



# News from White Haven

Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site, dedicated to Civil War General and 18th President Ulysses S. Grant and his wife, Julia Dent Grant, is located in south St. Louis County, Missouri.

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

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

## 'America's Best Idea' Brings the NPS to PBS



This stunning shot of a rainbow from the South Rim at Grand Canyon National Park is just one of the many images that bring the National Parks to American living rooms in September. Spectacular views of national parks from past and present are available for your use as computer desktop backgrounds at <http://www.pbs.org/nationalparks/wallpapers/>. Photo courtesy of Florentine Films.

It was author Wallace Stegner who called America's national parks "the best idea we ever had." Millions of visitors to National Park Service sites every year agree with him, some as casual visitors and others who are on pilgrimages. Acclaimed documentary director Ken Burns, whose credits include [The Civil War](#), [Baseball](#) and [The War](#), has taken a closer look at the American tradition of setting aside our beautiful and

significant places in his new documentary, [The National Parks: America's Best Idea](#). This documentary will show in six episodes on PBS starting September 27, 2009.

You can get involved with the project as well by contributing your stories of inspiration and good times in the national parks on the documentary's Web site at [www.pbs.org/nationalparks/share-your-story/](http://www.pbs.org/nationalparks/share-your-story/).

# Discussions on the Causes of the Civil War

“The cause of the great War of the Rebellion will have to be attributed to slavery.” So wrote Ulysses S. Grant in 1885. Nearing the end of his life, and knowing he was writing not only for the current generation but for posterity, Grant must have felt compelled to respond to those who were already arguing that the Civil War, his war, had little or nothing to do with the South’s “peculiar institution.”

As early as 1866, Edward Pollard had published the book whose title would coin the term “Lost Cause.” The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates argued that states’ rights had been the cause of the southern states’ secession.

In 1868, Alexander H. Stephens, former Vice-President of the Confederacy, took up Pollard’s argument in his book, A Constitutional View of the Late War Between the States. This book represented a complete about-face by Stephens, who had stated in his Cornerstone Speech of 1861 that the cause



**Alexander H. Stephens, vice president of the Confederacy. Photo: Library of Congress.**

of secession and war was slavery. In 1881, Jefferson Davis himself published a massive polemic, The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government, in which he also argued the primary issue of the war had been states’ rights. Of course, the right that the Southern states were looking to protect was the right of one individual to own another, and take him or her wherever they chose—even into states that had abolished slavery.

Grant was not alone, however, in his insistence that slavery had been the cause of the conflict. In 1877, Henry Wilson wrote The History of the Rise and Fall of Slave Power in America, which

explored the role of the slave power, or the slave owners, in inciting the war.

The debate continued into the twentieth century. James Ford Rhodes forcefully stated in Lectures on the Civil War (1913): “And of the American Civil War it may safely be asserted that there was a single cause, slavery.”

In addition to the states’ rights argument, there are those who argue that the war was all about economics. The most well-known work detailing this view was Charles A. Beard’s 1927 book, The Rise of American Civilization.

Debate over the cause of the Civil War continues unabated today. Although it is generally accepted in the academic community that slavery was the primary cause of the war, a cursory search of Internet book sellers will reveal any number of modern works still arguing that states’ rights or economics were the root cause of the war.

*Watch this space in the coming months for more books and discussion on the issues of the Civil War.*

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## St. Louis Commemorates the Civil War Sesquicentennial

For over a year now, a group of individuals representing many Civil War-related organizations, historic sites, and re-enactors have been meeting to formulate plans for how St. Louis will commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup>

anniversary of the Civil War. Events are being planned beginning in 2011 and continuing through 2015 that will include reenactments, symposia, and recreation of the 1864 Sanitary Fair held in St. Louis that raised money

and medical supplies for the Civil War soldiers and the freedmen. Starting with our next issue of this newsletter, we’ll be sharing with you some of the plans and ways that you can get involved. Watch this space for more information.

## Spotlight on the Park: OnCell Cell Phone Tours

Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site will implement a free cell phone audio tour for visitor use this summer. The site joins Grand Canyon National Park, Arlington House National Memorial, and many other National Park Service sites in making information available to visitors via cell phone.

ULSG is working on this project with OnCell Systems, an audio tour company based in Pittsford, NY.

The new audio tour will be available to anyone who wants to experience it, but it is aimed at visitors who do not have time to take a full-scale tour. It is a free service of the park, only costing visitors their normal fees for cell phone usage.

Different stops on the tour describe Grant's association with the property, his time in St. Louis, Ulysses and Julia Grant's courtship and marriage, the slaves at White Haven and other topics.

The audio tour is not meant to replace visitors' interaction with park rangers and volunteers. Rather, it will give visitors another way to connect with the park.

For a preview, call 314-748-7041, or visit [www.nps.gov/ulsg](http://www.nps.gov/ulsg) to download the tour map.

## A word from the Superintendent

*Our new superintendent, Tim Good, wished to share these thoughts with you:* I arrived on June 9<sup>th</sup> and have thoroughly enjoyed meeting the staff and learning more about the site. Both the employees and the site have an excellent reputation, and everything I have witnessed confirms that well-deserved reputation.

A great deal of that credit must be given to the former superintendent, Mike Ward, who left the site in such good condition.

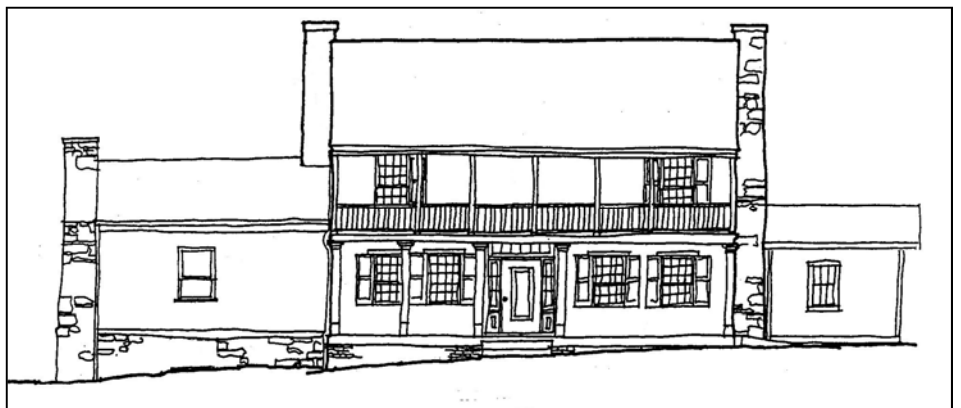
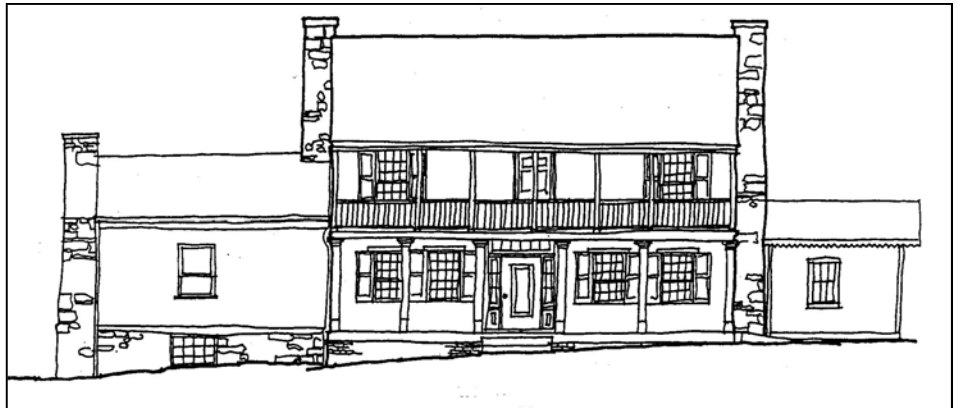
I would also like to commend

the site's incredible volunteers. These individuals possess an amazing enthusiasm and impressive dedication to this site and to its story. The park is extremely fortunate to have such individuals who willingly devote their time to caring for one of America's treasures.

I truly believe that Grant deserves far more recognition and admiration than he receives today, and I hope to work with the staff, the volunteers, and the park partners to increase his prominence in our nation, and throughout the world.

## Kids' Corner: Can You Spot the Differences?

Can you find the 6 missing objects in the bottom drawing of White Haven?



Answers: basement window, shutter on upstairs window, upstairs door, post on right side of porch, eading on roof.



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## Upcoming Events

- June 2– July 31: Critter Camp for kids ages 5-10 in cooperation with Grant’s Farm. Please visit [www.grantsfarm.com/CritterCamp.htm/](http://www.grantsfarm.com/CritterCamp.htm/) for more information.
- August 7-9: Night Walk into the Past living history program at Ulysses S. Grant NHS, 7 p.m. nightly. Call the park at 314-842-3298 x245 for reservations.
- Sept. 24-25: Missouri Conference on History Education annual conference in St. Louis. Please visit [www.missouriche.org](http://www.missouriche.org) for more information.

## Did you know?

In 1876, Americans celebrated Independence Day like never before. On July 4, 1876, the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the country took to the streets — thousands of Americans marched and rode in parades hosted by every ethnic group and civic organization imaginable. The celebration

lasted for two or three days in some cities, featuring speakers and fireworks.

In Philadelphia, however, the celebration started early. On May 10, 1876, President Grant opened the 1876 Centennial Exposition, which was America’s first World’s Fair. It drew 10 million visitors from around the world over the course of six months. In those

six months, visitors explored the industrial power, natural resources, and the expanding West of the United States. At the heart of it all was the celebration of American independence and freedom.

*Information from The Victorian Homefront: American Thought and Culture, 1860-1880, by Louise L. Stevenson, and from PBS’s American Experience Web site, [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/grant/peoplevents/e\\_expo.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/grant/peoplevents/e_expo.html)*