



# 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/).

#### Editorial Staff

Katherine Potter  
Pam Sanfilippo  
Abbi Telander

#### Chief of Interpretation

Chris Eckard

#### Contributors

Karen Maxville  
Terry Orr  
Chiffontae Ross  
Bill Meyer

#### Comments? Write to:

Chief of Interpretation  
Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site  
7400 Grant Road  
St. Louis, MO 63123

#### Telephone

314-842-3298 x245

#### E-mail

[ulsg\\_interpretation@nps.gov](mailto:ulsg_interpretation@nps.gov)

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

## Picturing the Past: Exploring Carte de Visites and Horses



Grant's horses, Reb and Billy Button, take the younger Grant children, Nellie and Jesse, to school in this 1869 engraving. Photo: Library of Congress.

Looking for something to do during the winter months? We have some special temporary exhibits for visitors to enjoy.

In February, the exhibit "Campaigning with Grant in the West," features some of Park Guide Terry Orr's collection of carte de visites (nineteenth century photos). The exhibit includes biographical sketches of Illinois soldiers who served under Grant during his western campaigns. Their stories connect us to the unsung heroes of the Federal army who fought to restore the Union. Preview the exhibit in the article "One Soldier's Experience at Fort Donelson" on page 2.

From March 15 through May 15, we are pleased to host the White House Historical Association's traveling exhibit, "White House Horses." Ulysses Grant's fondness for horses is well-known, but did you know that he had new stables built at the White House in 1871—the same time the stable was built at White Haven? Through this exhibit you can learn about the importance of horses for presidents until the "horseless carriage" became popular.

Make plans to visit the site to view these exhibits. While here, you can also enjoy of any of our permanent features: the film, a house visit, a walk around the historic trace, or the museum.

# One Soldier's Experience at Fort Donelson

Ulysses Grant's first major victory during the Civil War, at the battle of Fort Donelson in February 1862, was a fierce struggle. The surrender of 14,000 Confederates at the fort on the Cumberland River in west Tennessee gave the impression that the battle was one-sided. In fact, the number of killed and wounded on both sides were relatively equal.

When the Confederates tried to escape the fort and break out of Grant's encircling forces, they briefly overran part of the right flank of his line. On that right flank was the 11<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry regiment, including Second Lieutenant James O. Churchill from Freeport, Illinois. In the confusion of battle, the regiment found themselves surrounded and in quick succession Churchill was wounded in the left thigh and the right hip.

The counter-attack Grant ordered swept the Confederates back over the ground where Churchill lay. There he remained all night, between the lines, in

freezing temperatures which fortunately slowed his loss of blood. The following morning, after the Confederates surrendered the fort, he was recovered by Union troops. Churchill was initially placed on Grant's headquarters boat while waiting to be moved to a hospital. He lay next to Colonel John Logan (soon to be a general) who was also wounded, and Logan's wife attended to both of them.

After an arduous journey by steamboat Churchill arrived at a hospital in St. Louis. There, doctors were able to restore the use of his right leg by the use of improvised traction devices. He was appreciative of the treatment, care and attention he received, and throughout his convalescence he was visited by many St. Louisans. Once his wounds were sufficiently healed, he rejoined his regiment, rose to the rank of Brevet Lieutenant Colonel, and mustered out of service in September 1866.

Churchill's experience in St. Louis may have influenced his choice to settle here after the war.



James O. Churchill, in a 1863 or 1864 carte de visite. Photo: Collection of Terry Orr

He became active in both politics and the local G.A.R. and was the cashier of the custom house until just shortly before his death on September 4, 1910, at the age of seventy-five. James O. Churchill is buried in St. Louis' Bellefontaine Cemetery.

Fort Donelson National Battlefield is located in Dover, Tennessee. For more information see [www.nps.gov/fodo](http://www.nps.gov/fodo).

## Grant in St. Louis: A Second Printing 92 Years Later

We are anxiously awaiting the arrival of the reprint of Walter B. Stevens' *Grant in St. Louis*. The original, published in 1916 by The Franklin Club of Saint Louis, was limited to a printing of 100 copies. Due to the book's relevance to the site, we wanted to make it available to a wider audience.

As part of the new edition of the book, Park Ranger John Deutch wrote a biographical sketch of Stevens, a noted journalist and author. Site Historian Pam Sanfilippo wrote an introduction, providing some historical context for the original work. The cover highlights White Haven's main house.

The site's cooperating association, Jefferson National Parks Association, is working with Applewood Press, a publisher of historic and reprinted books, to make this new edition possible. *Grant in St. Louis* should be available at the park's book store sometime in early 2008.

## Spotlight on the Park: Ice House

White Haven’s historic ice house provided a necessary storage system for meats, fish, dairy products, and eggs, prior to the development of ice boxes or refrigerators.



The ice house at White Haven was restored in 2000 to its nineteenth century appearance. Photo: ULSG

An 1871 letter written by Grant implies that a milk house or spring house had previously been used to store perishable foods, and that the caretaker had recently built an ice house into the side of the hill behind the main house. The building was put in that place to take advantage of the ground’s constant cooler temperature, especially during the hot summer months.

In the winter, farmers and people in the business of ice hauling would begin to harvest ice blocks from local lakes, creeks, and ponds. The ice might even come from as far as the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers.

Today, the ice house is one of the park’s buildings that reminds visitors about farm work of the nineteenth century.

## Volunteer Artists Give Back



Left: Volunteer David Herries has carved several pieces for the park, including this figure of Ulysses S. Grant. Right: This hand-painted ornament represented the park on the White House Christmas tree this year. Photos: Bill Meyer

Over the past year, 26 devoted and talented volunteers have generously given 2,619 hours to Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site. Some of these volunteers contributed to the park through their artistic skills.

This year, local artist Gloria Gewinner-Ide hand-painted an ornament of White Haven for the White House’s NPS Christmas tree. Over 340 units of the National Park Service are represented on the tree for this year’s White House holiday

theme, Holiday in the National Parks. The park’s ornament was captured on film by long-time volunteer photographer, Bill Meyer.

Volunteer David Herries has contributed to many living history events with his traditional woodcarving skills. His “Ulysses S. Grant” and “National Park Ranger” carvings grace the front desk of the visitor center. Thank you to each of our wonderful volunteers for all that you do.

## Kids’ Corner: Grant Word Search

Find the 12 words listed below hidden in the rows and lines of letters. Look across, backwards, up, down, or diagonally.

R P L T E E R T J R N E  
 E R A E F H C U F E S S  
 T E J E M A L I A U U L  
 S S E I I I R A T Y A N  
 A I B G A N E M H R A M  
 M D L D I E U U E I A E  
 R E E A E G S N R R A E  
 E N E V A H E T I H W U  
 T T E E T G S H T O R I  
 R T H J R E S G R N N R  
 A A R E U E Y E K C U B  
 U R J Q B N L E E R S A  
 Q M E U T T U S R E E L

WHITE HAVEN  
 HIRAM  
 ULYSSES  
 JULIA DENT  
 BUCKEYE  
 QUARTERMASTER  
 FATHER  
 FARMER  
 UNION  
 GENERAL  
 EQUESTRIAN  
 PRESIDENT



**Ulysses S. Grant NHS**  
7400 Grant Road  
St. Louis, MO 63123  
(314) 842-3298

## Upcoming Events

- February 1 – 28: “Campaigning with Grant in the West,” a temporary exhibit featuring carte de visites of some of the soldiers who served under Grant, will be on display in the Visitor Center.
- March 4: The 139<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Grant’s inauguration as eighteenth President of the United States of America in 1869. In 1933, the 20th Amendment passed, changing the inaugural date to January 20th.
- March 15 – May 15: “White House Horses,” a traveling exhibit from the White House Historical Association, will be on display in the Visitor Center classroom.

## Did you know?

In 1848 or 1849, Julia Dent Grant’s brother, Lewis, built a villa in the southwest corner of the White Haven plantation. He called this two-story brick home Wish-ton-wish.

After Lewis went west to California, Ulysses and Julia Grant moved into this house in 1855 and made it their home until Ulysses completed the

Hardscrabble cabin in 1856. During Grant’s presidency, they stored the furniture from White Haven in Wish-ton-wish, and also rented out the first floor.

Tragedy struck on February 21, 1873, when Wish-ton-wish caught fire around noon and burned to the ground. Grant himself commented on the loss in a letter to a friend, saying “I see by the

morning papers that Elrod [the caretaker at White Haven] has been burned out, and no doubt without insurance.” According to contemporary newspaper reports, the Grants had stored about \$3,000 worth of furniture in the house.

Based on information from *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, Volume 24, and the *Missouri Republican*, Feb. 22, 1873.