



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/.

Editorial Staff

Katherine Potter
Pam Sanfilippo
Abbi Telander

Chief of Interpretation

Chris Eckard

Contributors

Jeannine Cook

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

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

From Private Home to National Historic Site



For years, White Haven was a private residence, remodeled in stages throughout the 20th century as shown in this early NPS photograph.

Twenty years ago this October, Public Law 101-106 was passed by the 101st Congress, establishing Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site. While the law was the beginning of the site's administration by the National Park Service, it culminated efforts by many individuals and organizations to move the property from private ownership and preserve it for the benefit of the public.

White Haven is recognized as historically significant due to Ulysses Grant's long association with the property, but because it was privately

owned for most of the 20th century, many people were not even aware of its existence. That would change in the late 1970s when the owners expressed a desire to sell the home.

In 1981 several St. Louisans sought to raise funds to purchase the home and eventually open it to the public, under St. Louis County's administration. Those plans did not come to fruition and the house and other buildings risked possible demolition for a condominium development.

Please see "Becoming ULSG," page 3.

National Parks: A Great American Idea

As the United States expanded, people became more and more aware that the new territories were full of natural wonders and beautiful places. In 1870, the Washburn-Doane expedition set out to explore what was known as the Yellowstone country in Wyoming and Montana Territories. If only, the explorers thought, there was some way to preserve all of Yellowstone's natural wonders for the good of everybody. The creation of a national park, land set aside by the government for the use of the people, seemed interesting, yet unattainable. But that didn't stop them from trying.

In less than two years, supporters of preserving the



The Grand Prismatic Spring is just one of the many natural wonders Yellowstone NP preserves. Photo courtesy of Yellowstone NP.

area included these explorers, railroad companies, and other boosters. The campaign to preserve the Yellowstone country caught the attention of Congress, and it passed a bill, putting the territory under the auspices of the Department of the Interior. President Ulysses S. Grant signed legislation officially

making the area around the mouth of the Yellowstone River a national park on March 1, 1872. This Act of Declaration set aside over 2 million acres of land for public enjoyment. Never before had a government passed a law of this scope. The establishment of this park would inspire countries around the world to do the same.

Today, there are over 390 National Park Service sites throughout America. All of these sites carry the legacy of Yellowstone and the idea that the federal government could and should set aside land “dedicated and set apart as a public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.”

You Know You've Asked: Who's Buried in Grant's Tomb?



General Grant National Memorial, also known as Grant's Tomb, is administered by the National Park Service. It has been part of the National Park System since 1958. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/gegr/. Image courtesy of General Grant National Memorial.

Technically no one is “buried” in Grant's Tomb, because the bodies that rest there are not underground. General Grant National Memorial, the official name of Grant's Tomb, is a mausoleum for Ulysses and Julia Grant.

At the time of Grant's death in 1885, he was considered a national hero. Most Americans assumed he would be buried in Washington, D.C. However, during his final illness Grant had indicated he preferred St. Louis, Galena, Illinois, or New York City, and that when his beloved wife, Julia, died, she would be buried next to him.

New York City's mayor offered a beautiful location in Riverside Park, and the family accepted.

In contrast to Grant's unassuming nature, designer John Duncan created a colossal monument, intended to reflect Americans' admiration for the general.

With pomp and circumstance, Grant's remains were interred on the 75th anniversary of his birth, April 27, 1897. When Julia Grant passed away in 1902, her body was placed next to his, following her husband's wishes.

Becoming ULSG from page 1

On March 29, 1985, Jeannine Cook, then President of Affton Historical Society, met with other concerned citizens active in historic preservation at the office of Virginia Stith, then Director of St. Louis County Parks. At that meeting, Save Grant's White Haven was born.

The condominium contract was held up thanks to Alderman H. Milford, who argued that rezoning the property for multi-family development would destroy one of St. Louis' most historic homes.

Members of Save Grant's White Haven then led the effort to transfer ownership to the National Park Service, according to Cook, "because we thought they had the know-how and personnel who could maximize the resource."

This was not as easy as it might seem, but the group proved undaunted. The first step was to conduct research and



Members of Save Grant's White Haven and other officials toasted the purchase of White Haven in July 1986. Pictured, from left: Joanne Keller, William Wenzlick, Jerry Schober, Harold Uthoff, Donald Withrow, James Komorek, Sen. Frank Bild, Erle Lionberger, Rep. Jack Goldman, Paul Douglas and Jeannine Cook. Picture from the Suburban Journals.

prepare the nomination form for the site to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places as a National Landmark. Submitted in October 1985, the site received landmark status on June 23, 1986, a requirement for properties to be added to the National Parks System.

Meanwhile, Save Grant's White Haven garnered community support and led by its president, state representative Jack Goldman, acquired a loan through Missouri's Historic Buildings Revolving Fund, along with matching funds from St. Louis

County, to acquire the property.

The grassroots effort became a groundswell of support for preservation of the site, and Congressman Richard Gephardt and Senator Christopher Bond introduced legislation at the federal level to establish the site as a unit of the National Park Service. Goldman, along with National Park Service representatives and Grant historian John Y. Simon, testified on behalf of the legislation, and the site was officially transferred to the National Park Service on October 2, 1989.

Kids' Corner: Join Us to Celebrate National Junior Ranger Day



How would you like to visit four different National Park Service sites in one day? During Junior Ranger Day on April 25, 2009, kids of all ages can come to Ulysses S. Grant NHS and experience activities from Mammoth Cave NP, George Washington Carver NHS, Wilson's Creek NB, and,

of course, Ulysses S. Grant NHS. The park will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with special activities happening from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. Admission to the park and the events is free and reservations are not required. All children must be accompanied by an adult at all times.



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

Upcoming Events

- April 25: Junior Ranger Day throughout the National Park Service. Join us at ULSG from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. or visit your nearby parks for fun activities for kids of all ages!
- June 2– July 31: Critter Camp for kids ages 5-10 in cooperation with Grant’s Farm. Please visit www.grantsfarm.com/CritterCamp.htm/ for more information.

Did you know?

Test your National Park knowledge with these trivia questions.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1) What state has the most National Park units? | established in 1890 to honor the Civil War soldiers that fought in two separate battles during a two month period? | administration was the National Park Service created? |
| 2) What National Historic Site commemorates the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869? | 4) How many National Park units were Civil War battlefields? | 8) Who was the only President who also served as an NPS park ranger? |
| 3) What was the first National Military Park, | 5) How many National Park units were Presidential homes? | |
| | 6) What person’s name appears in the most National Park units? | |
| | 7) During which President’s | |

- 1) California
- 2) Golden Spike NHS
- 3) Chickamauga-Chatanooga NMP
- 4) 19
- 5) 18
- 6) Theodore Roosevelt
- 7) Woodrow Wilson
- 8) Gerald Ford