



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/.

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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.

Park Draws Record Visitation



The 2007 Night Walk cast from left: Alison Gioia, Kyle Daniel, John Deutch, Katherine Potter, Larry Lapinski and Randy Harnish.

To quote from *Field of Dreams*, “If you build it, they will come.” Well, we restored and built it, and you are coming!

Are you one of the thousands who visited this summer? If so, you helped us set record numbers: almost 8,000 visitors for June, 9,500+ for July, and even the August heat didn’t keep over 6,000 of you away. We’ve had almost 40,000 visitors this year so far; an increase of 90 percent from last year!

In addition to all who came to see the completed site, several special events and programs were well attended. Our annual Night Walk into the Past, which focused on

Grant’s Native American Peace Policy, drew capacity crowds. Four hundred children visited the site as part of Grant’s Farm’s Critter Camp. Several workshops allowed educators to explore the site and see the multiple learning opportunities for their students, and other groups holding conferences in St. Louis included us in their plans.

If you haven’t visited yet, we realize that you may be waiting for cooler weather or smaller crowds. Now’s the time, on your own or as part of a group. Several events are planned for the fall that you may enjoy. For information, or to make a group reservation, call 314-842-3298, ext. 245.

Grant's Native American Peace Policy

American history is full of disputes between Native Americans and whites. Whites' greediness for land resulted in broken treaties, forcing Native Americans onto smaller and less desirable terrain. Agents appointed through patronage to trade with the Indians were corrupt, cheating the government and the Indians.



A Shoshoni teepee stands in view of the American flag, at Fort Hall, Washington Territory, c. 1870. Photo: Library of Congress.

Ulysses S. Grant blamed whites for troubles between the two races, a view based on his time in the west with the Army. He knew many whites thought Indians were savages who should be exterminated, a view he said in his first inaugural address was “too horrible for a nation to adopt without entailing upon itself the wrath of all Christendom.” Others felt that Indians should adopt white man’s ways, believing them superior to native cultures and lifestyles.

Grant also encouraged legislation

that would civilize the Indians and then grant them citizenship—a novel idea for the time. He appointed his friend, Ely S. Parker, a Seneca Indian who had been acculturated into white society, as Commissioner of Indian Affairs—noteworthy since Parker was not a citizen and the Attorney General had to rule that the appointment was legal, making him the first Native American to hold a cabinet-level position.

Grant then worked to eliminate corruption, turning to religious groups to provide Christian role models. Grant believed that by keeping settlers out of Indian Territory, peaceful methods would bring Native Americans to adopt the lifestyle of Christian farmers. His policy was only partially successful, as many Indians resisted reservation life, while whites demanded access to lands when gold and other minerals were found.

Grant's Trail Still Brings Visitors to White Haven



Grant's Trail, as it intersects with the U.S. Grant National Historic Site entrance.

In 1872, President Ulysses S. Grant provided the Pacific Railroad a 100-foot wide easement through his White Haven property. He also provided an additional 20 acres for Grant's Station. The Kirkwood and Carondelet Branch was a bypass around the congested city. Trains from the west would go to Carondelet, where they would be ferried across the Mississippi. The rail line was utilized for over 120

years by various railroads, but in 1990, railway traffic on this line ceased.

After laying abandoned for a few years, the right-of-way became part of Grant's Trail, a hiking and biking path of over 8 miles from Carondelet to Kirkwood. The original station is gone, but it has been reborn as a general store at neighboring Grant's Farm. Today, visitors cross Grant's Trail as they enter White Haven.

Spotlight on the Park: Peace Medal

We are fortunate to have in our collection two objects that address President Grant's Native American Policy: Peace medals. These first were given to Indians by the British, Spanish, and French as tokens of friendship. After the colonies won independence, medals became an important symbol of diplomacy used by the United States government.



Reverse of Grant Peace Medal.

In accord with President Grant's Peace Policy (see page 2), the design of his peace medal was a complete departure from that of his predecessors. Nowhere on the medal is the Indian depicted with exception of the peace pipe located on its front.

One of our medals is on display in the interpretive museum in the section entitled "A Vision of Justice," alongside other objects that represent different minority groups' struggle for equality. It serves as a reminder of a policy that sought to bring the Native American into white American society.

Kids' Corner: One-Room Schoolhouses

The coming of fall spells back to school for many people - today as well as in the 1800s. Children of that time, like Julia Dent and Ulysses Grant, attended school in a one-room schoolhouse. One teacher taught every subject to students of all ages. The school Julia went to sat on her family's farm. Julia didn't like the hard benches that were used instead of desks, so her mother sent a soft chair to school for her to use.

Instead of computers or notebooks, children wrote on slates with slate pencils. Students learned penmanship, history, spelling, arithmetic, science, and how to read. Often, the subjects also taught moral lessons on being good citizens and good children.

At recess, children might have played ball, hopscotch, jacks, and



Ulysses S. Grant attended school in his hometown of Georgetown, Ohio. Photo: Ohio Historical Society.

jump rope. They brought their lunches in pails and ate outside when the weather was nice. During the winters, students would huddle around a stove to keep warm.

Ulysses remembered learning "a noun is the name of a thing." His favorite subject was math. Julia struggled with Roman numerals but liked reading and playing at recess. Both enjoyed learning throughout their lives.

Grant Volunteer Now Park Guide

Hello, newsletter readers! My name is Terry Orr. Like many people of my generation, my interest in history began on a family vacation to Gettysburg during the Civil War Centennial.

That interest eventually led to a degree in history and a desire to work for the National Park Service. Along the way, I spent two years in the U.S. Army and had a long career in business. Last year, I began volunteering at Grant National Historic Site. Since January, I have been



Terry Orr, NPS Park Guide

wearing the uniform and enjoying the job I wanted when I graduated from college.



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Upcoming Events

- October 13-14 - Grant's Farm Civil War Living History at Hardscrabble Cabin.
- October - Temporary exhibits featuring the St. Louis Mechanical & Agricultural Fair on display.
- December - Temporary exhibits featuring Victorian Christmas Traditions will be on display.
- December 14 - 105th anniversary of Julia Dent Grant's death in 1902. She is interred beside her husband at General Grant National Memorial in New York City.

Note: Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site is closed Thanksgiving, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Did you know?

In the summer of 1856, friends and neighbors of the Dents and the Grants gathered at an oak grove in the northern part of the farm called White Haven. The assembled, about 75 men, both free and enslaved, spent the better part of two days setting logs and driving pegs to raise a log cabin for the Grant family.

This cabin had been in the plans

for over a year. Ulysses Grant, looking to be closer to the fields he worked, picked out a cabin site about 3/4 of a mile north of his father-in-law's house. He had started hewing oak and elm logs and splitting shingles in the fall of 1855, and had dug a basement earlier in the summer of 1856. By late summer, the time had come for the Grants to host a house-raising party.

When the cabin walls were complete, Grant set to work on his own shingling the home, and adding stairs and floors. Once the house was livable, Ulysses and Julia moved into the home with their three children on September 30, 1856.

Based on information from "Grant at Hardscrabble," by John Y. Simon, *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin*, July 1979.