



News from White Haven

Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site is dedicated to Civil War General and 18th President Ulysses S. Grant and his wife, Julia Dent Grant.

News from White Haven is a quarterly publication of Ulysses S. Grant NHS. It is also available online by visiting 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.

Waving Good-Bye



Karen Maxville

The park waved good-bye this fall to two long-time employees, Pam Sanfilippo, Site Historian, and Karen Maxville, Park Curator. Both began their NPS careers here in the early years of the park and their contributions to the park's physical and interpretive development cannot be overstated.

In addition to developing numerous special events, teacher workshops, and educational programs for school students, Pam gave countless off-site programs, including an appearance on C-Span's look at First Lady Julia Grant.



Pam Sanfilippo

Karen managed the park's volunteer program for many years, helped the park acquire historic documents and artifacts related to White Haven, and developed many temporary exhibits.

Both Pam and Karen accepted advanced positions with the National Archives; Pam at Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum in Abilene, Kansas, and Karen at Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum in West Branch, Iowa. Although we are sad to see them go, we wish them the very best of luck in their future endeavors!

Absence Conquers Love?

Ulysses Grant met Julia Dent at White Haven in early 1844. In May, Ulysses learned the Army was sending him south in preparation for war with Mexico. Before departing, he asked Julia to be his bride. It would prove to be a long engagement. On October 3, 1846, Ulysses wrote from Monterrey, Mexico to Julia back at White Haven. After describing the city and the casualties it had taken to secure it, he addressed a question Julia had apparently asked him in a letter.

“What made you ask the question Dearest Julia ‘if I thought absence would conquer love’? You ought to be just as good a judge as me! I can only answer for myself alone, that Julia is as dear to me to-day as she was the day we visited St. Louis together, more than two years ago, when I first told her of my love. From that day to this I have loved you constantly and the same and with the hope too that long before this time I would have been able to call you Wife.”

Ulysses and Julia would eventually wed in St. Louis in August of 1848. Thereafter, they would experience further separations, but their love for each other endured.



Grant Family Royalty

The Grants' first grandchild, Julia Dent Grant, was born at the White House in 1876 and named after her grandmother. She became a Russian princess when she married Prince Mikhail Cantacuzène in 1899, and subsequently moved to Russia where she had three children. She remained in St. Petersburg during World War I, but the family left Russia in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution in 1917. She became a writer and published three books recounting her experiences in Russia. She divorced the Prince in 1934. Julia Dent Cantacuzène Spiransky-Grant lived nearly a hundred years, passing away in 1975.



Students Learn About Panic Of 1873

In September, Ranger Nick Sacco gave a presentation to students from Nerinx Hall High School about the Panic (economic recession) of 1873, and facilitated a discussion with the students about the Panic in the site museum.

Students learned that during the Civil War, Congress began relying on paper currency (“greenbacks”) not backed by specie (gold or silver) to help fund the war effort. Roughly \$356 million in greenbacks were issued during the Civil War. Since they did not have specie backing, these greenbacks were essentially IOU promissory notes. The value of greenbacks was largely based on the confidence of wealthy investment bankers.

When Grant became President, he sought a return to specie-backed currency. The Coinage Act of 1873 outlawed the use of silver and put the nation’s economy towards the gold standard. The nation’s taxes and international debt were reduced

by \$300 million and \$435 million, respectively, during Grant’s tenure in office, but industrial overexpansion and harder access to capital forced several large financial institutions to declare bankruptcy, beginning a prolonged nationwide economic depression that lasted until 1879.

Since Grant’s time scholars and economists have offered differing perspectives on his economic policies, and questions remain open for debate today. On the one hand, one-fifth of the nation’s debt was eliminated during Grant’s tenure in office, and the resumption of specie-based payments led to substantial economic growth during the 1880s. On the other hand, white northerners disillusioned by the financial costs of protecting African Americans throughout the south during Reconstruction lost interest in protecting black rights. Furthermore, by 1890, 71 percent of the nation’s wealth was in the hands of only 9 percent of its citizens.

Spotlight on the Park: More On Archeology

Visitors of all ages have been learning about archeology by using our new interactive archeology table. Here, Mary Whitesel of Rockford, IL and Eric Hansen of Crestwood, MO search for buried artifacts. The table was constructed by R. J. Hutson as an Eagle Scout project.



Also regarding archeology, a team from the National Park Service's Midwest Archeological Center was at the park in September. In the photo below they are marking off a large section of historic ground and using radar ground penetration to do a geophysical survey in preparation for a dig. Park staff and volunteers assisted the following week during the actual dig.



Although nothing major was found this time, archeology has helped us learn much about life at White Haven, particularly about the lives of the enslaved people whose labor kept the farm running. Many of the artifacts uncovered at White Haven are on display in the winter kitchen and in the stable museum.

President Grant's Thanksgiving Proclamation

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Whereas it behooves a people sensible of their dependence on the Almighty publicly and collectively to acknowledge their gratitude for his favors and mercies and humbly to beseech for their continuance; and

Whereas the people of the United States during the year now about to end have special cause to be thankful for general prosperity, abundant harvests, exemption from pestilence, foreign war, and civil strife:

Now, therefore, be it known that I, Ulysses S. Grant, President of the United States, concurring in any similar recommendations from chief magistrates of States, do hereby recommend to all citizens to meet in their respective places of worship on Thursday, the 24th day of November next, there to give thanks for the bounty of God during the year about to close and to supplicate for its continuance hereafter.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

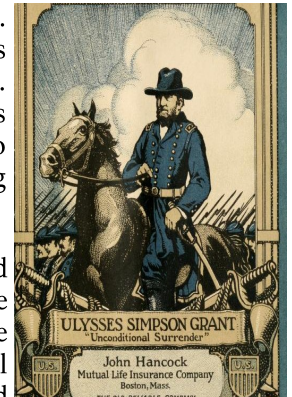
Done at the city of Washington, this 21st day of October, A.D. 1870, and of the Independence of the United States the ninety-fifth.

U. S. GRANT.

Kids' Corner: Do You Have A Nickname?

Ulysses Grant had many nicknames in his lifetime. Some were nice and some were mean. When Ulysses was born he was named Hiram Ulysses Grant. However, as he grew up his family called him by his middle name, Ulysses. 'Ulysses' was often shortened to 'Ulyss,' or just 'Lyss.' Some boys teased him by calling him 'Useless.'

Ulysses was also embarrassed that his initials spelled 'HUG,' so when he left home to go to school at the United States Military Academy at West Point he changed them around. He wrote 'UHG' on his travel trunk. When he got to West Point he found there had been a mistake. West Point was expecting Ulysses 'S.' Grant, not Hiram U. Grant. Ulysses accepted the change. As soon as the other cadets (students) saw the initials 'U. S.' they started calling him 'Uncle Sam.' The 'Uncle' part was soon dropped, and for the rest of his life his West Point classmates called him 'Sam.'



When Ulysses became famous during the Civil War he acquired many more nicknames, some based on his initials 'U. S.' He was called 'Unconditional Surrender' after his first major victory at Fort Donelson in Tennessee in 1862.

Do you have a nickname? Can you think of a nickname based on your initials?



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Upcoming Events

- November 27, 2014 — Park will be closed for Thanksgiving
- December 20, 2014 — “Holidays At White Haven” - time to be determined
- December 25, 2014 — Park will be closed for Christmas
- January 1, 2015 — Park will be closed for New Year’s Day
- February 21, 2015 — Mary Lincoln and Elizabeth Keckley portrayal — 10:00am

Did you know?

In 1846, Julia’s youngest brother, Lewis (or Louis) left Missouri and journeyed west to California. There he became a lawyer and a judge. In 1849, Lewis, just 26 years old, was selected as a delegate to the first California State Constitutional Convention charged with drafting a state constitution acceptable to the United States Congress, allowing California to enter the Union.

The first question the delegates faced was, would California be a free or slave state? Nationally, it was a momentous question. Either way, the balance of power in the Senate between free and slave states would be upset. (In 1820, to maintain that balance, Congress, as part of the Missouri Compromise, had created the free state of Maine while allowing Missouri to enter as a slave state.)

Many emigrants in California had come from slave states, including Lewis Dent, and might have been expected to advocate for the institution. Yet, when the convention met, the delegates voted unanimously to apply for statehood as a free state.

Julia’s brother, Lewis Dent, voted to prohibit slavery in California.