required for this event.

## Kids Corner: Junior Ranger Day

Have you ever wondered what it would have been like to have served as a soldier during the Civil War? What music did people in the 19th century listen to? What items should you bring with you on a camping trip? You can find answers to these questions and have fun doing it by visiting the park on Saturday, April 22nd for Junior Ranger Day!



Junior Ranger Day is an annual program hosted at National Park Service sites throughout the country for kids of all ages. Potential Junior Rangers have a chance to participate in hands-on activities while learning about history, nature, and the importance of conservation. This year's theme is "National Parks 101," which celebrates the National Park Service's 101st anniversary and

aims to educate people about the basics of history and nature.

Numerous activities will be taking place at the park throughout the day for Junior Ranger Day. Kids will have the chance to march as soldiers, dig for archaeological artifacts, use arts and crafts to create their own National Park, and listen to music. We hope to see you there!



**Ulysses S. Grant NHS**  
**7400 Grant Road**  
**St. Louis, MO 63123**  
**(314) 842-1867**

## Upcoming Events

- April 21st, 7pm: Timothy S. Huebner Lecture\*
- April 22nd, 10am-2pm: Junior Ranger Day
- April 29th, 10am: Bike Through History on Grant's Trail\*
- June 16th, 7pm: Melodies at White Haven: USAF Brass Quintet
- June 23rd, 6pm-8pm: Junior Ranger Solar Eclipse Program (No RSVP) and Lecture\*
- June 29th: 7pm: John McManus Lecture\*
- July 21st, 7pm: Melodies at White Haven: U. City Summer Band
- July 22, 10am: U.S. Grant Death Commemoration

*\*Reservations are required for these events. Please call the park at (314) 842-1867 to RSVP.*

## Did you know?

Ulysses S. Grant detested the practice of shaking hands. In an 1877 interview with Grant in the *New York Herald* during the family's world tour, the interviewer noted that Europeans throughout the continent loudly cheered the General and rushed to shake hands with him upon his arrival, "the same as our people do at home." Grant lamented that "in England the habit is as strong as in America." He continued,

saying that "I think hand-shaking a great nuisance, and it should be abolished. In 1865 [at the end of the Civil War] it was awful with me; I thought I could hardly survive the task. It not only makes the right arm sore, but it shocks the whole system and unfits a man for writing or attending to other duties. It demoralizes the entire nervous and muscular system. None but a strong man could go through as much of it as I did in 1865."

