



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.

"Lee and Grant" in St. Louis



Left: Memorial statue of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant at St. Louis City Hall.

Right: Portrait of Lt. Robert E. Lee in 1831, prior to his time in St. Louis.

The traveling exhibition "Lee and Grant," produced by Virginia Historical Society, is currently at the Missouri History Museum, and will remain through September 14, 2008. The exhibit allows viewers to examine the lives of these two men who played such pivotal roles in our nation's history.

Missouri History Museum added items from its own collections that reflect Lee's and Grant's St. Louis connections. Lee was in St. Louis from 1837 to 1840, working to improve the harbor. Grant's association with St. Louis was much longer: he arrived at Jefferson Barracks in 1843 (see related article, p. 3), lived at White

Haven between 1854 and 1859, and owned the property until shortly before his death in 1885.

Visiting both the exhibition and Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site is the best way to learn first about Robert E. Lee and then explore Grant's life and legacy in greater detail. The Missouri History Museum offers Civil War St. Louis bus tours that include both sites. In addition, programs on "Grant at White Haven" and "Lee's Arlington" are scheduled for August 30 and 31. The August 30 program is at Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site; August 31 is at Missouri History Museum. Both begin at 2 p.m. and are free.

Vicksburg and the Other Battle of the Crater

The casual student of the Civil War has heard of the Battle of the Crater, the ultimately disastrous attempt by the Union army to end the stalemate around Petersburg, Virginia, in July 1864. While much of the blame lay with the corps and division commanders, ultimately Grant blamed himself.

Should he have known that the mine explosion wouldn't work? Over a year earlier two mines were exploded during the siege of Vicksburg. The first was on June 25, 1863. Two Union regiments seized the crater created by the explosion, were pinned down, and nothing was gained. Another mine was blown on July 1, and Grant's observation was that "no attempt to charge was made this time, the experience of the 25th admonishing us." Grant then determined that these efforts



The Siege of Vicksburg. Image: Library of Congress.

were futile until he could blow up several mines simultaneously and attack immediately afterward. The Confederate garrison at Vicksburg surrendered before this was necessary.

While some comparisons can be made between the two assaults

and Grant's decisions, in both cases Grant took responsibility for his actions, something President Lincoln appreciated. He had questioned Grant's decisions leading up to the siege at Vicksburg, but ultimately admitted, "You were right and I was wrong."

Jefferson Barracks: The Post on the Mississippi



Jefferson Barracks stable built in 1851. Image: www.civilwaralbum.com

Established south of St. Louis, Missouri, in 1826 and named in honor of Thomas Jefferson,

Jefferson Barracks was the first army post west of the Mississippi. It served a critical role in westward expansion and continued to function as a major military training location for over a century.

Many notable 19th century military figures were stationed at the post, including Zachary Taylor, Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, William T. Sherman, Philip Sheridan, and Ulysses S. Grant. After graduation from the U.S. Military Academy in 1843, Grant was assigned to the 4th U.S.

Infantry as quartermaster, stationed at Jefferson Barracks, then the largest military post in the country. Grant soon rode out to White Haven, where he met Julia Dent, who would become Mrs. Ulysses Grant in 1848.

Following World War II in 1946, the War Department closed Jefferson Barracks as an active military post. Yet today, several entities still occupy portions of the original grounds: National Guard units, a St. Louis County Park, a V.A. center, and a National Cemetery.

Spotlight on the Park: 1860 Photograph

The oldest known photograph of White Haven dates from approximately 1860. The grainy image was a great find in 1993, but it also left many questions. The photograph shows basic structural features on the west side and front of the home, but many details are shadowed and unclear.



Enhanced 1860 Photograph.

Recently, the Ford Conservation Center photographed the original image in the highest resolution possible. We hoped to answer questions about architectural features, the piece of equipment shown under the lean-to, and the identity of two women on the second floor porch.

Unfortunately, although the image was enhanced significantly, it still remains too blurry to provide definitive answers. Instead, more questions arose: is there a man standing in front of the stone building, and what material is hanging out of the sitting room window? Perhaps some future technology will be able to reveal all of the mysteries the 1860 photograph offers.

New Faces at Ulysses S. Grant



Some of our new staff members from left to right: maintenance laborers Bill O'Bright, Kevin Johnson, A.J. Sanfilippo and Jonathan Karberg; education intern Michelle Antenesse; and park guide Shawn Peters.

Junior Ranger Program: Revised, Reimagined and Better Than Ever

Calling all kids: Try our new Junior Ranger program coming this summer!

Initially started in 2000, the park's Junior Ranger program needed extensive revisions due to the completion of the new Visitor Center, museum, and exhibits in the home, outbuildings, and along the historic trace last year. The new program includes activities utilizing all of these areas to enhance children's visits.

The new program is really three separate programs: one set of activities is for children ages 5 to 7; a second for those 8 to 10; and a third for those 11 and older. Watching the park's film, visiting the historic home, and exploring the museum are common to all three groups. Other activities in



Ranger John Deutch, who developed the new program, helps junior rangers complete their activities.

each group's booklet are designed to be age-appropriate. They encourage Junior Rangers to explore, observe, and draw conclusions while visiting historic White Haven. The rewards include a Junior Ranger badge and a Certificate of Achievement.



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Upcoming Events

- May 18 – September 14: Lee and Grant Exhibit at the Missouri History Museum, displaying artifacts from White Haven
- August 1 – 3: Annual Night Walk into the Past at Ulysses S. Grant NHS, program reservations can be made beginning in July by calling the site at 314-842-3298.
- August 22: Ulysses and Julia Grant’s 160th Wedding Anniversary
- August 30: “Grant at White Haven” program at Ulysses S. Grant NHS at 2:00pm

Did you know?

White Haven’s 1850 slave census lists four adult female slaves, providing basic statistical data. Julia Dent Grant offers additional insight into the lives of slaves in her memoirs, though it is definitely from her own perspective. Only one account from a former slave, Mary Robinson, was available, until recently when another interview was discovered, that of Mary Henry.

Mary Robinson served as the

Dents’ cook and was interviewed in 1885. She talks little about herself, but remembered Ulysses as a hard worker and devoted husband. She recalled last seeing Grant around 1880, saying, “he received me very kindly and it seemed to me that he was mighty glad to see me.”

Mary Henry was a former enslaved playmate of Julia’s. In her 1900 newspaper interview, Mary recounted how she would

fool Col. Dent in order to stay a week in town. She, too, spoke fondly of the Grants, recalling how she visited Julia in St. Louis after the war, going up to “Mrs. Grant’s rooms at her pleasure and unannounced.”

Based on information from “Auntie Robinson’s Recollections,” *St. Louis Republican*, July 24, 1885, and “She was Mrs. Grant’s Mammy,” *Kansas City Star*, April 22, 1900.