



# 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.

## **Very Grand Grant Opening**



Associate Midwest Regional Director Jim Loach, Superintendent Mike Ward, Honorary Park Rangers Jack Goldman and Jeannine Cook, JEFF Superintendent Peggy O'Dell, and JNPA Executive Director David Grove cut the ribbon, officially marking the opening of the completed historic site.

On Saturday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 124 years after the Grants' final trip to their St. Louis home, almost 700 visitors toured Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site for its Grand Opening. This event marked the conclusion of the park's multi-year, multi-million dollar development. Finally, the Visitor Center, historic structures, grounds, and the interpretive museum in the historic stable were completed and open to the public. Jeannine Cook and Jack Goldman, integral in saving the property and fostering its transition into the NPS, received Honorary Park Ranger awards prior to the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Helping to mark the occasion, the 33<sup>rd</sup> Illinois Regimental

Band performed 19<sup>th</sup> century tunes, while the 8<sup>th</sup> Missouri Volunteer Infantry reenactors set up a Civil War encampment. Darrell Hedrick and his horse Sonny added a realistic feel to the stable, and woodcarving and storytelling were enjoyed by all. Dr. John Y. Simon, editor of *The Papers of U.S. Grant*, reflected on the Grants' journey from White Haven to the White House.

Throughout the day, park staff and volunteers provided interpretation around the site. But the day truly belonged to the park in celebration of the journey toward fulfilling its mission to preserve and interpret White Haven and its 19<sup>th</sup> century residents.

# Grant's Stable: A Retirement Dream

In the waning months of the Civil War, Ulysses S. Grant purchased 650 acres of the farm called White Haven, planning to develop the property as a horse farm. Horace Porter recalled Grant saying, "I am looking forward longingly to the time when we can end this war, and I can settle down on my St. Louis farm and raise horses." With Lee's surrender, Grant believed his dream was about to be realized. However, the assassination of Lincoln changed not only Grant's plans for the farm but his destiny as well.

Ulysses and Julia did not return to St. Louis to take up residence after the war, yet White Haven remained in Grant's thoughts. Detailed instructions sent to his caretaker demonstrated the affection Grant felt for the farm. He still intended to retire there when his work in the nation's capital was finished.

To this end, Grant authorized the



Various saddles, bridles, and boots are displayed in the restored tack room.

construction of a large stable for the Thoroughbreds and Morgans he shipped to the farm. Grant saw to the location and design of the barn personally, and by the summer of 1868 it was well under way. Grant continued to closely monitor its progress from Washington. In September 1871, he instructed his caretaker William Elrod to build "eight box stalls, taking the place of at least sixteen or eighteen of the stalls,

thus reducing the capacity of the stable from forty to thirty or thirty-two horses." Grant, caring deeply for his horses, was not about to see them crowded.

Today, the restored horse stable houses a museum designed to encourage visitors to explore the personal and private lives of Ulysses and Julia Grant through a variety of displays and interactive exhibits.

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## Mary Grace Ford Celebrates 40 Years of U.S. Citizenship



**The city of Trieste, Italy, is just east of Venice, and sits at the head of the Gulf of Trieste on the Adriatic Sea.**

On Flag Day, Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site employee Mary Grace Ford celebrated forty years of being an American at a naturalization ceremony held at the Old Courthouse in St. Louis. An NPS employee since 1990, she has been in the administrative division at Grant since 1999.

Born in Trieste, Italy as Maria Grazia Micich, Mary Grace grew up in this town near the border

of present-day Slovenia. In 1956, she emigrated with her family to St. Louis. They settled on the Hill, where Mary Grace attended school.

In 1967 at the age of nineteen, Mary Grace became the first in her family to pledge her allegiance to her new homeland. Planning to live and work here, she wanted to belong and give back to this country. She has served as a federal employee since 1978.



# Grand Opening Snapshots



Top left: Park Guide Larry Lapinski looks on as volunteer David Herries demonstrates wood carving techniques, a skill used in the 19th century for tasks such as making plow handles or creating decorative furniture pieces.

Top right: A museum visitor takes in "A Vision of Justice," a section of the new interpretive museum that examines Grant's presidential efforts towards equality.

Middle left: Tom Rung, along with other members of the Sons of Union Veterans, presents the colors in 19th-century fashion at the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Bottom left: Park Guide Jean Freeman provides an interpretive experience for a visitor behind the historic home.

Bottom right: Park Guide Katherine Potter, one of the day's several costumed interpreters, welcomes visitors to White Haven.





**Top left:** A museum visitor plays with a flip board that compares Julia's apparel choices to those of women today.

**Top right:** Park Guide Abbi Telander examines a new interpretive node with visitors behind the summer kitchen.

**Middle left:** A visitor reads a flipbook set up like a scrapbook of Grant's travels in the "Neighbor, Traveler, Friend" section of the new museum.

**Bottom left:** The "magic mirror" in the dining room of the historic house brings to life for visitors the Dents' and Grants' late-1850s conflict over slavery.

**Bottom right:** Members of the the 8th Missouri Infantry (US) Reenactors demonstrate elements of Civil War camp life on the park grounds.





## Spotlight on the Park: House Fence

Good fences make . . . nice lawns? That may not be how the saying goes, but that is the case with White Haven's fence. Without any neighbors near the main house, the original fence shown in this 1860 photograph was likely constructed to keep cattle, chickens, and other livestock off of the family's lawn.



**Above: White Haven fence c. 1860**  
**Below: Restored fence facing original barn site**



East of the house stood the chicken house, horse stable, and cattle barn. While the neat white fence does present a pleasant welcome to visitors, its design indicates a more practical purpose. Chickens would be hard-pressed to gain access to Julia's piazza. The fact that the fence only enclosed three sides of the house, leaving open passage to the ice house further indicates that the White Haven lawn was a "no livestock zone."

## Kids' Corner: Critter Camp



**Historian Pam Sanfilippo introduces Critter Campers to archeology.**

Grant's Farm's Critter Camp is in full swing, and Ulysses S. Grant NHS is again partnering to offer campers four unique activities at the site each day. This year's campers become amateur archeologists, dress up in 19th century clothing, find out about transportation advances during the Grants' lives, and learn more about the National Park Service. At the culmination of their four days at the site, they earn the coveted Junior Ranger badge.

The camp is for 5-10 year olds, and runs Tuesday through Friday, until August 3. For information about next year's camp, contact Erin Lawrence, Camp Supervisor at Grant's Farm at 314-525-0847.

## Grant Employee Completes Historic Preservation Training Program

On April 20, 2007, the sixth class of Park Service employees to complete the Preservation and Skills Training (PAST) program received their certificates at the Gambrill House in Frederick, Maryland. We are proud that our own Albert Banks III was one of the graduates of the two-year curriculum focusing on preservation philosophy and specialized skills required in historic maintenance. Albert, a native of Illinois, has worked for the



**Albert Banks III, NPS PAST graduate**  
National Park Service for fourteen years and has done projects at twelve different park sites.



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## Upcoming Event

We are celebrating the return of the annual favorite Night Walk into the Past. This living history event will take place August 3-5 at 7 p.m. This year's journey into Grant's life will investigate his Presidential policy on Native American affairs. Visitors will encounter historic figures such as General William T. Sherman, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Ely Parker, and George Armstrong Custer's widow, Libby. The event is free; however, space is limited, seats fill quickly and reservations are required. Please call 314-842-3298, ext. 245, for reservations.

## Did you know?

In 1848, after four years of engagement, Julia was more than prepared for her marriage to Ulysses upon his return from the Mexican War. August 22 was the day appointed for the wedding. Julia had planned to wear her mother's wedding dress, until a close family friend, Carolyn O'Fallon, loaned her a white watered silk gown and white tulle veil. Another friend provided a

bouquet of white cape jasmines.

The ceremony took place in the evening at the Dents' townhouse at 4th and Cerre in St. Louis. Julia's youngest sister Emmy described it as "a sweet, old-fashioned wedding." The wedding party included Julia's sister Nellie, a cousin, and a friend. Standing for Ulysses were his army friends, and future Confederate officers, James

"Pete" Longstreet and Cadmus Wilcox. Ulysses wore his regimentals, and was said to have nearly tripped over his sword several times. From this modest start, Ulysses and Julia were happily married for nearly 38 years.

Based on information from *The Personal Memoirs of Julia Dent Grant (Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant)* and *When Grant Went A-Courtin' By His Wife's Sister: Emma Dent Casey*.