

Ulysses S. Grant's White Haven:

*A Place Where Extraordinary People
Came to Live Ordinary Lives, 1796-1885*

by Kimberly Scott Little



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Historic Resource Study
Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site
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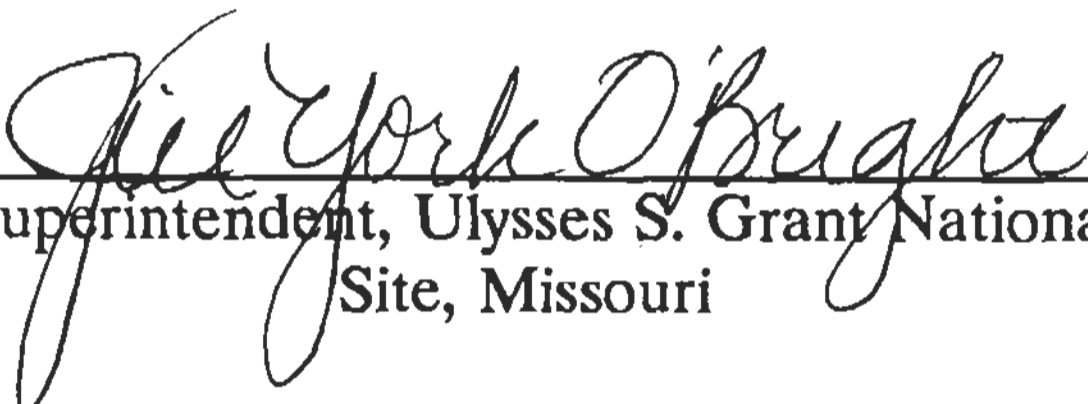
*Historic Resource Study
Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site
Missouri*

by

Kimberly Scott Little
National Park Service

St. Louis
1993


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3/9/93
Date


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Editorial Notes and Common Abbreviations

The author elected to print quotations without the use of *sic* for misspellings and emphases present in original sources.

The following common abbreviations are used throughout the text without introductory full citation:

USG, <i>Papers</i>	Ulysses S. Grant, <i>The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant</i> , ed. John Y. Simon (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press).
USG, <i>Memoirs</i>	Ulysses S. Grant, <i>Memoirs and Selected Letters: Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant; Selected Letters, 1839-1864</i> , ed. Mary Drake McFeely and William S. McFeely (New York: Library of America, 1990). (Note: All page numbers in this text refer to this edition of Grant's memoirs.)
JDG, <i>Memoirs</i>	Julia Dent Grant, <i>The Personal Memoirs of Julia Dent Grant (Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant)</i> , ed. John Y. Simon (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975).
SIUC-USGA	Ulysses S. Grant Association, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.
CVR File	Charles van Ravenswaay File
JDG	Julia Dent Grant
JRG	Jesse Root Grant, Sr.
MHS	Missouri Historical Society
SIUC	Southern Illinois University, Carbondale
ULSG	Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site, Missouri
USG	Ulysses S. Grant
USGIII	Ulysses S. Grant III

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Kimberly Scott Little
March 1993

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

About ten miles southwest of downtown St. Louis, Missouri, is the heart of an old farm called White Haven. At the center of the property is a large white house, a hodgepodge of French colonial and American architecture bearing the signs of numerous additions, deletions, and transformations during the almost two centuries of its existence. Near the house are outbuildings, relics of the owners who shaped the land around the big house. Behind the house is a spring branch which ambles listlessly to the Gravois Creek, and because of this creek early residents called the land the Gravois farm.

A series of extraordinary people lived on this farm, beginning with an obscure pioneer who moved to the site in the 1790s. Through its owners, the site has ties to the Lewis and Clark expedition, Thomas Jefferson's war with Tripoli, the development of St. Louis as a commercial center, the Mexican War, the Civil War, and President Ulysses S. Grant. Grant was the most prominent of White Haven's owners, and his association with the property spanned all of his adult life.

The history of White Haven and its owners will be explored in this historic resource study. Chapter Three begins with the founding of St. Louis and introducing White Haven's residents through its first half century. At the close of this period, the farm was owned by Frederick Dent, the father-in-law of Ulysses S. Grant. Chapters Four through Seven detail the life of Grant before he achieved fame in the Civil War. Grant's childhood, education, courtship, service in the Mexican War and peacetime army will be discussed, as will the period when Grant lived at White Haven in the 1850s. Chapter Eight provides a narrative of the Civil War and Grant's personal and family life from 1861 to 1865, in particular his purchase of White Haven. Chapters Nine through Eleven explore Grant's public service after the war, his presidential administration, and his final years. The study illuminates his wife and children during this period as well. Chapters Twelve and Thirteen conclude with a brief history of the subsequent owners of White Haven, from Grant's death in 1885 to 1989, when the property became the Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site.

This work is a beginning for studying the fascinating people who made White Haven and the Gravois farm their home. It spans American history from Spanish colonial Louisiana to Gilded Age politics, and therefore it does not provide a detailed study of any single aspect. Its most famous resident, Ulysses S. Grant, is studied for what past histories have not told us about him. His life is connected with the earlier residents of the farm and their stories. This history of White Haven provides a springboard for more specialized considerations of all of the residents of White Haven, beginning with the prehistory of St. Louis.

CHAPTER TWO

The Pioneers on the Gravois

"Their guns furnished meat, and the cultivation of a very limited amount of the soil, their bread and vegetables. All the streams abounded with fish. Trapping would furnish pelts to be brought into the States once a year, to pay for necessary articles which they could not raise--powder, lead, whiskey, tobacco and some store goods. Occasionally some little articles of luxury would enter into these purchases--a quarter of a pound of tea, two or three pounds of coffee, more of sugar, some playing cards, and if anything was left over of the proceeds of the sale, more whiskey." Ulysses S. Grant, Memoirs and Selected Letters: Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant; Selected Letters, 1839-1865 (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1990), 779.

The history of the Gravois farm began in the Spanish colonial period in 1796. French settlers founded St. Louis in the 1760s, and the residents and character of the town were French, Spanish, Native American, African-American, and English-American. The first owner of the Gravois land was an obscure man named Hugh Graham, who acquired the land in 1796. From the time he sold the property in 1799 and for the next twenty years, the property was owned by a series of people important to the development of St. Louis, the fur trade, and westward expansion. James Mackay, who is known for his explorations of the Upper Missouri River and service to the Spanish and American governments, owned the property from 1799 to 1808, during the period in which Louisiana was transferred to the United States government.

The first American-born owners of the Gravois farm were William Lindsay and Elizabeth Sappington Long, both natives of Virginia. The Longs owned the farm until 1818, when they sold it to former sea captain, adventurer, and Pacific explorer Theodore Hunt and his wife Anne Lucas, the French-American daughter of the most despised member of the board of land commissioners who examined Spanish grants for fraud, J.B.C. Lucas.

With the possible exception of the Longs and Hugh Graham, the owners of the Gravois farm in its first two decades of existence were not farmers by tradition. Like the most famous owner of the land, Ulysses S. Grant, they were extraordinary people who came to the Gravois to live ordinary lives.

The Pre-History and Founding of St. Louis

The first Native Americans¹ reached the convergence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers as early as 20,000 B.C. Beginning about 5,000 years ago, these people became settled, cultivating crops such as squash, beans, and corn that had been transplanted from what is now Mexico. Their culture thrived on the stability that farming and its surplus grain provided, and for about two hundred years from 1100 A.D. the famous "Mound Builders" of Cahokia flourished in a city of up to 40,000 inhabitants. Mysteriously, the Cahokia settlement waned around 1300 A.D. Disease, severe drought, or other climatic change may have caused them to decline. They left behind remnants of their great architectural achievements, however, in the form of dozens of mounds, some towering like the pyramids, that served as burial sites, platforms for their leaders' homes, and places of worship.

As the Cahokians dispersed, they formed smaller tribal units and blended with other groups that were moving into the area. The Spanish invasion south of the current United States and the French invasion into Canada caused further realignments of tribes, and at the time that Creole² settlers reached the St. Louis area around 1700, the Osages, the Missouris, Sioux, Kansas, Otoes, Iowas, and Omahas were settled near the Missouri-Mississippi convergence. As Mississippi Valley Native Americans did for several millennia, some of these tribes farmed, raising corn, squash, beans, and occasionally tobacco. Because European diseases reached the tribes and severely reduced their numbers before settlers arrived, European pioneers had little to fear from the native population when they began to establish towns in Louisiana. Some tribes traded with the French, Spanish, and British, while others looked to them for tribute and occasional support. For the most part, they simply represented another culture in what was to become the diverse society of St. Louis.³

Colonial St. Louis was French in character but governed by Spain. In 1763, an enterprising New Orleans emigré from France, Pierre Laclède, and his paramour's young son, Auguste Chouteau, ascended the Mississippi River in search of a location for a new fur-trading post. They selected for their site a position near Cahokia, a French Creole village founded in 1699 near the site of old Cahokia, and upstream from Ste. Genevieve, established by Creoles twenty to fifty years previously. Their post was to be near the old Jesuit mission

1. This study will use *Native American* or *Indian* to delineate the racial and ethnic group of people descended from the first inhabitants of the Americas who were present prior to the European invasion and immigration. In contrast, the term *native* will be used as an antonym of immigrant.

2. The residents of French and Spanish Louisiana identified themselves as Creole, according to Charles van Ravenswaay, "a term that included anyone of French or Spanish ancestry born in the Americas." Their language, customs, and laws revealed their heritage. Charles van Ravenswaay, *Saint Louis: An Informal History of the City and Its People, 1764-1865*, ed. Candace O'Connor (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1991), 66.

3. James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley, St. Louis, Missouri*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing Co., 1981, 1990), 1-2; R. Douglas Hurt, *Indian Agriculture in America: Pre-History to the Present* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1988), 13, 62-63, 11-64 *passim*.

at what was known as *Rivière des Pères*--the River of the Fathers--founded in 1699. As Laclède and Chouteau stood on the bluff overlooking present downtown St. Louis, they began to envision more than a mercantile post; they saw one of the great cities of the continent, born at the merging of the Missouri and Mississippi.⁴

The French and Indian War, as it was known in North America, and the Seven Years War, as it was known on the European continent, provided Laclède and Chouteau with the means to settle their new town. As a result of the wars, France transferred her North American holdings west of the Mississippi River to Spain, and the territory around St. Louis became known in Spanish records as *Alta* (or Upper) *Luisiana*. By the terms of the Peace of Paris of 1763 the British won most of the continent to the east of the river. As aforementioned, other French settlements had preceded Laclède and Chouteau's in the Mississippi Valley. Some were in what had become British territory, particularly Cahokia and Fort des Chartres (established about 1720) across the Mississippi and Missouri rivers from St. Louis. Many French residents of these towns decided that they would prefer the nominal Spanish rule of French St. Louis over that of the new monarch of the territory east of the Mississippi, Britain's King George. Several families crossed the river and helped to settle St. Louis.⁵

The early character of St. Louis, therefore, was more French than Spanish, although Spain eventually sent a few officials and soldiers to administer the town. The most important residents of St. Louis were traders from New Orleans and Montreal, and, as time passed, a few traders of Anglo descent visited frequently and even settled in the town. The economic base of colonial St. Louis was always the fur trade, never farming. St. Louisans did not even grow enough grain to feed themselves, thus the nickname *Pain Court*⁶ was applied to the town by residents of more agriculturally-oriented communities such as Ste. Genevieve. What was grown in St. Louis was cultivated according to the medieval system of common fields in the beginning. For safety from Indian attacks, residences were clustered along the waterfront, with the fields stretching to the west. Laclède granted lots in town, but the common fields were, obviously, held in common. As the new century approached, more and more people built cottages on the edges of the most remote fields and began receiving grants for individual farms away from the safety of the village, but this was after the British and Indian threats were substantially reduced.

4. Carl J. Eckberg, *Colonial Ste. Genevieve: An Adventure on the Mississippi Frontier* (St. Louis: Patrice Press, 1986); Gregory Franzwa, *The Story Old Ste. Genevieve: An Account of an Old French Town in Upper Louisiana; Its People and Their Homes*, 5th ed. (St. Louis: Patrice Press, 1967; 1990), 22-29; van Ravenswaay, 17-18; A.P. Nasatir, ed. *Before Lewis and Clark: Documents Illustrating the History of the Missouri, 1785-1804* (St. Louis: St. Louis Historical Documents Foundation, 1952; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1900), I, 6-7.

5. Primm, 10-12.

6. In French, *pain court* means lack of bread, signifying that St. Louis often had to send to Ste. Genevieve or another more agricultural area for its grain.

In 1767, trader and farmer Clement De Lore de Treget decided that he would move outside the confines of the village of St. Louis. He built a house south of the city and was soon joined by other settlers from St. Louis, Cahokia, Kaskaskia, and French Canada. The settlement was initially known as De Lore's Village, after its first settler, but he officially changed the name to Carondelet in 1794, to honor the Spanish official, Baron Francois Luis Hector de Carondelet. De Lore was given the power to designate home sites and to assign fields to settlers in what became known as the Carondelet Commons.⁷

De Lore's village was a commercial contrast to St. Louis. Carondelet was nicknamed *Misère*, because its settlers were considered poor, and almost all of them were *habitants* (farmers). De Lore assigned each family a home site and plot in Carondelet Common Fields, as Laclède had done in St. Louis. The hardworking settlers at Carondelet were considered a more serious group of people than those at St. Louis; they did not give frequent parties and their intellectual life was considered to be lacking. They held few or no slaves.⁸

The traders of St. Louis and their families were an odd mix; many of them were born and educated in Europe and, like Laclède, were second sons who had decided to seek their fortunes in the fur trade in North America rather than accept careers in the army or the priesthood in France. Many of them traveled with a library, and their clothes ranged from deerskin to expensive silks. Their religion was, by law, Catholic, although the form of ~~Catholicism practiced in St. Louis tended more toward a constant festival than a penitent~~ and pious culture. Dances were common in St. Louis after Sunday Mass.⁹

Roman Catholicism in St. Louis did affect the town's development, however. No settlement was permitted by non-Catholics until three decades into the history of St. Louis, and that settlement was allowed only as a necessity of securing the province against British expansion.¹⁰ Catholic and Spanish law controlled the treatment of slaves in the town, and up to the time of the American Civil War the city was known for its liberal and humane treatment of bondspeople. Under Spanish law, slaves could not be beaten severely, and by

7. Nini Harris, *A History of Carondelet* (St. Louis: Patrice Press, 1991), 3-5.

8. Harris, 6-7.

9. Primm, 32-36; van Ravenswaay, 82, 171.

10. Extensive correspondence on the settlement of non-Catholics in the St. Louis area may be found in the *Papeles Procedentes de Cuba* in the *Archivo General de Indias*, Seville, Spain. See for example Estevan Miro to Franco Cruzat, July 13, 1785, PC112, AGI-PC 3B-771. Scholar Anna L. Price, working under the auspices of the Saline Creek Valley Project, University of Missouri-Columbia, the Missouri Historical Society and various grants including one from the National Endowment for the Humanities, microfilmed and made a calendar in English of many of these records. This author is indebted to Price for her meticulous summaries and translations in draft form and to Missouri Historical Society for allowing me to use them. The author adopted the abbreviations developed by Price. The first set of letters and numbers above identify the document, while the second set correspond to her translation.

tradition many were freed as they reached adulthood or when their masters died. Native Americans could not be enslaved by law, although many of the prominent citizens continued to hold them and acquired additional Indian slaves after the Spanish regime began.¹¹

The limits of Catholic law were evident in the social relations among whites of St. Louis as well. The Spanish government was uncooperative in returning Madame Thérèse Chouteau, Laclède's companion and the mother of his four children, to her lawful husband, René Chouteau, over a two-year period in which he petitioned for her return. Madame Chouteau, her first son Auguste (actually the child of René Chouteau), and her lover Pierre Laclède were too powerful and influential in St. Louis for the New Orleans government to disturb them.¹² Other St. Louis fur-traders and officials kept Indian and black mistresses openly, and, although "respectable" society did not fully welcome them, they were active participants in the commercial and political community of the city.¹³

The early homes in St. Louis and the surrounding Creole communities such as Ste. Genevieve and Cahokia were primarily composed of upright logs or stone. The design of vertical log structures was an adaptation of Norman construction, using heavy hewn upright beams with diagonal logs in the corners and at other weak points. The logs were sunk in the ground about three feet (the style being called *poteaux en terre*), or they were mortised into sill beams that were placed on stone foundations (the style called *poteaux sur solle*).¹⁴ The interstices between the logs were filled with *bouzillage*, a mixture of hair, mud, and rubble. To these Normanese homes, the Creoles added a steep-pitched roof, often hip-style in the eighteenth century,¹⁵ that extended over galleries, or porches, that encircled the

11. van Ravenswaay, 66; Primm, 187.

See also Carl N. Degler, *Neither Black Nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1971), for information on how the Catholic church dictated laws and conduct regarding slaves in Latin America. Compare this to English-American slavery as presented in Oscar Handlin and Mary Handlin, "Origins of the Southern Labor System," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 7 (April 1950), and Winthrop D. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

12. The Spanish governor at New Orleans ordered that Madame Thérèse Bourgeois (Chouteau) be sent to him in October 1774 to be returned to Auguste Chouteau, but in January the officials in St. Louis had yet to respond. Then, they said they would send Madame Chouteau, but if she went to New Orleans at all it was for a brief period of time. By the end of the year, she was back in St. Louis, and Laclède had taken up official residence outside her house to appease the officials. He returned to her company shortly, however, and remained with her until he died. See Pierna to Unzaga, January 26, 1775, CUBA81, 81-534; December 10, 1775, 81-614, Cruzat to Unzaga; Primm, 14-15; Van Ravenswaay, 21-25.

13. Harris, 7.

14. *Poteaux en terre* means posts in ground and is pronounced poe-toez-on-tair, with the three words being run together. *Poteaux sur solle* means posts in sill and is pronounced poe-toe sir (or sewr)-sole. The x is silent in *poteaux sur solle* but not in *poteaux en terre*. Both of the final e's are silent.

15. Hip roofs are composed of four planes that meet each other at the top of the roof, often in a single point. From the air, a hip roof might look like a square with two diagonal lines drawn across it.

house. The roof was covered with thatch or, later, cedar shingles, and the exterior walls under the protection of the roof were plastered, as were often the inside walls.

Other houses were composed of stone, some of it cut expertly by German stone masons who emigrated to St. Louis as early as 1767. The stone houses had roofs similar to those on the log houses. Houses of stone and log ranged in size from a single room to five rooms on the first floor, with a sleeping loft in the attic space of larger homes. Central chimneys were prevalent.¹⁶ The number of dwellings of each kind grew year by year, and in 1804 a map of the core of St. Louis showed thirty-three stone homes, one hundred thirty-one of the *poteaux en terre* style, and seven in the style of *poteaux sur solle*.¹⁷

Even city dwellers kept a garden within the bounds of their lots. In Ste. Genevieve and other more rural areas, inhabitants surrounded their homes, gardens, and outbuildings with palisades of upright logs, sunk in the ground similar to *poteaux en terre* houses. The palisades provided them with protection when Native Americans were raiding livestock, and high, small windows--more like ventilation openings--under the eaves allowed them to shoot over the row of timbers but protected them from return fire.¹⁸

The American Revolution, although focused on the Atlantic coast, affected St. Louis. The town allied itself with the American revolutionaries, as did France overtly and Spain unofficially, and consequently was open to attack by British forces eager to expand into Spanish territory. In 1779, Spain and Great Britain officially declared war, increasing the threat to the settlement of St. Louis. The next year, a force of British soldiers, fur-traders, and Native Americans (primarily Sauk and Fox) descended on St. Louis from the area of Prairie du Chien (now in Wisconsin). They came with the purpose of conquering St. Louis and gaining control of navigation on the Mississippi. Fortunately, the governor at St. Louis learned of their plans and fortified the town. Although several people were killed outside the fortifications (families who were working in the fields or who had moved to farm outlying land), no one within the entrenchments was killed. Almost immediately, the uneasy alliance among the invading Indians, traders, and British soldiers fell apart, and they retreated in disarray to the upper Mississippi.¹⁹

16. For general information on home construction and style in Creole Upper Louisiana see Harry Hagen, *This Is Our St. Louis* (St. Louis: Knight Publishing Company, 1970), 23; Franzwa, 26-29. See Hagen, 32-33, and Louis Houck, *A History of Missouri from the Earliest Explorations and Settlements until the Admission of the State into the Union* (Chicago: R.R. Donnelly and Sons, 1908), I, 354-355 n. on specific stone buildings and German immigrant stone masons.

17. Houck, (1908) II, 23. Houck illustrates his point with a stone house built in St. Louis in 1766, also 23. One of the old St. Louis town halls was also of stone, and was photographed in a state of serious deterioration by St. Louis iconographic chronicler Emil Boehl in 1878. See Hagen (1970), 27.

18. Franzwa, 28-29.

19. Houck, (1908) I, 346.

The conclusion of the Revolution had a far-reaching impact on St. Louis. American settlers began flooding across the Appalachians. Under British rule, settlement was illegal west of these mountains, where citizens would have been difficult to protect and control.²⁰ One of the first acts of the new government was to allow expansion into the Ohio and Tennessee river valleys. American settlers quickly spread to the Mississippi and even desired to cross over to St. Louis and the surrounding area to obtain free land from the Spanish government. At first, Spanish officials refused on the grounds that most of the settlers were not Catholic. Eventually, however, a few were allowed to cross on the terms that they renounce their former nationality in favor of Spain and that they not practice any non-Catholic religion. Among the fur-trading settlers who moved to *Alta Luisiana* was Daniel Boone, who became Spanish commandant of the Saline Creek area.

An additional result of the conclusion of the American Revolution was that Britain was freed (although without victory) to engage in war with Spain. Spain's British conflict contributed to the American settlement around St. Louis, because of the need to populate the area and, as before, to protect it from British intrusions. Eventually, the Spanish government realized that it might lose Louisiana to the British. In consequence, the King of Spain secretly re-deeded the territory to France in the Treaty of San Ildefonso in 1800, a fact not revealed until the time of the Louisiana Purchase.²¹

The Origins of the Gravois Farm

During the French and Spanish colonial period in St. Louis from 1764 to 1804, the Gravois farm came into existence. One cannot be sure when people of European descent first began living on the land around what is now White Haven. Two features made the location a prime settlement site. The first of these features was the Gravois Creek, then called *Rivière au Gravois*²², and its tributary spring branches. A ready water supply was a necessity for any settler, and the Gravois was a reliable source in all four seasons. The second feature that encouraged settlement was the combination of open land and woodland around the creek. A large "natural" field--perhaps an oak opening or prairie, or perhaps a clearing created by seasonal Native American burning--was to the northwest of the current house and was bordered on two sides by water (the creek and the spring branch). The field

20. The Proclamation of 1763 (signed by the King of England on October 7 of that year) prohibited settlement by British subjects west of the Appalachians, among other things.

21. Primm, 71-73.

22. The Gravois apparently was a more significant body of water then than today. *Gravois* in French is a variation of *gravat*, meaning rubble or debris of a building. The term may be an epithet applied jokingly, as *Pain Court* was applied to St. Louis, or it may refer to the remains of an old settlement, such as the Jesuit mission or an Indian settlement. *Au* in French means "at" or "to", so *Rivière au Gravois* means the river leading to the rubble or river at the rubble.

was perfect for grazing or cultivation.²³ The site was near the early River des Peres mission, and it is quite possible that a fur-trader or farmer-*habitant* had settled the land in one of the six decades between the founding of the mission and the founding of St. Louis.

In 1796, Hugh Graham acquired 800 arpents of land on the *Rivière au Gravois*.²⁴ His tract included the area where the Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site is located now and spread south and west from there. A survey from 1800 indicated that a "habitation" or "settlement" was located near the Gravois and south of the *prairie*, and the *prairie* was probably under cultivation.²⁵ Little is available on Hugh Graham. Graham originally settled both on the Gravois and in the vicinity of St. André in what is now north St. Louis County. He was one of the first residents of St. Louis with an Anglo name and emigrated to the area under the new Spanish policy of allowing limited American settlement by families willing to pledge an oath to Spain. He was already in his late thirties or early forties at least when he moved to *Alta Luisiana* in 1793, and his children were reaching adulthood. He had a son named Alexander who served as witness to several documents in the late 1790s and early 1800s around St. André.²⁶ Hugh may have been married to or the father of Isabelle

23. An "opening" in a forest indicates a stretch that is bare of trees or that has a few, widely scattered, mature trees. It is a naturally occurring meadow. An opening can be distinguished from a true prairie in that it does not have the tough, matted grass and roots that cover prairies. Native Americans sometimes created fields within woodland by systematically burning the vegetation, and the "natural" field by the Gravois may have been created this way. (See William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 48-51, for information on systematic burning in New England. Hurt also described systematic burning throughout). An 1800 survey of the land indicated a "*prairie*" in French, which can be translated several ways. In this case, the surveyor probably intended to use the term to refer to an opening or meadow. An opening or burned-over field could have been cultivated with equipment available to late eighteenth-century farmers. A true prairie could not have without one expending a great amount of energy.

Don Santiago McKay, Survey No. 876, *Certificat d'Arpentage*, April 18, 1800, [United States Survey No. 9], Record Group 952, U.S. Surveyor General for Missouri, *Registre d'Arpenage*, I, 159.

24. The arpent is a colonial French measurement of area equivalent to .8506, or a little more than 5/6, acres. 800 arpents equals 680.56 acres. (When arpent is used as a linear measure, it equals the length of one side of a square arpent). See *Definitions of Surveying and Associated Terms*; prepared by a Joint Committee on the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping, and the American Society of Civil Engineers; rev. ed. (n.p.: American Congress on Surveying and Mapping and American Society of Civil Engineers, 1972, 1978), 12; Franzwa, 30. References in popular literature to owners of White Haven frequently omit Graham, such as in Mary Barrett, "House with a Proud Pedigree," *Globe-Democrat Magazine*, September 30, 1956, 5-8. Barrett lists James Mackay rather than Hugh Graham as the first owner of the land, but she is incorrect.

25. Don Santiago McKay, Survey No. 876, *Certificat d'Arpentage*, April 18, 1800, [United States Survey No. 9], Record Group 952, U.S. Surveyor General for Missouri, *Registre d'Arpenage*, I, 159.

26. Alexander Graham had a daughter, Maude Eleanor, born about 1800, who married and had four children with John Orr. Through the Orrs, the Grahams were related to the Breckinridges, the Caulks and Longs, the Bells, and other prominent families of the Bonhomme-Wild Horse Creek region. In honor of
(continued...)

Graham, and he may have been kin to Samuel, George, and John Graham.²⁷ He could have come from the United States (probably by way of Kentucky or Illinois), English Canada, or Great Britain directly. Graham may have been a fur-trader who had frequented St. Louis before he received the land grant and settled down.

Graham probably was a typical late eighteenth-century St. Louis resident. His name appears on several legal documents as witness, and he once bought a cow at a widow's sale.²⁸ He was not prominent, and no records are extant describing his course after the early 1800s or the paths of his children. He may have had other children, and his property in the Bonhomme area indicates that he may be related to the St. Louis Grahams who later became prominent in the printing business.

How Graham used the land by the Gravois may be assumed from local tradition. Graham may have been a land speculator, but that seems unlikely because he did not gather other land. More likely is that he was a genuine *habitant*, a farmer who took the closest available land to the towns of St. Louis and Carondelet. Except for its remoteness, the location was ideal for farming with its ready water supply and pre-cleared land (the prairie). By law, Graham would have had to have cultivated some portion of it and to have had a family to support to qualify for and retain the grant.

Graham also appears to have allowed squatters or tenants on his land, as is indicated by other land documents. Other residents in the area when Graham was there were the

26. (...continued)

John Orr and his brother James, who settled on the old Richardson survey (see map of St. André), the community became known as Orrville. See Thomas Scharf, *History of St. Louis City and County* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts Company, 1883), II, 1929, *passim*. See also Finiel's Map of 1797-1798, *Service Historique de la Marine*, Vincennes, France; Zénon Trudeau, map accompanying letter, February 28, 1798 (516), Louisiana Papers, VANC MSS M-M508, Bancroft Library, Manuscripts Division, University of California, Berkeley, California.

27. Houck lists Hugh and Samuel Graham as residents of the Gravois Creek area in 1798. Samuel also witnessed transactions for Hugh, e.g. Hugh Graham and Samuel Graham as witnesses, May 15, 1803, St. Louis Colonial Archives 1158, MHS. In French. Hugh witnessed with his mark, while Samuel signed his name. A man named Samuel Alexander Graham appears in the "History of the Graham Genealogy" at MHS as having been born in Juanita, Pennsylvania, March 4, 1785, and died in Cumberland, Pennsylvania, May 18, 1861. He was the son and grandson of William and John Graham. Although the birth and death dates of this Samuel could make him a son of Hugh, it seems unlikely that he would have returned to Pennsylvania. A John Graham came from Illinois in 1796 and settled on Bois Brule Creek. Houck, (1908) I, 381. John Graham also exchanged land in St. André in 1800. Land sale, Andres Alexandro to Juan Graham, December 23, 1800, St. Louis Colonial Archives, 784B, MHS. In Spanish. Alexander Graham received land from George Graham in 1805. St. Louis City Recorder of Deeds, Book L, Page 141. Hugh Graham and Jacques Mackay, land exchange, September 6, 1799; Document #1113, St. Louis Colonial Archives.

28. Disposal of the property of Cristina Rindenhauer, St. André, July 8, 1803. Adjudicated by James Mackay. St. Louis Colonial Archives, MHS.

equally obscure John Murphy and George Crump.²⁹ John Murphy came to the St. Louis area in the late 1700s and settled on Graham's land. He built several cabins and put in crops that he deeded to the owner after Graham.³⁰ In addition, some old French settlers had grants directly east and west of Graham's tract.

The population of St. Louis at this time was 1100, which virtually guaranteed that every family knew every other family at least by name. In addition, people frequently traded land as well as furs, and they often moved to new locations in the city and in the countryside. Surrounding communities from which they could choose were Carondelet, aforementioned; the Gravois Settlement, as the area around Graham's claim had come to be known; St. André, a community on the Missouri River; Boone's Saline, far to the west; St. Charles; and several settlements in what is north St. Louis. In short, most of St. Louis County had some kind of settlement, sparse though it may have been, and other settlements were spread outside the environs of St. Louis.³¹

The Fur Trader: James Mackay

The commandant who governed St. André when Hugh Graham lived there was a Scotsman named James Mackay. Mackay bought the Gravois farm from Graham in 1799, and he purchased improvement rights (cabins, fields, and crops but not land) from John Murphy in the same location in 1804 and additional land that has been identified in the same area from George Crump in 1802.³² Mackay was an extraordinary man who came to the Gravois to live an ordinary life with his new wife, Isabella Long.

James Mackay was born in Scotland in 1759, in the high coastal lands of County Sutherland, Parish of Kildonan.³³ He was raised on a farm called Ariglinne (also Ari

29. Several George Crumps, any or all of whom may be tied to the George Crump of the Gravois farm, can be identified in nineteenth and early twentieth century Missouri histories. For instance, in 1882, George Crump born in 1833 lived in Nodaway County. *History of Nodaway County*, 744-745. George Crump was in a Boone County history that same year. *History of Boone County, Missouri*, 1034. George Crump also showed up in histories of Schuyler and Jackson Counties. *Schuyler County*, 286; W.Z. Hickman, *History of Jackson County, Missouri* (1920), 358.

30. John Murphy to James Mackay, sale of improvements, November 23, 1803, Vol. 4, Book 1, 58, Instrument 1143, St. Louis Colonial Archives, MHS.

31. Primm, 65.

32. John Murphy to James Mackay, sale of improvements, November 23, 1803, Vol. 4, Book 1, 58, Instrument 1143, St. Louis Colonial Archives, MHS; George Crump to Jacques Mackay, sale of 450 arpens, January 30, 1802, Vol. 4, Book 1, 37-38, Instrument 1103, St. Louis Colonial Archives, MHS.

33. On a letter written by Mackay around 1821, a relative of his pencilled in his date of birth as May 1, 1761. The birth date of 1759 is more widely accepted, however. James Mackay to Zeno Mackay,

(continued...)

Chlinney, Arrichliney), in a stone longhouse measuring fourteen by sixty feet and overlooking the loch for which the farm was named.³⁴ Mackay's family was prominent among the poor and rustic highland clans, but a series of changing circumstances in Great Britain while he was growing up made the up-country life even more difficult than it had been for his parents. First, the great grazing lands of Britain were gradually being enclosed and divided into large private land holdings. For the non-noble, the means of subsistence was disappearing. The Enclosure Act brought many emigrants from Britain to North America, people who were seeking open land on which to farm. Second, as Mackay scholar Thomas Danisi has revealed, unusually inclement weather ruined the meager highland crops in the years preceding his move. Mackay and some of his brothers, uncles, and cousins decided that life might be better for them in North America, and around 1776, Mackay emigrated to the New World.³⁵

Details do not exist to confirm where Mackay first landed, but he may have gone to North Carolina, where his uncle William and aunt Isabelle Mackay lived; to New York, where his brother John lived; to Virginia, where his brother William had lived and operated a commercial house at Petersburg; or to Nova Scotia, where his brother George lived. Eventually, Mackay established himself in the Canadian fur trade. On coming to North America, Mackay spoke English and his own native dialect of Scots or Gaelic. He settled in French Canada, where he became literate in French, and took a position with the North West Company, which was at that time a competitor of the Hudson's Bay Company.³⁶

Mackay's trading ventures took him into far western Canada, and he began to learn the ways and languages of the Native Americans with whom he traded. He traveled extensively along the upper Missouri River, in Spanish territory, and he no doubt had contact with traders from St. Louis through the Native Americans with whom he traded. Mackay is credited by more than one author with having been the first English-speaking

33. (...continued)
unfinished letter, circa 1821, St. Charles Collection, MHS.

Mackay spelled his name as the author spells it, and he pronounced the second syllable as if it were a long i. Mackay was rendered by the French, Spanish, English, and Americans of St. Louis as McKay, Makay, Mackey, and other variations. Mackay's children abandoned his spelling and pronunciation in favor of Mackey (pronounced with equal emphasis on the two syllables, and with the second syllable pronounced as if it were a long e), and Mackey is the common pronunciation and spelling in St. Louis at the time of this writing. Mackay's first name was commonly written as James, Jaymes, or Jacques, and frequently he was given the title Santiago.

34. The longhouse of Mackay was identified by Thomas Danisi in October 1991 on the current estate of Sir John Nutting. Danisi has in his possession photographs of Loch Ariglinne as it appeared in 1991, the longhouse, and adjacent longhouses that are still in use and reflect accurately the house of Mackay's birth.

35. Thomas Danisi, "Honor Without Title: James Mackay," draft ms., January 1992.

36. The Northwestern Company eventually was bought out by the Hudson's Bay Company.

European man west of the Mississippi River, but this pronouncement does not appear to be based on fact.³⁷

Mackay traveled far west on trading ventures in 1784, 1786, 1787, and 1788. His route took him around or across the Great Lakes to Michilimack, on the northern shore of Lake Superior, and beyond. Mackay was among the traders who established three new posts between present-day Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Regina, Saskatchewan, in 1784, 1786, and 1787 on the Assiniboine and Qu'Apelle (or Catapoi) River. From one of these remote posts in 1787, Mackay struck further south and west and reached the Maha Indian villages, near present-day Homer and Omadi, Dakota County, Nebraska. Then he explored up the Missouri River into the Dakotas, where he was one of the first European men to reach the Mandan Indian Villages north of Bismarck, North Dakota. From the Mandans he learned details of the source of the Missouri in the Rocky Mountains, and he may have explored there.³⁸

Around 1789, Mackay left Canada for the new United States. For the next four or five years, he had commercial and fur-trading interests along the Ohio River, particularly in Cincinnati and Louisville, and he traveled to Montreal and New York. It was probably there that he met the Spanish minister to the United States, Don Diego Maria de Gardoqui.³⁹

Spanish concern over the economic intrusion of British traders on the upper Missouri ~~caused them to cast about in search of some man familiar with the area who could take over~~ their expeditions to the region. Gardoqui first took note of Mackay when he visited New York in 1789. Gardoqui borrowed a map made by him, and they discussed the upper Missouri Indian nations.⁴⁰ Mackay probably visited New York several more times in the next four years, but documentary evidence only proves that he returned in October 1793,

37. In 1770, for instance, six years before Mackay is said to have left Scotland, Pierre Laclède was in business with a man named John Hamilton, who no doubt was of English descent and spoke English. Houck, (1908) II, 20-21n. Historian Thomas Scharf reported that Mackay was "supposed to be the first English-speaking man not of French or Spanish blood who settled west of the Mississippi." Scharf, I, 189. Scharf's statement is difficult to prove or disprove.

38. Mackay may have traveled as far southeast from the Mandan Villages as St. Louis. On October 30, 1788, Spanish official Peyroux wrote to another official that a Canadian trader had recently come to town and planned to settle at a saline (salt lick) with his brother. CUBA 201-957 (AGI-PC 201-957).

39. In 1789 the capital of the United States was in New York City, Washington, District of Columbia not having been constructed yet. Once again, the author is indebted to Mackay scholar Thomas Danisi for uncovering heretofore unknown details of Mackay's life from 1789 to 1793. Danisi identified business interests of Mackay in Louisville, Kentucky, Cincinnati, Ohio, and Cahokia, Illinois in these four years. Danisi, draft ms.

40. Gardoqui to Don José de Monino Redondo, Conde de Floridablanca (First Foreign Minister to Britain's King Charles III), June 25, 1789, in Nasatir, I, 130-131. Gardoqui wrote of an explorer and trader who is an "enthusiastic Englishman" whose travel fit that of Mackay. Thomas Danisi has identified Gardoqui's "Englishman" as Mackay. Danisi, draft ms.

following a trip to Montreal. Mackay was extraordinarily observant and well-spoken; he wrote to his old business partner and mentor William Grant with details about happenings around New York, the western United States, France, and Philadelphia. He gave details about a clash between American ships and part of the French fleet in the outer New York harbor, presumably with concern over the hindrance of trade between Montreal and the States.⁴¹

The Spanish officials in St. Louis concluded that they could not prevent trade by the British on the upper Missouri River unless they established their own posts there, so in 1793 they created the Missouri Company for that purpose. In 1794, Jean Baptiste Truteau headed an expedition up the Missouri to the Mandans, but his tour was stopped by hostile Indians along the way.⁴² The company members cast about for a more promising leader, and in 1795 they settled on Mackay, who had renounced his former citizenships and sworn allegiance to the Spanish crown about two years earlier.⁴³ Mackay either already spoke Spanish or learned it very quickly, because much of his official correspondence appears in French, English, and Spanish.

Mackay led expeditions for the Missouri Company from 1795 to 1797. His assistant, John Evans, succeeded in temporarily gaining a British trading post on the upper Missouri and may have traveled as far west as the Rockies.⁴⁴ From their personal knowledge and with assistance from the Native Americans with whom they traded, they mapped the river from its mouth into the far reaches of the Dakotas. They also kept journals that detailed the flora, fauna, and major geographical features of the regions through which they passed.⁴⁵

41. James MacKay to William Grant, November 9, 1793, Dearborn Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

42. Care should be taken to distinguish between Jean Baptiste *Truteau*, whose primary occupation was fur-trading, and Don Zenon *Trudeau*, who was a Spanish official.

43. Ironically, it was Mackay who had opened trade for the Canadians with the Mandans. Of him, the Spanish officials obliquely wrote that the traders started from Catapoi (Qu'Appelle) "to make their unlawful Trade on the Missouri with the Mandaines and other nations that inhabit the Territory of his Catholic Majesty." Quoted in A.P. Nasatir, "James Mackay," in LeRoy R. Hafen, ed. *The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West*, IV (Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1966), 186; Nasatir, I, 84-89.

44. John Evans' trip to the New World had been funded by a group of Welshmen, who believed that the Paduca Indians were descended from a Welsh nobleman, Prince Madoc, who was supposed to have traveled to North America some seven centuries earlier. Evans, a Welshman by birth, was sent to make contact with the Indians. Mackay hired him in part to translate should the expedition happen on any Welsh-speaking tribes.

45. Mackay's journal, with a letter of transmittal, is in the Papers from Spain, No. 42, MHS Archives. Spanish with English translation. Xenon Trudeau to the Governor, May 1, 1796, in French, AGI-PC 193a-628. Trudeau's transmittal to the governor included copies of Mackay's instructions to Evans regarding his search for the Pacific Ocean.

Mackay's primary task in traveling up the Missouri River was to establish a profitable trading relationship between the Spanish Missouri Company and the Mandans and the nations north and west of them. Secondly, he had to remove the presence of his old comrades, the traders of the North West Company who had established a post on the Missouri River. Mackay relayed an ultimatum to the Canadians through his lieutenant, Evans. He ordered the traders to evacuate the fort, claiming it in his name and in the name of Spain. Mackay's proclamation had such an immediate effect that Cuthbert Grant had to petition Evans to retrieve some of his company's goods. He wrote, perhaps sarcastically, that he was not aware that the Spanish Missouri Company had an exclusive charter to trade on the river. Grant requested that a collection of property belonging to one particular trader be returned to him. It is not clear if Grant appealed to Mackay as a former friend or in feigned subservience. Correspondence does not exist transmitting Mackay's reply.⁴⁶

For Mackay's service to the Spanish government, he received several large land grants and the commandantship at the village of St. André.⁴⁷ Under Mackay's leadership, St. André flourished, and in 1804 the new American military commander of upper Louisiana, Amos Stoddard, called it the "largest and best settlement in this district." In 1800, the community had almost 400 residents, including 50 slaves.⁴⁸ Mackay was also given the commandantship of St. Charles, which was an expansive territory composed of almost all of the land north of the Missouri River. His pay was nominal, so his primary compensation was land. Mackay held about 30,000 arpents in land from Spanish grants. He was the first owner, for instance, of a saline (or salt lick) in Howard County, called Mackay's Saline before it became known as the famous Boone's Lick.⁴⁹

Around 1799, Mackay shifted his interests from the Missouri to the Gravois. He traded Missouri River land for several tracts along the Gravois, including Hugh Graham's,

46. Cuthbert Grant to John Evans, October 8, 1796, in English, AGI-PC 213-957, CUBA 213, MHS.

47. The governor to Zenon Trudeau, May 1, 1798, in Spanish, AGI-PC 133-24. CUBA 133. The governor instructed Trudeau that he had appointed Mackay to San André that day and that Trudeau should assist him with taking his post. Mackay was awarded the position due to his "zealousness and service to the Company del Missouri." In May 1799, the governor again alerted Spanish officials in St. Louis to the power and promise of Mackay. Writing to Carlos De Lassus, the governor specified that Juan Mackay merited special attention and that De Lassus should assist him any way that he could. The governor also wrote because he was afraid that the war with Britain would cut communications between St. Louis and other Spanish territories. De Lassus was to act in the absence of the governor, particularly in the matter of keeping Mackay on the side of the Spanish. The Governor to Carlos De Lassus, in Spanish, May 12, 1799, AGI-PC 134a-387. CUBA 134a. MHS. In this century, a few historians have maligned Mackay and attempted to prove that he did not accomplish much of what has been credited to him. It is ironic that historians chose to lambast him at the time, because daily documentation was growing to prove rather than disprove his contributions to the Canadian and Spanish fur trade.

48. St. André might have flourished for years more, but in the early 1800s an unfortunate shift in the Missouri River wiped out most of the farms.

49. *Collections*, IV, 1, 20n., in Charles van Ravenswaay File [hereafter CVR File], MHS.

and, although he continued as commandant of St. Andres, the Gravois became his home at least part of the time. On February 24, 1800, forty-year-old James Mackay finally settled down and married seventeen-year-old Isabelle (or Isabella) Long, formerly of Virginia.⁵⁰ Her family continued to play a prominent role in the Gravois farm for the next eighty years, and they are discussed in detail below.

James and Isabelle Long Mackay had nine children in their twenty-one years of marriage (James died at the age of 61 or 63 in 1822).⁵¹ During their early years of marriage, Mackay continued in his post as commandant and served as deputy surveyor to his good friend Antoine Soulard. As surveyor or as commandant of St. André, he was responsible for the construction of the old King's Highway (near the current Olive Street). According to one source, Mackay served as governor in the place of Zenon Trudeau when that official was away from the city.⁵² Mackay probably had some income from farming and trading. He was not an extensive slaveholder during these years.

When Louisiana was transferred to the United States, Mackay was appointed one of the first judges of the Court of Common Pleas by then governor William Henry Harrison.⁵³ Mackay's appointment was due in part to the petition of George Muter and Benjamin Sebastian to John Breckinridge, describing Mackay as having "explored as far perhaps as any man we have heard of..." Of his capacity for official service, they continued, "He is a very honest, upright man--speaks french language as fluently as the english--and is intimately acquainted with all the inhabitants, whose disputes he has long been in the habit of deciding; and must, therefore, be well qualified to Act as a Superior Judge in that country...."⁵⁴ He

50. *Collections*, IV, 20, n., in CVR File, MHS.

51. Eight Mackay children were recorded in an 1854 Missouri Supreme Court Case regarding Mackay's land: Zeno Mackay (who married Maria Robinson Kerker), Eliza L. Coleman (wife of Reuben), Catharine Guion (wife of Louis), Julia Bowles (wife of David), George Antoine Mackay (who married Fannie Miller), James Mackay (who married a Franklin County woman), Emilie Amelia Coleman (wife of William C.), and Isabelle Louisa Barker (wife of Simeon L.). *Norcum v. D'Oench*, Missouri Supreme Court Reports, St. Louis, 1854, XVII, 109, CVR File. A descendant reported that the other child was William R., who died in childhood. "Family Data from Mrs. E.D.C. Leek's notes, St. Louis, 1952," ["1894 Copy from the Original, St. Louis Court House"], Mackay Family, CVR File, MHS.

Mackay's obituary appeared in the St. Louis *Enquirer*, March 23, 1822. See James Mackey.

52. "Child Descended in Five Direct Lines from John Sappington," St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*, October 14, 1917, clipping in Daughters of 1812 Collection, MHS.

53. According to James Neal Primm, Charles Gratiot was named presiding judge, and Auguste Chouteau, Jacques Clamorgan, David Delauney, and Mackay were named justices of the Court of Quarter Sessions. Primm, 76.

54. George Muter and Benjamin Sebastian to John Breckinridge, December 12, 1803, *Territorial Papers of the United States*, Louisiana and Missouri (1948), 11. Muter and Sebastian wrote from Frankfort, Kentucky, and they may have known Mackay personally from his years on the Ohio River. Alternatively, they may have known of him through families who had moved from Kentucky to St. Louis in the 1790s and early 1800s.

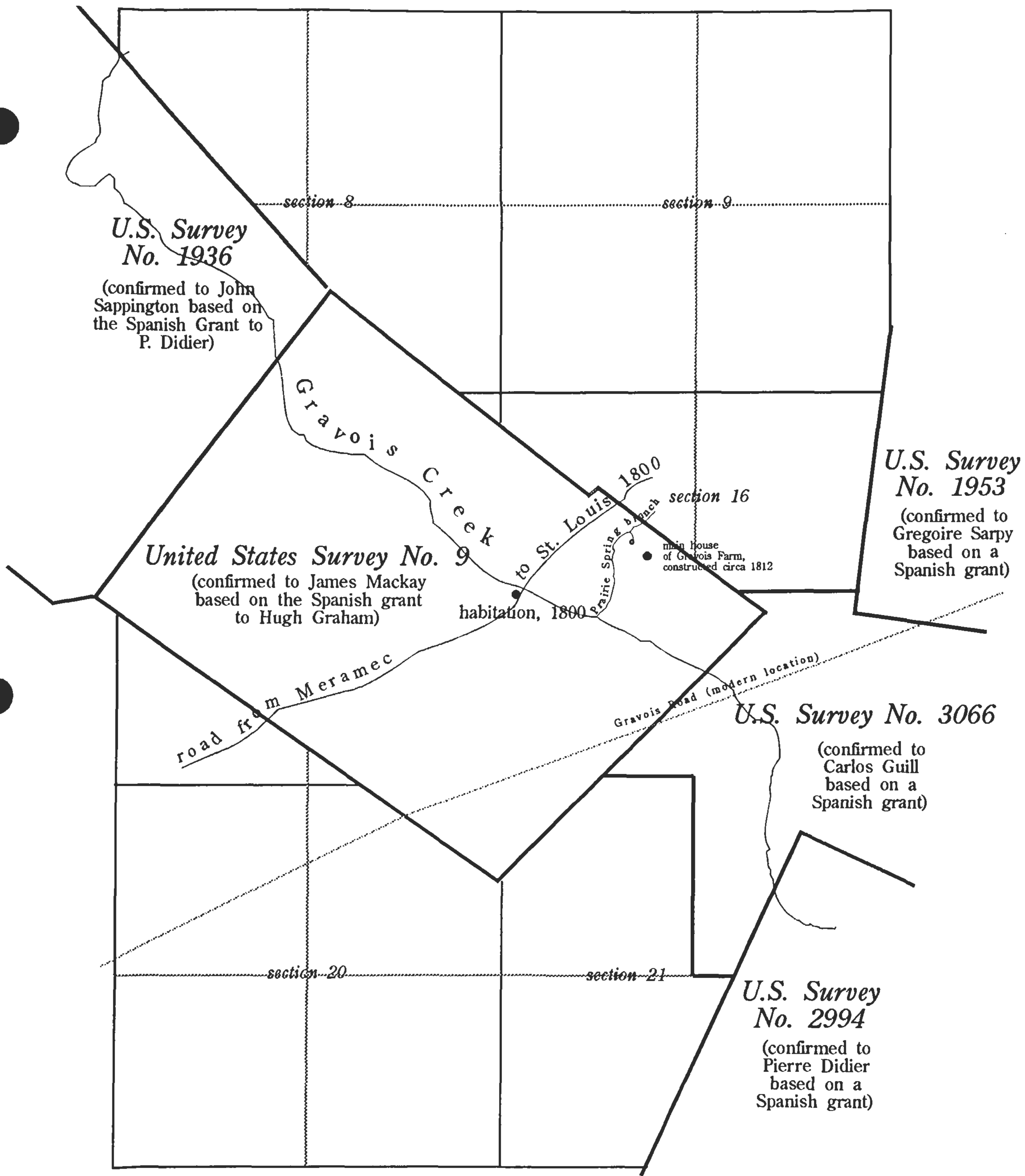
served as justice of the peace for several years, supplied the Lewis and Clark Expedition with valuable survey information and map of the upper Missouri River, and in 1817 was an elected representative to the Missouri territorial legislature.

For all of his prominence and service to the British, Canadians, Spanish, and Americans, Mackay did not die with a secure wealth; for more than a decade his family fought to gain clear title to the extensive land holdings he had been given by the Spanish government. The inventory of personal items in his estate revealed much about him and his sophisticated taste. Furniture appropriate for a comfortable, large family was listed--dinner table, fourteen Windsor chairs, bureau, bookcase, straw and feather mattresses, and so forth. Mackay's executors recorded that he had a violin, a German flute, several American law books, Hume's 12-volume "History of England," china, silver, tinware, common dishes, old work tables, surveying tools, other household items, and eleven slaves, mostly young women. He also had a menagerie of barnyard animals: cows, horses, sheep, hogs.

The inventory of Mackay's estate is a beginning from which to understand the passionate venturer who purchased the Gravois farm in 1799. Mackay was not a common man: He was extraordinary in his trip from Scotland to the New World, in his early occupations, and in his service to three governments. His proficiency in several European and Native American languages and dialects and his diplomacy and ability to slip in and out of the frequently hostile Native American societies of the upper Missouri stand as an example of his capacity. He was at times almost foolishly courageous, but he was also brilliant and crafty. He was a man of aesthetics, culture, and learning, well-read for one who had spent so much of his adult life away from European society. When he finally settled down, he became a father as passionate and concerned for his young wife and children as he had been for his adventures.⁵⁵

In 1803, President Thomas Jefferson authorized negotiations with France to acquire Louisiana. Although the U.S. Constitution did not specify that the president had the power to purchase land on behalf of the nation, Jefferson believed that the territory was critical to

55. "Family Data from Mrs. E.D.C. Leek's Notes, St. Louis, 1952" ["1894 Copy from the original--St. Louis Court House"], Mackay family, CVR File, MHS, reported that "Mr. Mackey was a fine musician and brought with him from, Scotland a violin and flute, both of which are in the possession of his grandchildren...."



Map 1.
The Gravois Farm and Surrounding Spanish Grants, circa 1803

the healthy development of the United States, and he was willing to risk a congressional or judicial challenge. On April 30, 1803, the treaty was signed, and St. Louis with the rest of Louisiana became a part of the United States of America.⁵⁶

St. Louis was so isolated in the early 1800s that most residents did not know that they had returned to French rule in 1800. When the Americans arrived to assume power, the Spanish flag still flew, and Spanish-appointed officials still governed. To make the transfer of the city from France to the U.S. appear more legitimate, the American authorities first replaced the Spanish flag with the French one, and then they put up the American flag, signifying that the United States truly was in power.⁵⁷

To ease the transition to American rule, Thomas Jefferson appointed a combination of local men and those from the eastern United States to official posts. James Mackay, for instance, was appointed a territorial judge, and he served in later years as a territorial legislator. Outsiders who were Washington allies of Jefferson were appointed to serve on the Board of Land Commissioners, the body that initially affirmed or disallowed the old Spanish grants.

The Virginians: William L. and Elizabeth Sappington Long

Isabella Long's family came to St. Louis from Virginia around 1796 or 1797. They settled first at Bonhomme, another name by which Mackay's St. André was known. Around 1807, they moved to the middle portion of Mackay's Gravois land, where John Long remained until his death in 1826.⁵⁸ John Long and his wife Elizabeth Bennet had three sons and at least one daughter.⁵⁹ Both Long's daughter Isabelle, who married James Mackay, and his son, William Lindsay Long, lived on the Gravois farm. Lindsay Long, as he was commonly known, acquired the Gravois farm from his father and his brother-in-law before December, 1808. The property apparently was a gift in honor of his marriage to Elizabeth Sappington.⁶⁰

Elizabeth Sappington was one of seventeen children of John Sappington and his wife Jemima Fowler. John Sappington was born September 3, 1753, near Baltimore, Maryland. He served in the Revolutionary War and, while on furlough in 1780, married Jemima. From October 1781 to December 1802, Jemima bore seventeen children--ten daughters and seven

56. Primm, 72.

57. Primm, 73.

58. Scharf, II, 1880-1881.

59. "Child Descended in Five Direct Lines from John Sappington," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, October 14, 1917, Daughters of 1812 Collection, MHS.

60. William Long and Elizabeth Sappington married in 1808, according to Elinor Martineau Coyle, *Old St. Louis Homes, 1764-1865: The Stories They Tell*, rev. ed. (St. Louis: Folkestone Press, 1964, 1979), 43.

sons--all of whom grew to maturity and had from two to fifteen children. The growing family moved from Maryland to Boonesboro, Kentucky, in 1792, where they improved a farm and were distillers of corn, rye, peaches, and apples. Between 1804 and 1807, they progressed to the vicinity of the Gravois settlement, where Sappington had purchased a huge estate as early as 1801 from Pierre Didier.⁶¹ The prodigiousness resulted in the growth of a community known as Sappington, and a few of their early homes--particularly that of Zephaniah Sappington, survived into the late twentieth century.⁶²

William Lindsay and Elizabeth Sappington Long constructed the main house on the Gravois farm. The house may have been built at the time of Lindsay's marriage to Elizabeth, or they may have lived for a time in one of the many cabins on the farm and constructed the substantial frame house later, probably between 1812 and 1814. The house is reported from one source to be based on designs from a New England plan book, with the "Natchez-style gallery" added for protection from the summer heat. The house may have been constructed with slave labor.⁶³ At the time Long built, he had a multitude of examples from which to take his style. In downtown St. Louis, most of the houses were built of upright posts imbedded directly into the ground, of stones, or, more recently, of bricks. Long's choice of a timbered frame covered with hand-hewn clapboard is reminiscent of American architecture rather than the French styles that were gradually fading from St. Louis' horizon. The roof, however, which encompasses the gallery as well as the main house, was definitely borrowed from his French neighbors. Long's house was large by early St. Louis standards, and this fact may give credence to his having built it after residing on the farm for several years. The large house would have been more than ample by St. Louis standards for his growing family.

The frame of White Haven is composed of hand-hewn timbers, and the milled wood may have come from Long's brothers-in-law, Jonah and John (Junior) Sappington, who operated a "large and profitable tread-mill" for grain and lumber.⁶⁴

61. The author has retained the family's spelling of the Boone settlement in Kentucky. Typescript from notes written on photograph by J. Siler, First Sappington Reunion, September 29, 1892, "Genealogical Notes on Sappington Family and Mauro Family," Sappington Family Papers, MHS; William L. Thomas, *History of St. Louis County, Missouri: A Story That Attracts by Its Recital of Past Achievements; Its Record of Earnest Endeavor and Sure Development to Present Greatness and Its Future with Roseate Promise*, I (St. Louis: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1911).

62. The home of Zephaniah Sappington resembled the house constructed by William Lindsay Long on the Gravois farm. The Zephaniah Sappington house was disassembled circa 1990 and is now in the possession of the Dean family, who plan to reassemble it in a village they are creating near Daniel Boone's house with old Missouri homes destined for destruction.

63. Coyle, 42. Coyle's source was M. Barrett, "House. . . Pedigree," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, September 30, 1956, 7. Barrett's article contains numerous inaccuracies and misinformation presented as "facts" from reputable sources. It should be used with extreme caution.

64. Scharf, 1880.

Life on the Gravois farm during the Long's residence was an odd combination of crude fur-trade life and Eastern sophistication. Lindsay's father John Long regularly purchased such items as "course" and "drab" cloth and bear skins, yet he and his son also bought Moroccan slippers regularly from one of the four St. Louis merchants.⁶⁵ Growth in St. Louis was slow, in part because there was much land yet to the east and in part because the New Madrid Earthquake of 1811-1812 inhibited settlement in the region.

The War of 1812 between Great Britain and the United States caused settlement disruption. Lindsay served with his Sappington brothers-in-law as a minuteman during the war, patrolling the banks of the Mississippi for signs of Indian uprisings encouraged by the British.⁶⁶ While the Longs lived on the Gravois, Missouri became a second-class territory, the change in name spurred by the southern portion of Louisiana having become a state by that name.⁶⁷

Elizabeth Sappington Long and her many brothers and sisters grieved at the death of their father in 1815 (their mother died previous to Elizabeth's marriage).⁶⁸ Sappington's will reveals that he owned slaves, and Lindsay Long probably owned a few at the time as well. They were not large holders, however, using only a few as house servants and field hands. In 1816, Elizabeth bore a son, John Fenton Long, in the main house at what is now White Haven. John Fenton Long went on to become Julia Dent's teacher, to marry one of her young Sappington classmates, and to serve as Ulysses Grant's agent in St. Louis.⁶⁹

In 1818, the Long family sold their property to Theodore Hunt and Anne Lucas and moved to found the town of Fenton, Missouri.⁷⁰ The town was slow to begin, however, and in 1821 they moved back to the Gravois. On what is now Pardee Road, south of White Haven, they built an American log cabin that stands today.⁷¹

65. Entries, October 14, 1808, 121; November 5, 1808, 135, Joseph Philipson Account Book, 1807-1809, St. Louis Mercantile Library.

66. Elinor Martineau Coyle, 39.

67. Primm, 104-105. Louisiana became a state in 1818.

68. Will of John Sappington, Sappington Family Papers, MHS.

69. John Fenton Long's connection with the Grants and White Haven continued until Ulysses's death and beyond. Jesse, Ulysses and Julia's youngest son, wrote to Long in 1886 that it was to Long that Grant wrote his last posted letter.

70. "Child Descended in Five Direct Lines from John Sappington," St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*, October 14, 1917, in Daughters of 1812 Collection, MHS.

71. William Lindsay Long's house is characterized as "American" rather than French colonial because its logs were placed horizontally rather than vertically. The Long log house is currently owned by the St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation and is called the Bishop-Long House. The house has been modernized with plumbing and electricity. It is occupied and not open to the public.

Sea and Land: Theodore Hunt and Anne Lucas Hunt

Theodore and Anne Lucas Hunt moved to the Gravois farm in April 1818. Neither of them had experience farming, and their occupations prior to and after leaving the Gravois had little to do with agriculture. Like James Mackay, they were adventurers possessed of rare courage, ambition, and pertinacity in the face of adversity. Before he moved to St. Louis, Theodore blazed paths east, to Asia. In her mature years, Anne was a maverick among American women financiers. The Hunts' lives were interwoven with the other residents of the Gravois farm through a series of relationships, all part of the intricate mesh of St. Louis society in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Anne's father, Jean Baptiste Charles Lucas, was born in France in 1758, the son of Robert Seward Lucas and Marie d' L'Arche. He was from a prosperous family, possessed several estates, and by tradition was well-educated. He graduated from the School of Law at Caen. In 1784, he emigrated to the United States with his wife, Anne Sabine. Lucas was acquainted with Albert Gallatin, and at Gallatin's urging he settled in Pittsburgh. Lucas occupied himself in Pennsylvania with fur trading, law, and public service as a representative in the Pennsylvania legislature. On the advice of his wife, Lucas also speculated in land and grew wealthier.⁷²

In 1803, he was elected to the United States Congress as a representative from the Pittsburgh area. One of his first actions was to speak strongly against Congress granting full rights of citizenship to the residents of the newly acquired Louisiana Territory. Lucas and another representative of French descent, Benjamin Huger of South Carolina, were the most outspoken opponents of high territorial status for the Creoles, claiming that they did not understand "republican principles," could not take care of themselves, and were not loyal to the United States. The residents of St. Louis had cried, Lucas charged, the day the American flag was raised over their city. Since the French Revolution, Lucas was suspicious of his former country folk and their North American counterparts in Louisiana.⁷³

Nevertheless it was J.B.C. Lucas whom Thomas Jefferson selected for two posts in the newly acquired territory. The first post, superior court judge, could be performed by an outsider as well as an insider. The second position was that of land commissioner, making Lucas the head of the small group of men who were selected to confirm or disallow the land grants given by the Spanish government. Jefferson may have selected Lucas because he was

72. "Hunt-Benoist Genealogy," Hunt Family Papers, MHS; Primm, 82.

73. Primm, 78. Lucas was correct that the residents of St. Louis shed tears on the day the transfer to the United States took place. John F. Darby, *Personal Recollections of Many Prominent People Whom I Have Known, and of Events--Especially of Those Relating to the History of St. Louis--During the First Half of the Present Century* (St. Louis: G.I. Jones and Co., 1880; rep. St. Louis: Hawthorne Publishing Co., n.d.), 286, reported that one of the daughters of Charles Gratiot, who took down the French flag and put up the American flag, told Darby that Gratiot called for three cheers, "But no cheers were given; the people, many of them, shed tears."

conversant in French and could communicate with the local inhabitants. Lucas wanted the positions because they were lucrative and allowed him to stay with his family most of the year (which he could not do as a congressman). Lucas' hostility toward the people of Louisiana made him a poor choice for the position, however, and his greed and ruthlessness made him one of the most hated of the new American officials in St. Louis.⁷⁴

J.B.C. Lucas arrived in St. Louis in 1805 or 1806. He brought with him his wife, four of six of his sons, and his daughter.⁷⁵ It is not necessary for the purposes of this study to describe in detail Lucas' early days in St. Louis. It is sufficient to say that Lucas adopted the policy that most Spanish grants should be disproved, and whenever he disproved a valuable claim, he attempted to buy it.⁷⁶

The Creoles and early Anglo residents such as James Mackay were not pleased with some of the arrogant American officials who arrived around 1805, and with each passing year the dislike grew into a social and political feud. On one side were the old residents and a few newcomers: Clamorgan, Mackay, Manuel Lisa, the Chouteaus, Gratiot, Soulard, St. Vrain, lead miner John Smith T.,⁷⁷ and newcomers Wilkinson, Browne, Penrose, and Donaldson. On the other side were J.B.C. Lucas, Rufus Easton, James Bruff, Samuel Hammond, William C. Carr (the United States land agent), Edward Hempstead, and Moses Austin, a rival to miner John Smith T. After Wilkinson left St. Louis in 1806, a slight shift

74. Primm, 80, 82.

75. Lucas's oldest son ran away when he was in his teens, and the family never saw him again. Another son established himself on a Caribbean plantation. "Hunt-Benoist Genealogy Record," [ms.], Hunt Family Papers, MHS.

76. The United States revised land laws applying to colonial Louisiana grants repeatedly from 1800s to the 1870s. Louisianans appealed their claims when they could, and by 1835 the United States had approved most of the claims to Spanish grants, including many of those previously refused by J.B.C. Lucas. The claims were rarely approved to the original owners, however, as will be discussed with regard to James Mackay's heirs below. After more than twenty years of litigation, many colonial Louisianans had been forced to mortgage their land and had lost it to pay court costs. J.B.C. Lucas, John Mullanphy, and their heirs were the primary benefactors of the claims when they were finally approved. Remarkably, some claims were not settled until the 1870s.

See Paul W. Gates, *History of Public Land Law Development*; written for the Public Land Law Review Commission; with a chapter by Robert W. Swenson (Washington: Government Printing Office, November 1968), 96-107, for a discussion of Lucas's board of commissioners, later boards, and when various claims were confirmed. Gates' study of public land law is monumental, but his examination of the Louisiana claims is not. He approaches the grant claimants from the point of view of Lucas and the United States and suggests that colonial Louisianans practiced widespread fraud in making their claims. Gates does not discuss the traditions of acquiring and keeping land under the Spanish government in Louisiana, and he does not use the *Territorial Papers*, which detail individual claims and give evidence that most of them were valid. Gates also does not discuss the frequency with which land had passed out of the hands of the original claimant before the grant was validated by the United States.

77. John Smith T. added the T. to his name because he was from Tennessee and to distinguish himself from other John Smiths.

in alignments and a few pragmatic marriages resulted in the formation of what Lucas-supporter Joseph Charless called "the Little Junto." Hempstead married into the Gratiot and Chouteaus, thereby becoming one of the strongest supporters of liberal land claims and of the old Creole power structure.⁷⁸

Lucas intensified his land speculation after the earthquake centered near New Madrid, Missouri, in the winter of 1811-1812, which came in the same year that his wife, "the most important thing in the world to me," died.⁷⁹ Lucas learned from his friends in Washington that land certificates would be made available to residents whose farms had been destroyed by the earthquake. Before word of the certificates reached the Louisiana Territory, Lucas and a few of his close friends offered to buy the damaged farms at a pittance. The shaken residents readily sold, unaware that within months the United States government would have compensated them with certificates entitling them to choose better land elsewhere in the territory. Crafty Lucas, of course, held claim to the certificates when they arrived, and he used them to expand his holdings.

One of J.B.C. Lucas' biggest targets as land commissioner was James Mackay. According to local tradition, Mackay received huge land grants as compensation for his service to the Spanish government. Lucas set out systematically to disprove all of Mackay's claims, producing note after note of arguments he would use against Mackay's claims. Lucas' complaints against them were usually small: there was no survey; the grant had not been signed in New Orleans; Mackay had not been married when he received the grant.⁸⁰ These flaws in title were common, however, and it was Mackay that Lucas chose to attack rather than other residents.⁸¹ Territorial governor Frederick Bates once said of Lucas, "He has absolutely no attachment and his animosities are immortal."⁸² Lucas chased Mackay to the doorstep of death, and after his property was accounted for in his estate inventory, like vultures Lucas' friends swept in to pick his bones clean and deprive his widow and young children of their legacy. In a letter to his son Zeno written shortly before he died, James Mackay admonished him to trust almost no one but his old friend Antoine Soulard, and he

78. Primm, 83.

79. J.B.C. Lucas to E.V. Lucas, March 13, 1813, draft letter. Typed translation by Madelon Sprengnether, 1962. Lucas Family Papers, MHS.

80. Lucas's extensive notes are preserved in the Lucas Family Papers, MHS.

81. The *Missouri Gazette* from 1808 to 1810 carries a debate by anonymous correspondents that may explain in part Lucas's target of Mackay. In the newspaper, "A Louisianan" and "A Land Claimant" argued the two sides of the battle to confirm Spanish claims. The Land Claimant wrote on behalf of the new American settlers (primarily officials such as Lucas and Rufus Easton), while the Louisianan wrote on behalf of the Louisiana colonials and sharply criticized the conduct of the Board of Land Commissioners and in particular Lucas. Late in the correspondence, the Land Claimant identified the Louisianan as James Mackay. Mackay scholar Thomas Danisi has tentatively identified the Land Claimant as Edward Bates. Danisi draft ms.

82. Quoted in Primm, 82.

lamented the system in which men such as J.B.C. Lucas came out the victors.⁸³ Although almost all of Lucas' arguments against Mackay's claims were eventually reversed and the claims approved, by that time the Mackays had lost a substantial portion of their former wealth. One piece of property that his son Zeno and widow Isabelle retained adjoined his old Gravois farm, on the east side of the Gravois road.⁸⁴

The Mackay family's treatment under Lucas's land board was extreme but indicative of how far Lucas would go to gain wealth. In this century, Lucas has been admired for his contributions to the borders of St. Louis, his land being called the Lucas Additions. He is a much less admirable man, perhaps, when one realizes how he acquired his wealth.⁸⁵

Lucas indulged his children, including his daughter Anne, born September 23, 1796. During her youth and early adulthood, Anne used the nickname Nancy. Sometimes the elder Lucas attempted to be mother and father to Nancy, such as when he ordered her stylish fabric and a new hat from Pittsburgh merchant Anthony Beelen: "Send me... fashionable silk cloth as will make a wrapper for my daughter, She is sixteen years of age, midle size the colour ought to be fasionable, she would not wish however that it should be rose, nor very light coloured." He continued, "I wish also to have... a fashionable bonnet most suitable to her age and two pairs of good silk stockings."⁸⁶ Nancy was growing up, and soon she would be ready to receive suitors.

Lucas' sons received superior education at eastern boarding schools, and Nancy received a better education than most St. Louis girls. In 1813, Lucas wrote of her, "She has a lively wit and very expressive eyes. She learns with an astonishing facility; she sketches with great taste and is very exact in her knowledge. She has the mind of a man rather than a woman."⁸⁷ In 1814, she attracted the attention of Theodore Hunt, a retired United States naval officer who visited St. Louis in the employment of John Jacob Astor.

83. James Mackay to Zeno Mackay, [1821?], St. Charles Collection, MHS.

84. Primm, 80-81; Danisi, draft ms. See Gates for information on revisions in the laws governing Spanish grants and appeals by grant holders. Many of the Mackay claims were approved by 1836.

85. See Hagen, 200, for a rose-colored view of Lucas's aggressive land acquisition.

86. J.B.C. Lucas to Anthony Beelin (draft letter), 1812, Lucas Collection, MHS Archives. Anthony Beelen was a retail merchant in Pittsburgh. From the city directory for 1812-13 in *Honest Man's Almanac* (Pittsburgh: Patterson and Hopkins, 1812) in Sarah H. Killikelly, *The History of Pittsburgh: Its Rise and Progress* (Pittsburgh: B.C. and Gordon Montgomery Co., 1906), 145-150.

87. J.B.C. Lucas to E.V. Lucas, March 13, 1813, draft letter. Typed translation by Madelon Sprengnether, 1962. Lucas Family Papers, MHS. Correspondence of Anne Lucas Hunt indicates that she exercised considerable control over her family's property as a single, married, and widowed woman. See, e.g. McCune Gill, *The St. Louis Story* (St. Louis: Historical Record Association, 1952), 42-43.

Theodore Hunt was an impressive man in his own right, and perhaps by the time he married Nancy Lucas he was ready to let another command his life. He was born in Trenton, New Jersey, in 1778. Two years before Hunt's birth, his father Abraham Hunt may have saved George Washington's army from discovery by Colonel Johnnes Rall of the Hessian garrison on Christmas Eve, 1776. The elder Hunt, a prosperous Trenton merchant, entertained the Hessian redcoat officer and prevented any message from being delivered to him regarding Washington's preparations for the Battle of Trenton. Consequently Rall was unprepared when Washington's forces attacked him and his troops. The colonists completely routed the British at the battle of Trenton; their victory revived colonial hope in the American Revolution.

Theodore entered the United States Navy as a midshipman on September 2, 1798. Hunt was unfortunate enough to be aboard the frigate *Philadelphia* when she was captured by the Barbary pirates off the coast of Tripoli in 1803. Hunt remained a captive until June, 1805, when American forces freed him and his surviving crewmates. Hunt returned to the United States in command of his own vessel. In 1809 he was given command of the frigate *Hornet*, and on July 10, 1810, he was commissioned a master commander. He resigned less than a year later. During his time in the navy, Hunt had the opportunity to engage in several private sailing ventures, and his public and private business took him to India, China, Java, and Manila in the Philippines, as well as Europe and northern Africa. In 1814, he went to St. Louis with a letter of introduction addressed to J.B.C. Lucas. With Lucas' help, he established himself in St. Louis and joined the family venture of real estate speculation.⁸⁸

Nancy and Theodore were married on June 23, 1814.⁸⁹ For a time, they lived in St. Louis, and Theodore ran a tanning yard. Then in 1817, J.B.C.'s son, Charles, engaged in two duels with the notorious Thomas Hart Benton.⁹⁰ Benton was a politician who moved to St. Louis in 1815 from Nashville following a public and infamous fisticuff with the "hero of New Orleans," future President Andrew Jackson. Benton immediately worked his way into the best of the old St. Louis French society, the "landed elite" and fur traders who made up the power base of the town in the colonial era. Directly at odds with the old elite were the Lucases, Rufus Easton, another Jefferson appointee, and private land speculators William Russell and David Barton. J.B.C. Lucas' position as land commissioner and Rufus Easton's as territorial legislator enabled both of them to accumulate huge tracts of land that rivalled those of the colonials. Benton's connections with the old elite put him in opposition to

88. James Morrison to J.B.C. Lucas, May 10, 1814, copy in "Theodore Hunt," CVR File, MHS; "Hunt-Benoist Genealogy Record," Hunt Family Papers, MHS; Obituary of Theodore Hunt, *Missouri Republican*, February 14, 1832, in "Theodore Hunt," CVR File, MHS; Harry C. Carr to Caleb S. Green, February 28, 1945, Hunt Family Papers, MHS; "Certificate of Arrival, No. 10, Port of Cowes," September 6, 1810, Hunt Family Papers, MHS.

89. "Hunt-Benoist Genealogy Record," Hunt Family Papers, MHS.

90. "Raw Hides and Bark" [advertisement], *Missouri Gazette and Illinois Advertiser*, July 9, 1814; "Raw Hides" [advertisement], *Missouri Gazette*, September 27, 1817.

Lucas, Easton, and the other newcomers. He was their political and social rival, and a small insult among these men could result in death.

The duels between Benton and Charles Lucas originated in the courtroom, where Lucas insulted the opposing attorney, Benton. Benton challenged Lucas to a duel, but the latter refused. Tensions continued to rise, however, and in a few weeks the two men were walking their paces. Benton seriously wounded Lucas by shooting him in his jugular vein, but remarkably Lucas survived. For a time their rivalry lulled, but soon after Lucas' recovery their insults began again and escalated to orchestrated violence. Nancy wrote of the second duel between Lucas and Benton: "I did not even know it was going to happen until it was over." On a small island on the shore of the Mississippi, the two men walked only ten paces, then turned, and shot. Lucas hit Benton in the leg. Benton fatally wounded Lucas. Local residents named the spot "Bloody Island" in memory of this and other scandalous affairs of honor on the island, and, not surprisingly, newspapers across the nation carried accounts of the Lucas-Benton duel.⁹¹

Nancy decided soon thereafter that she would prefer to live outside the city. "I was so fearful of meeting Benton after that, that we moved out into the country, near Gravois road...." she wrote years later. That move took the Hunts to Lindsay and Elizabeth Long's Gravois farm.⁹²

~~It was January 1818, when Theodore and Nancy negotiated with the Longs for the farm. In addition to the finished house, the Hunts wanted fifty acres of land cleared and fenced, and they contracted with Lindsay Long to ensure that they got it.⁹³ Nancy reported happily and reassuringly to her father, who was in Washington on business at the time, that they were looking forward to a quiet life of farming. The Hunts moved to the Gravois farm toward the end of April.⁹⁴ Probably during their ownership or in conjunction with their purchase of the property, the Hunts added a wing to the rear of the house. According to local tradition, the wing had features similar to those found on a ship's deck, a whimsical reminder for Captain Hunt of his years of adventure on the high seas.⁹⁵ While they lived~~

91. Primm, 115-117.

92. Anne L. Hunt, "Early Recollections," Missouri Historical Society's *Glimpses of the Past*, I: 6 (May 1934), 41-51.

93. Theodore Hunt and William L. Long, agreement, sale of residence and land, mortgage, and contract for work, January 16, 1818, Hunt Family Papers, MHS.

94. The General Land Office Field Notes, 18, Department of Natural Resources Map Archives, Rolla, Missouri, reported on May 1, 1818, that "Capt. Hunt" had placed his own posts for the survey of his land. Anne L. Hunt to J.B.C. Lucas, January 28, 1818, Lucas Family Papers, MHS.

95. "Scene of General Grant's Courtship a Hidden Spot of Interest," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, December 3, 1916.

on the Gravois, Nancy had two children, Theodosia, born in 1819, and Charles, born in 1820.⁹⁶

One could not expect the city-dwelling and sea-faring Hunts to survive at farming, however, and Nancy's father made their trial even more difficult for them. In conjunction with fluctuations in national monetary policy, J.B.C. Lucas' land speculations and those of his cronies caused a boom and then a crash in the St. Louis real estate market.⁹⁷

"God preserve the land from total ruin," wrote St. Louis resident William Carr Lane in January 1821. "Theodore Hunt is ruined [if you will believe it]," continued Lane, implicating Nancy's father in the real estate debacle that brought on the crash. "Old Lucas has been and still is an active instrument in the business [of speculating]. H[unt] is certainly a very contemptible man, but that does not justify L[ucas] in becoming his *active* enemy. Were I Hunt, I would

‘bring down the gray hair
of that abominable old man,
with sorrow, to the grave’

at any hazzard." With a bit of glee for the puritanical side of Theodore Hunt and a touch of sympathy for the man who had lost his fortune at the hands of his own father-in-law, Lane purchased Theodore and Nancy's side-board.⁹⁸ The Hunts were ruined for the time, and they sold their new home on the Gravois and moved to a large piece of the Lucas family land which they called Normandy.

Eventually the Hunts recovered their wealth and Anne inherited substantial land and money from her father. After the death of Theodore in 1832, Anne married his cousin, the successful fur trader and mill owner Wilson Price Hunt. Anne was widowed again in 1842, but this time she did not remarry. She built the wealth of her father and two husbands into a small fortune and became one of St. Louis' greatest philanthropists of the nineteenth century.

After twenty-four years, the Gravois farm was no longer an isolated land grant on the outskirts of St. Louis. It was in an area dominated by French Creoles and Southern Americans, and gradually the land was being cleared and cultivated. While the first owners built the primary structures on the Gravois farm, none of them remained long enough to shape its overall development. That task went to the family of Frederick Dent, the man whose family owned the Gravois farm for sixty-five years and gave it its name, White Haven.

96. "Hunt-Benoist Genealogy Record," Hunt Family Papers, MHS.

97. Primm, 109-111.

98. Lane was quoting an unidentified poem or song. William Carr Lane to Mary Lane, December 20, 1820; William Lane to Mary Lane, January 17, 1821, William Carr Lane Collection, MHS.

CHAPTER THREE

"The Showplace of the Country": The Dents at White Haven¹

While the Grahams, Mackays, Longs, and Hunts occupied the Gravois farm for more than two decades combined, none of them stayed long enough to form the kind of attachment to the property that the next family did. From 1820 to 1865, Frederick Dent and his family owned and lived by the Gravois. They made the farm their own, they named it White Haven, and through marriage family members retained ownership of the property until 1885, sixty-five years after Frederick Dent first purchased the core of the farm.

"Pretty Ellen Wrenshall and Her Brave Young Husband," Frederick Dent²

The Dent family was one of the American families who moved into primarily Creole St. Louis in the twenty years following the Louisiana Purchase. Their roots were in Maryland and Pennsylvania, and they moved to St. Louis to be merchants and conduct trade with the eastern United States. At White Haven, they raised seven children and experienced successes and setbacks. Their lives had a mix of pioneer spirit, old Southern charm, and Eastern gentility. In their lives there was nothing incongruous about buffalo skins and Dresden china, and eventually they provided the link to White Haven's most significant owner, Ulysses S. Grant.

Frederick Dent was born in 1786 or 1787 in Cumberland, Maryland. His father was George Dent and his mother Susannah Dawson Cromwell, the widow of Joseph Cromwell.

George Dent was descended from some of the largest land grant recipients in Maryland, and his family had plantations in Charles, St. Marys, Calvert, Prince Georges, and Frederick counties. In the three generations preceding George's birth in 1753 to Peter and Mary Elinor Hawkins Dent, the Dent family had several sons, so that the quantity of property that was willed to each son was reduced with every generation. Part of the property was a plantation called White Haven and located on Mattawoman Creek in Charles County. In 1785, George's father Peter Dent died, leaving to his wife Elinor and his sons George, Theodore, Thomas, and William portions of his land in Frederick and Charles

1. Julia Dent Grant, *The Personal Memoirs of Julia Dent Grant (Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant)*, John Y. Simon, ed. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1975) [hereafter JDG, *Memoirs*], 33.

2. JDG, *Memoirs*, 33.

counties. Because the land was subdivided among the five heirs, George apparently did not receive any of the White Haven estate.

Little else is known about the life of George Dent prior to 1785. He probably married in the 1770s, although the identity of his first wife has been obscured by time. As was common in colonial America, George Dent outlived his first wife. According to one source, she left him a widower with four children to care for, namely Ellen, Fannie, Priscilla, and Lewis.³

In 1785 the widow Susannah Dawson Cromwell received permission to marry George Dent. Susannah was the daughter of John and Martha Anne Dawson and was probably born in Anne Arundel or Prince Georges County in 1758. Susannah married her first husband, Joseph Cromwell, prior to July 1776, when they were recorded in the Deer Creek Lower Hundred, Harford County, census. Susannah and Joseph had at least two children, John and Thomas, between 1776 and 1785. Joseph died before 1785; no record of the cause of death was listed, although apparently he did not die in Revolutionary War service.⁴

Around 1786, George and Susannah Dent moved to the frontier town of Cumberland, Maryland. In 1787, the Maryland legislature appointed George Dent and four other men to be the first survey commissioners.⁵ George and Susannah's first son Frederick Dent claimed to have been the first white child born in Cumberland after its incorporation on January 20, 1787.⁶ Frederick was born in either 1786 or 1787 on October 6, and he was among the first white children born in the town if not the first. About the time of his birth his father constructed a log house, and it was here that Frederick grew up.

The Dents of Cumberland were well-respected. George Dent was appointed often to serve on civic committees, such as the committee for the erection of a jail. Opportunities

3. "Quick Sketch Showing Plantations of 1650-1750, Dents, Truman, Addison, Taney, Keys, Wilkinsons, Hansons," Ulysses S. Grant Papers, MHS. Gustave Anjou, *The Grant-Dent Family* (n.p., 1906), 59-60. A descendant of the Dent family, James Finney Casey IV of Maryland, has a copy of the Anjou genealogy in which family members made corrections. Because of the contradictions with known Dent family genealogy, one may question the reliability of Anjou's information on the first wife and children of George Dent.

4. Gaius Marcus Brumbaugh, *Maryland Records, Colonial, Revolutionary, County, and Church, from Original Sources* (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins Co., 1915); James M. Magruder, Jr. ed. *Index of Maryland Colonial Wills* (Annapolis: James M. Magruder, 1933); Harry Wright Newman, *Charles County Gentry* (1940), quoted in James F. Casey to Kim Little, February 5, 1992, Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site Central Files [hereafter ULSG-CF].

5. Among the other commissioners was Evan Gwynn. A Gwynn married Frederick's sister Fannie, and this may be the same family. Will H. Lowdermilk, *History of Cumberland (Maryland), From the Time of the Indian Town, Caiuctucuc, in 1728, up to the Present Day* (Washington: n.p., 1878; rep. Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1971), 258-261.

6. Lowdermilk, 262-263.

for education on the frontier were few, but Frederick received at least a rudimentary education at home.⁷

In 1802, George Dent died, and Frederick set off for the home of his older half-brothers in Pittsburgh.⁸ Frederick's brothers John and Thomas had a "commercial house," meaning that they conducted general trade. Almost immediately after he arrived, Frederick's brothers arranged for him to go on a trading venture into Spanish Louisiana, across the Mississippi River. With Christian Catron and Charles Whavendorss, sixteen-year-old Frederick signed a thousand-dollar bond, obligating him to follow the trading laws of the United States. He was pledged to trade with the Sauk, Fox, and another Native American tribe "where said Indians may be." He could not use any kind of foreign uniform, medal, or alcohol for trade purposes, and he was obliged to keep meticulous accounts of his business transactions.⁹ Dent's first trading venture introduced him to Missouri, where he spent the majority of his life.

For the next fifteen years, Frederick Dent traveled between St. Louis and Pittsburgh, conducting trade for his brothers' business. His business interests apparently brought him back to Maryland, where he joined the militia in the War of 1812. On August 24, 1814, he fought as a non-commissioned officer at the Battle of Bladensburg, near Washington, District of Columbia.¹⁰

7. "Regarding Mr. Dent," Notes of [Julia Dent Grant?], James F. Casey Collection, ULSG; Lowdermilk, 270, 282. As a coincidence, General E.O.C. Ord who served under General Ulysses Grant during the Civil War was born in a nearby house. Lowdermilk, 282. Most of the original houses in Cumberland were destroyed when Interstate 70 was constructed.

8. "Regarding Mr. Dent" gives the date of George's death as 1802, and some of the evidence in Lowdermilk leads one to believe that this is correct. Susannah Dent died in 1807 in the home of another resident of the town, indicating that she no longer had a home with George. In opposition to this idea is that a George Dent was appointed surveyor of Cumberland in 1806. It is possible that this George Dent was Frederick's brother or cousin rather than his father, however. Lowdermilk, 282, 286. The author has been unable to locate probate records for Susannah and George Dent.

9. F. Dent, Christian Catron, and Charles Whavendorss, Indian Agent Bond, March 27, 1802, Tesson Family Papers, MHS.

10. Seven thousand untrained American militia faced 4500 British regulars at the Battle of Bladensburg. Bladensburg is a few miles northeast of the District of Columbia. When the American troops lost the battle, the British troops stormed Washington and burned the White House and the Capitol. This was the lowest point in the War of 1812.

"Frederick Dent," CVR File, MHS; Charles K. Gardner, *A Dictionary of All Officers, Who Have Been Commissioned, or Have Been Appointed and Served, in the Army of the United States*, 2nd. ed. (New York: Van Nostrand, 1853, 1860), 146-147, bears out that Frederick Dent never received a commission. "Regarding Mr. Dent."

Map 2.
The Lives of Frederick Dent
and Ellen Wrenshall
through 1817



Living in Pittsburgh at the same time as Frederick Dent were John and Mary Bennington Wrenshall. John Wrenshall was a Methodist minister who ran a commercial house trading in Asian specialty items such as tea and fabric. His wife Mary was a native of England. Both of them had moved to Pittsburgh from Philadelphia.¹¹

The Reverend Wrenshall had a daughter named Ellen Bray, and on December 22, 1814, she married Frederick Dent. A year and a half later, their first child, John Cromwell, was born on May 22, 1816.¹² The following year Frederick, Ellen, their infant son John, and friend Edward Tracy set off on a raft for St. Louis. Their daughter Julia heard years later, "Nearly all Pittsburgh assembled on the riverbank to wish pretty Ellen Wrenshall and her brave young husband Godspeed." They took with them all of their household possessions, including china and furniture.¹³

A St. Louis Merchant

By 1817, St. Louis was a bustling commercial center. The inhabitants were a mix of recent American settlers and the French and Spanish Creoles who were descendants of the original Louisianans. Between 1804 and 1816, sixty-four families had moved to St. Louis. Twenty-four were from Virginia and Maryland and came from backgrounds similar to Frederick Dent's. Ten were from Pennsylvania. Ten total were from the New England and mid-Atlantic states of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Jersey. France, Santo Domingo [the Dominican Republic], and Ireland each supplied five families, North Carolina two, and Scotland, Wales, Italy, Ohio, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Indiana Territory each one.¹⁴ In Carondelet, the southern suburb of the city of St. Louis, the old Sappington and Mackay families dominated, joined by the Fines, Musicks, Longs, Wells, St. Johns, Bowles, Parkes,

11. It was common for ministers to have a second profession in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. John Wrenshall, Foreword addressed to "the Inhabitants of the City of Pittsburgh and its Vicinity," in "Farewell to Pittsburgh and the Mountains," summarized in James F. Casey to Kim Little, July 2, 1991, ULSG-CF; "Mrs. Grant Seriously Ill," December 14, 1902, unidentified clipping, Grant Family Papers, Ulysses S. Grant Association, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale [hereafter SIUC-USGA]; JDG, *Memoirs*, 40-41; 1812-13 Pittsburgh city directory in Sarah H. Killikelly, *The History of Pittsburgh: Its Rise and Progress* (Pittsburgh: B.C. & Gordon Montgomery Co., 1906), 150.

12. Anjou, 60-61.

13. JDG, *Memoirs*, 40-41; "Frederick Dent," Charles Van Ravensway Notes, MHS. William Hyde and Howard L. Conard, eds. *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis: A Compendium of History and Biography for Ready Reference* (New York, Louisville, St. Louis: Southern History Company, Haldeman, Conard and Co., 1899), 557, lists Dent's date of moving to St. Louis as 1821, but other records indicate the earlier date.

14. James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri*, 2nd. ed. (Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing Co., 1981, 1990), 86-87.

Guions, Le Brons, Tessons, and the most recent arrivals, the Hunts, Smiths, Pipkins, and Sales. Among the settlers was John Cromwell, Frederick Dent's half-brother.¹⁵ Little information is available on John Cromwell and his time in St. Louis, although he purchased land and served as a witness in the county. Miscellaneous title records indicate that he may have had two sons named Andrew and Oliver.¹⁶ John probably preceded Frederick to St. Louis and eased his younger brother's transition to the new city.

Frederick Dent conducted business for his brother Thomas, and he established his own business as well. The account of Manuel Lisa, a prominent St. Louis citizen, indicates that around 1820 Frederick Dent sold him lard, sugar, coffee, rice, loaf sugar, Madeira wine, brandy, and herring for a total of \$117.16. Lisa paid for most of the order in buffalo robes.¹⁷ St. Louis residents frequently traded goods rather than scarce cash. This can be illustrated by a disagreement between Dent and Stephen Hempstead over some barrels Dent got from Hempstead's employee in trade for goods.¹⁸

A court case in 1822 indicated that Thomas Cromwell, Alexander Plummer, and Frederick Dent were "trading together under the name and firm of Alexander Plummer and Co." about the time Dent moved to St. Louis. His brother Thomas also had a company with a family named Dobbin, and they advertised salt, iron, glass, and "a variety of other articles, suitable for the Western trade" that Frederick could have assisted them with trading.¹⁹ Around 1824 Dent expanded his business interests up and down the Mississippi. He opened a store in Galena, Illinois, in that year. Just a few years before, St. Louis residents Henry Gratiot and his wife Susan Hempstead had started settlement there with an Indian post.²⁰

Frederick and Ellen Dent immersed themselves in St. Louis society. In 1819, Dent was one of the founders of the Episcopal Church, along with his business partner Thomas

15. J. Thomas Scharf, *History of St. Louis City and County* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts Co., 1883), II, 1880.

16. St. Louis City Recorder of Deeds, miscellaneous records from 1819 to 1825.

17. "Prices of Food Also High in St. Louis in 1820," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 21, 1917, St. Louis History Collection, MHS.

18. E.S. Beebe to William Hempstead, April 10, 1826; Beebe to Hempstead, May 22, 1826, Stephen Hempstead Papers, MHS.

19. Charles E. Peterson, "Manuel Lisa's Warehouse," *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin*, IV: 2 (January 1948), 59-91, 85n.

20. "Galena and Its Lead Mines," *Harpers New Monthly Magazine*, XXXIII (May 1866) 682-696, quoted in Kenneth P. Williams to USG III, October 9, 1951, SIUC-USGA; Marie Lisa Washburne Fowler, "My Mother and I," Marie Lisa Washburne Fowler Collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Riddick and Wilson Price Hunt, the second husband of Anne Lucas.²¹ Frederick Dent had the added benefit of knowing one of St. Louis' most prominent new residents, Col. John O'Fallon. In March 1827, O'Fallon married a cousin, niece, or half-sister of Frederick or Ellen, and the Dents hosted the wedding reception.²²

When the Dents moved to St. Louis, they did not buy a home immediately. In 1819, they rented a stone house in the city from William Morrison.²³ The large number of settlers precipitated a real estate boom, and Dent could not resist getting involved. The same year, he purchased about ninety arpents of land on the Meramec River and additional land in St. Louis for speculation. Dent was now in the real estate business.²⁴

On June 22, 1820, Frederick Dent purchased 184 arpents of the Gravois farm from Theodore and Anne Lucas Hunt for \$6000, to be paid in the coming year. Dent satisfied the payments, and on February 19, 1821, he owned his new country home, including the house constructed by Lindsay Long, free and clear.²⁵ Dent still had sufficient business concerns to keep him in the city, however, and for the next five or six years the family used the Gravois farm as a summer home and retreat while Dent gathered an additional seven to eight hundred acres of adjoining land.

"My First Recollection": Growing Up at White Haven²⁶

In 1827, the Dent family moved to White Haven as their primary residence.²⁷ There were now five Dent children: John, born in 1816 in Pittsburgh; George Wrenshall (called Wrenshall), Frederick Tracy, Lewis (or Louis), and Julia Boggs, born in St. Louis in 1819, 1820, 1823, and 1826, respectively. In 1827, Ellen gave birth to the second daughter, Nellie,

21. Charles F. Rehkopf, "The Beginnings of the Episcopal Church in Missouri, 1819-1844," *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin*, XI:3 (April 1955), 265-278.

22. The familial relationship between Frederick and Ellen Dent and Caroline Shutz (or Sheets) O'Fallon is not clear. Stephen Hempstead, Sr., "I at Home," Part VIII, ed. Mrs. Dana O. Jensen, *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin*, XXII: 2: Part I (January 1966), 180-206, 184.

23. Dent defaulted on his lease, and Morrison sued him. "Frederick Dent," CVR File, MHS.

24. "Invoice of the Sale of the Chouteau and Soulard Land Situated on the South Side of the Marimack River Including LaMays Ferry on the South," about 1819, John Richardson Papers, MHS; miscellaneous deeds, St. Louis City Recorder of Deeds.

25. Theodore Hunt to Frederick Dent, Bond for Deed, June 22, 1820, Book J, 489; Theodore and Anne L. Hunt to Frederick Dent, Warranty Deed, February 19, 1821, Book K, 58, St. Louis City Recorder of Deeds.

26. JDG, *Memoirs*, 33.

27. JDG, *Memoirs*, 33. From 1824 to 1827, St. Louis had serious problems with smog, and the pollution could have contributed to the Dents' decision to move to the country. Primm, 136.

at White Haven. Around 1833, she had a third daughter, Mary, but the baby did not survive for more than a year or two. Emily, the last Dent child, was born in 1836.²⁸

By 1830, Frederick Dent also had amassed a total of eighteen slaves. He had six boy and six girl slaves, and two adult men and three adult women. He also kept a white hired hand.²⁹

Life along the Gravois for young Julia Dent was, according to her own account, full of dusky trains of black slave girls, locust and rose bloom fritters, and a kind of country elegance. Julia attended school in a one-room log building on the Gravois Road, probably on the south side of her father's property. "My school days are only pleasant memories. I was very young and small when I first attended school, and was often carried most of the way by my brothers George and Fred.... And then dear Kitty [a slave] would carry me sometimes, and occasionally I would ride mamma's pony led by Kitty," Julia explained.

Her school was a typical country school. She remembered at least four teachers when she studied there. Two of them came from New England colleges. Her last teacher was John Fenton Long, the son who was born to William Lindsay and Elizabeth Sappington Long on the Gravois farm four years before the Dents purchased it.³⁰ When Julia was old enough, she moved to town to study at the Misses Mauros' boarding school, a finishing school where she enjoyed the pleasures of reading novels but did not study too much. Julia attended school in St. Louis until 1843, but she often brought friends to White Haven.³¹

Among Julia's compatriots in St. Louis was Adele Gratiot, the daughter of Henry and Susan Hempstead Gratiot and the granddaughter of Pierre Chouteau and niece of Manuel Lisa. Adele grew up in Indian trading posts near Galena, Illinois, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, and Dubuque and Keokuk, Iowa. At two points in her childhood, however, Adele went to live with her St. Louis relatives, the Pierre Chouteaus. Adele no doubt knew Julia Dent through her family's business with Frederick Dent, which was extensive, and through the circle of society in which both of their families participated in St. Louis and Illinois. Adele and Julia renewed their friendship after Julia moved to Galena in 1860, as will be discussed in detail in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven.³²

28. Anjou, 60-73; JDG, *Memoirs*, 30.

29. Fifth Census of the United States, 1830; United States Bureau of the Census, St. Louis County, Missouri.

30. JDG, *Memoirs*, 36-38.

31. JDG, *Memoirs*, 38-40.

32. Fowler, "My Mother and I," Marie Lisa Washburne Fowler Collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Fowler's reminiscences include a copy of memoirs written for Fowler by her mother, Adele Gratiot, regarding life growing up in the trading posts and St. Louis.

Except for John, all of the Dent sons attended college. Wrenshall began his education at Augusta College in Kentucky, where his uncle was president, but he finished at St. Charles College when his uncle moved there. Lewis also attended St. Charles College. Fred was appointed to the United States Military Academy, from which he graduated in 1843. All of the Dent children brought friends home from school to visit with them at White Haven on weekends and vacations.³³

A visit to the Gravois farm about 1840 would have taken the traveler down the old tree-lined Gravois Road ten miles outside St. Louis. The traveler would have passed the extensive fields of the French and early American landholders and the smaller farms of the new German immigrants. On the Gravois Road the traveler crossed River des Peres, the creek named after the 1699 Jesuit mission, and continued southwestwardly until he reached the Gravois Creek. There, a lane led northeast about a quarter of a mile. On the left side of the lane was the creek, and farther to the left a high ridge from which one could see Carondelet on a clear evening. On the right was a well-developed orchard, probably dating from the Long, Hunt, or early Dent ownership. Next came a small vineyard, and then the lane veered away from the creek to the right.

On the traveler's left now was a barn, almost new when the Dents purchased the farm, and several sheds clustered around it. The odor of cows and clover hung in the air. Behind the barn were slave cabins. A noise to the left signaled a spring branch, a tributary of the Gravois, River des Peres, and eventually the Mississippi. The ground sloped to the meandering branch, and then rose again on the other side to a field of about fifty acres under cultivation. Looking ahead toward the source of the spring branch, the traveler could see the profile of the old Dent house, built by Lindsay Long and added to by the Hunts and Dents. The lane twisted around the barn and sheds to come up on the house from the front. There, the avenue ran between two fences, one of split logs marking the boundary of a field that led to the orchard by "the other way 'round," another a formal white picket fence enclosing the house and gardens.

Little in the Dent's front yard was symmetrical. The picket fence jogged in on the northeast side of the white clapboard house, where the vegetable garden was located. The posts on the two-story piazza did not line up with each other or with the windows and doors. Around 1840, Dent had divided the two rooms in the main wing of the first floor into three rooms: a dining room, a parlor, and a front hall. He replaced the wide old doors entering the two original rooms with a single, more modern one entering the hall. The new door had sidelights but did not center in the original opening. Upstairs, the gallery posts were symmetrical, but the spacing was uneven within each side.

The house had a large single-story addition on the southwest elevation, part of a French-style vertical log cabin that was placed on a stone foundation and joined to the main

33. JDG, *Memoirs*, 46-47.

wing, also about 1840. Three massive stone chimneys extended from the roof line, one from the southwest elevation of the clapboard-covered cabin, and one at each end of the original house. The chimneys were not centered on the ends of the house because of a peculiar Creole design element: the roof of the main house extended over the gallery in one clean line, not the shed style so common on Anglo-American farmhouses.

In the summer, the galleries invited the traveler to sit in the cool shade, enjoying breezes scented by Mrs. Dent's rosebushes. Behind the main house was a stone workhouse, where meals were cooked, butter was churned, and cheese was made, all by the capable hands of Dent's young slave women. The house was next to the spring that fed the branch, so behind the work building was a stone spring house where dairy products were stored until they could be marketed.³⁴

In 1840, Frederick Dent had thirteen slaves: five boys, six girls, and one man and one woman.³⁵ His primary business was the farm, which he ran with the assistance of his children and their spouses. Each child was assured that a portion of the land would be his or hers one day if the child helped around the farm. The oldest son John stayed around in anticipation of carrying off the real prize: the rambling white house and adjoining fields.

Fighting

Frederick Dent's secondary business was trading real estate, which involved dozens of title transfers in a decade. As a result, he usually suffered when economic panics struck, such as happened nationwide in 1837. The 1837 panic descended into a depression that hit its nationwide low around 1843. In St. Louis, the newly chartered Bank of Missouri in essence failed in 1839 and was forced to transfer its banking interests to private companies. For farmers and real estate agents, the bank failure and depression sounded economic death knells.³⁶ It was no different for Frederick Dent, except that when other St. Louis business people bounced back in the late 1840s, Dent did not recover as easily.

Frederick Dent was one of the Gravois Settlement farmers who could best be characterized as land-rich but cash-poor. He mortgaged the farm as often as necessary to buy other land to subdivide, build on, or simply sell at a profit. In 1843, Dent mortgaged

34. Emma Dent Casey, "When Grant Went A-Courtin'," James F. Casey Collection, ULSG; "Improved and Unimproved Land for Sale," *Missouri Republican*, August 5, 1846. See also Architect Alan O'Bright's notes and drawings at the Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site regarding the chronology of the buildings on the farm.

35. Sixth Census of the United States, 1850: United States Bureau of the Census, St. Louis County, Missouri, Schedule of Population.

36. Hasty shuffling of the bank's assets prevented an actual bank failure, but the effect was the same as if it had closed. Primm, 136-144, 146-47.

White Haven to David Irvin for \$5000. Dent was to pay him 10% interest semi-annually.³⁷ He thought the mortgage would be sufficient to carry him into better times, but he found it difficult to pay Irvin the \$500 annually sometimes.

In 1846, Dent advertised White Haven for sale. He presented it as having:

400 ACRES... with a commodious frame dwelling containing nine rooms, a large stable, negro quarters, smoke and dairy houses of stone, together with all other out-buildings, barns, &c. that can be desired on a well-improved farm. WHITE HAVEN is a well watered stock farm, having the Gravois Creek running through it in addition to several fine springs.³⁸

By the time the advertisement appeared, Julia and her brothers and sisters had learned that her family was in reduced circumstances, and they were distressed at the thought of losing their home. Dent did not succeed in selling White Haven, but he may have rented it for a few years. He leased a brick townhouse at Fourth and Cerre Streets in downtown St. Louis, and the family moved there. Inexplicably, the Dents stayed in the city of St. Louis in the summer of 1848 and possibly 1847 and 1849.³⁹

Frederick Dent had additional financial problems in the 1840s. The Dent's White Haven farm was located on the old U.S. Survey Number Nine, the land that the Spanish government had granted to Hugh Graham and that the United States government had confirmed to James Mackay. The Spanish officials had authorized Graham to select 800 arpents, or approximately 650 acres, and the United States believed that it had confirmed 650 acres to James Mackay. The problem was that the land that Graham and Mackay had cultivated and believed to be theirs actually measured 750 acres according to the survey. The extra 100 acres were located in the eastern part of Survey Number Nine, which Dent purchased from Theodore Hunt. Now, almost fifty years after Hugh Graham's tract was missurveyed, the township of Carondelet wanted to fight Frederick Dent over the extra 100 acres. To make matters worse, part of the disputed section was where Dent's house was located. To further confuse the issue, an additional section of Dent's White Haven farm was located in Section 16 of the township. The township by law was supposed to have reserved

37. Frederick and Ellen Dent, Deed of Trust, September 13, 1843, St. Louis County Recorder of Deeds, Book D3, 167.

38. "Improved and Unimproved Land for Sale," *Missouri Republican*, August 5, 1846.

39. If Dent leased the White Haven house with the farm, it would have necessitated the family living in town for the summer. JDG, *Memoirs*, 55; "Drive to Restore Old Dent Home to Begin Tomorrow," *Star*, May 6, [1924?], St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*.

the money from the sale for school purposes, but there were no schools in the early 1820s when Dent purchased the land. Now Carondelet wanted him to buy it again.⁴⁰

In May 1845, Frederick Dent set out for Washington, D.C., to investigate his case in the federal land office. He believed that he was correct in claiming his land, but he was not sure the courts would think so. In 1849, witnesses were called in the trial *State of Missouri v. Frederick Dent*, but the case was delayed by the cholera epidemic that summer. For the next five years Dent fought with the town of Carondelet. One township official remembered that the case was settled in favor of Carondelet. In fact, most of the disputed land went to Dent, but he did have to repurchase a small section from the government.⁴¹

Frederick Dent did not ask for trouble when he got involved in the suit with Carondelet, but his sons' disagreements with their neighbors was another matter. There was little question among the Dents that John, the eldest, was the black sheep of the family. He refused to attend college like his brothers, and he floated between business in downtown St. Louis and out on the farm. It was John and his youngest brother Lewis who in 1843 good-naturedly set up the "Gravois Hunting Club," a good-old-boys party drinking and shooting society in which John Fenton Long and other prominent neighbors sons participated.⁴² Naturally the neighborhood Germans who were excluded from such revelry were displeased, and a feud developed between the Dent sons and the sons of William and John Sigerson.

No one in the neighborhood was quite sure why the Dents and the Sigersons disliked each other. "One night all the haystacks and outhouses of the Sigersons were burned down," remembered Carondelet official William Taussig. "Busy tongues at once connected this incident with the well-known bad feeling existing between the two neighbors, and spread the rumor that the stacks had been set on fire by the Dents." Taussig believed that the Dents

40. According to the Ordinance of 1787, section 16 was to be set aside in each township to pay for schools in the old Northwest Territory. When Missouri was admitted as a state in 1820, it adopted the surveying regulations of the Ordinance of 1787, including the one which designated section 16 of each township for school purposes. Missouri did not establish public schools immediately, though, and in the settled areas of the state some townships sold section 16 but did not save the money for its future schools. When Frederick Dent purchased part of section 16 in 1820, Carondelet Township redesignated the "school" section to be section 32. Then it sold section 32 and did not save the money from it. In an effort to get money for public schools, the township reviewed the Graham survey for a way to recover the school money. Officials discovered the missurvey, and they sued Dent for the 100-acre difference.

41. *State of Missouri v. Frederick Dent*, St. Louis Court of Common Pleas, 1849, 1854; William Taussig, "Address Before the Missouri Historical Society," in James L. Post, ed., *Reminiscences by Personal Friends of Gen. U.S. Grant and the History of Grant's Log Cabin* (St. Louis: J.L. Post, 1904), 84-85; Title Abstract A, First American Title Company, ULSG.

42. The rules of the club required members to pay the other members certain quantities of alcohol for offenses such as failing to attend meetings, failing to hit a deer at close range, reading while hunting, snoring while on a stand, and drinking to excess. "Dent's Deer Club: A Drinking Coterie of Old St. Louisans," unidentified clipping [circa 1872] in Long Family Scrapbook, Vol. II, Long Family Papers, MHS.

were innocent, and naturally they were distraught when word reached them that they had been blamed. Either Wrenshall or John then decided to take the law into his own hands, and one of them engaged in a fight with the Sigersons. The result was that the Dent son was left almost dead with head injuries.⁴³

By 1850, the Dents' finances had improved somewhat, and Frederick now owned thirty slaves, eighteen female and twelve male. They ranged in age from one year to sixty years old, although only six of them were adult men. The rest were mostly young women and children, too young to be of much help. Dent apparently intended to raise them until they could work as full hands, but the Civil War thwarted those plans. Also living at home was John Dent, already thirty-four years old, Lewis, who was twenty-six, and, when he had leave from his army position, Julia's young husband. Julia and her two sisters remained as well.⁴⁴ From 1843 onward, the story of the Dents at White Haven is the story of Ulysses Grant, for in the fall of that year he first traveled down the road by the Gravois Creek and inquired for the residence of Frederick Dent, the father of his roommate at West Point.

In the years that Frederick Dent and his family lived at White Haven, they shaped and developed the farm into their own. Like the earlier owners of the Gravois farm, Dent was a businessman more than a farmer, but for forty years he lorded over his estate like a country gentleman. His family, who had been one of the recent arrivals in 1820, was counted among St. Louis' oldest and finest by 1860. The Dents accumulated wealth enough ~~to make friends and enemies, and they engendered the respect of St. Louisans sufficient to sustain them in the community after their wealth waned.~~ The Gravois farm was now Dent's place, White Haven.

43. Taussig misidentified the Dent son who was beaten as Fred, who was out of St. Louis on army duty at the time. Taussig correctly reported, however, that the injured Dent son later married a Shurlds daughter and moved to California. This could be either Wrenshall or John. Taussig in Post, 80.

44. Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Population Schedule, Slave Schedule, St. Louis County, Missouri.



Figure 1. Theodore Hunt, owner of White Haven, 1818-1820.
Courtesy Missouri Historical Society



Figure 2. Anne Lucas Hunt, owner of White Haven 1812-1820.
Courtesy Missouri Historical Society



Figure 3. Frederick Fayette Dent, owner of White Haven 1820-circa 1861; father of Julia Dent Grant.

Courtesy Missouri Historical Society

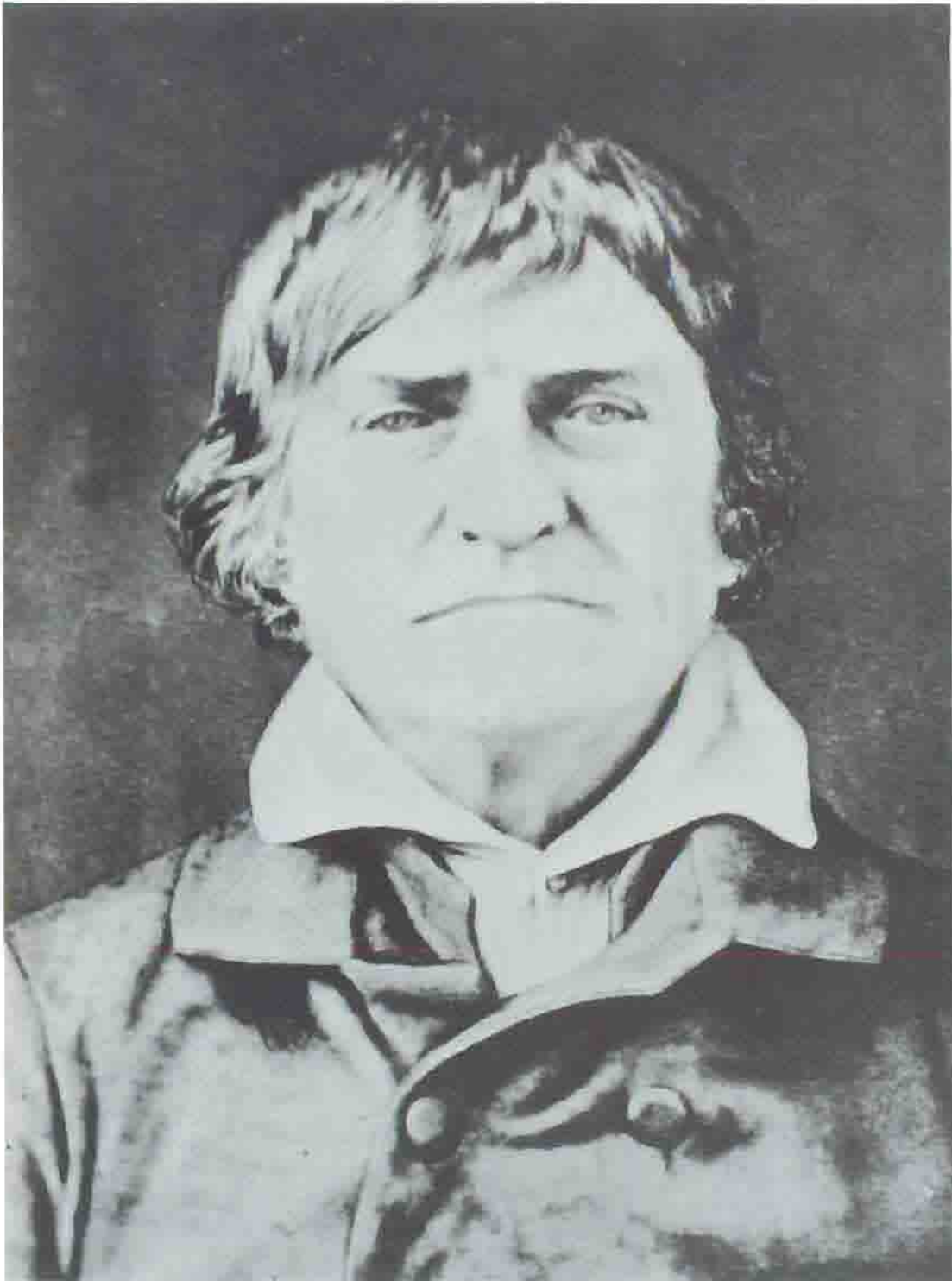


Figure 4. William Lindsay Long, who constructed White Haven around 1812. Photographer Martin Schweig. *Courtesy Missouri Historical Society*

CHAPTER FOUR

From Point Pleasant to West Point:

The Childhood and Education of Ulysses Grant

Hiram Ulysses Grant was born in Point Pleasant, Ohio, on April 27, 1822. A typical midwestern boy with a talent for horses and mathematics, he grew into manhood under the permissive hands of his parents. At seventeen, he entered the United States Military Academy, where he received one of the best educations available in the United States at the time. He excelled in mathematics, art, and horsemanship, and he enjoyed reading novels.

Throughout his childhood and young adult life, Ulysses Grant revealed glimpses of the great man he would become. He had a natural affection for animals, and he developed this affection into his daring skill on horseback. He demonstrated ingenuity and determination when he was faced with challenges, using his intellect to overcome physical tasks that others might have considered too big to tackle. In this way, he loaded wagons full of logs by himself as a little boy, and he overwhelmed a garrison of soldiers as a young man. Ulysses Grant the man had a vision of his surroundings and his world that was unique. That vision first appeared in the eyes and mind of a little boy in Ohio.

Jesse and Hannah Grant's Son

Early biographers described the Grant family as traditional. His family had roots in Massachusetts, where his first American ancestor arrived in 1630.¹ In recent generations, the family unit had been unstable. Jesse Root Grant, Ulysses' father, was a son of Noah Grant and his second wife, Rachel Kelly. Noah started his family in Connecticut, where he had two sons. His first wife died, however, and he left one son in Connecticut for unknown reasons and moved to Pennsylvania with the other one, Peter. He next married Rachel Kelly and moved to Ohio, where they added seven more children to his family. Rachel was the anchor of the Grant family, and upon her death in 1805 her seven children were virtually orphaned. Noah placed his five oldest children with neighbors and took the two youngest to his adult son Peter's home in Maysville, Kentucky.

1. Gustave Anjou, *The Grant-Dent Family* (n.p.: Gustave Anjou, 1906); Ulysses S. Grant, *Memoirs and Selected Letters: Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant; Selected Letters, 1839-1865* (New York: Library of America, 1990) [hereafter USG, *Memoirs*], 17-18; Genealogy file, Ulysses S. Grant Papers, Missouri Historical Society. Ulysses was seventh-generation American, being descended from a Highland Scottish clan similar to James Mackay's. Matthew Grant landed at Nantucket, Massachusetts, May 30, 1630.

Eleven-year-old Jesse, Noah and Rachel's eldest child, was sent to live with a Judge Tod in Youngstown, Ohio, until he was "grown." At that time, he went to Maysville, Kentucky, to live with his half-brother Peter, who was already established in business. Peter Grant had a tannery, and it was there that Jesse learned the trade. He did not settle long with his brother, however, and for a time he lived with Owen Brown, father of the infamous John Brown, in Deerfield. He also lived in Ravenna and in Point Pleasant, where he established his own tannery and married Hannah Simpson on June 24, 1821.

Hannah was born in Pennsylvania but moved with her family to Clermont County, Ohio, in 1819. Hiram Ulysses Grant, their first son, was born April 27, 1822, a scant ten months after they married. Within a few months of Ulysses' birth, Jesse re-established his tanning business in Georgetown, Ohio, and that was where Ulysses grew up.²

Jesse Grant received little formal education, but he was well known in the area for his frequent correspondence with the local newspapers. He was an opinionated man, and apparently he was respected by other members of his community because he was chosen master of his Masonic Lodge in the 1820s and became the first mayor of Bethel, Ohio, in 1851.³ Jesse was a prosperous businessman, and he continued to expand his business interests into the upper midwest throughout his working years.

Jesse and Hannah Grant allowed Ulysses a wide degree of freedom even as a young child.⁴ Hannah's relationship with her son is an enigma. When Ulysses was three, neighbors saw him playing under the legs of horses. Some biographers have used this as an example to suggest that Grant was always at ease with them. "Horses understand Ulyss," said Hannah. But she did nothing to shield her young son from the hooves of the massive animals. Hannah also was described as a "devout Methodist," yet Ulysses was never baptized into her faith.⁵ By Methodist tradition, he should have been baptized as an infant. He did

2. USG, *Memoirs*, 17-18; Thomas Maitland Marshall, "An Early Chapter in the Life of General Grant." typed draft ms., a lecture given before Missouri Historical Society, April 27, 1922, 2.

3. The lodge was the Masonics, No. 72, founded January 17, 1824, by Jesse Grant, among others. Jesse was elected Master in 1827. *Masonic Calendar*, 1827, Georgetown Lodge No. 72, F.& A.M., Georgetown Chapter No. 52, R.A.M., White Oak Chapter No. 193, Eastern Star, Ulysses S. Grant Association, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale [hereafter SIUC-USGA]. W.E. Thompson, January 22, 1930, in the *Bethel Journal*, Grant Memorial Edition, April 25, 1930, 5 in SIUC-USGA.

Jesse Grant has been portrayed as an embarrassment to his famous son because he became "eccentric" as he grew old. Ascribing these characteristics to Jesse as a younger man, however, is ahistorical and does not allow for the long span of human growth and decline from Ulysses's birth to the 1860s. It is significant to Ulysses's life story that his father was well-respected during his childhood and years of early development.

4. William McFeely, *Grant: A Biography* (New York: Norton, 1981), 8-9, suggests that Hannah had a mental disorder, but correspondence between the Grants throughout Ulysses's lifetime contradicts McFeely's theory.

5. Marshall, 2.

not attend church regularly as a boy, and, although some biographers have offered tone-deafness and distaste for church music as an excuse, it would appear more likely that his attendance was not important to his parents.⁶

As far as Hannah's intellectual and emotional capacity, she was reported to have been "pure-minded" and "simple-hearted," but she may have been simple-minded and pure-hearted.⁷ Hannah never visited Washington while her son was president, and authors have offered various explanations, from some kind of mental problem to country simplicity or an estrangement between Hannah and her son. Evidence exists that Julia and Ulysses' children were required to spend time with their Grant grandmother and that Julia wanted Hannah to visit them, so apparently Ulysses and his mother did get along.⁸ Hannah may have merely wanted to avoid the glare of publicity that plagued her son and daughter-in-law. Without additional evidence which has not surfaced in one hundred years of research, the relationship between Hannah Grant and her son Ulysses will remain ambiguous.

Jesse was lenient with Ulysses, but he was not indifferent as Hannah may have been. Early on, Ulysses expressed his disgust with the tanning business, so Jesse allowed him to plow and haul instead of working among the animal carcasses. Ulysses also was allowed time to go to school, and Jesse even sent him to live with an aunt so that he could attend classes beyond what his local schools offered. Perhaps Jesse indulged Ulysses with an education because his son was obedient and willing to do what chores were given him. Jesse wanted to give Ulysses and his other children financial stability and education, things Jesse did not have in his own childhood.

An Ohio Boyhood

Information about the boyhood of Ulysses S. Grant abounds but sorting fact from fiction is a difficult task. One source refers to Ulysses as "restless" while another implies that

6. Nicholas Smith claimed that Grant did attend church as a boy, but as he was writing for a religious publisher he would have hesitated to say otherwise. Nicholas Smith, *Grant, the Man of Mystery* (Milwaukee: Young Churchman Co., 1909), 13. A standard joke about Grant and music was that he could recognize only two songs: "Yankee Doodle" and not "Yankee Doodle." In contradiction, Julia mentioned on more than one occasion that Ulysses asked her to sing or complimented her piano playing. See, for example, JDG, *Memoirs*, 56.

7. These words were attributed to Ulysses S. Grant when speaking to the minister before his mother's funeral in 1883. It seems unlikely that these were his exact words, but the irony of them with the possible reality is striking. In opposition to the idea that Hannah may have been simple-minded is that it was reported in her obituary that she read the newspaper the day she died. See Nicholas Smith, 373.

8. Nicholas Smith, 373.

he could rarely muster the energy or interest for boyhood games.⁹ Many biographers have portrayed his early life as serious, fraught with hard work and embarrassment from his father's "garrulousness." Grant did work hard, but by his own admission he did not work at what he did not enjoy. He detested his father's tanyard, so as a young boy he took over the family farming and hauling to stay away from the carcasses and hides.¹⁰ Ulysses came from a family of which he could be proud. Jesse Grant was an outspoken man. He was a regular correspondent with local newspapers, but citizens admired him rather than laughed at him for it. His opinions won him two positions in the local social and governmental structures, positions that spanned a quarter of a century. He was a successful businessman, self-made in every sense of the word, and literate because he desired knowledge. At the time Ulysses was growing up, his father was an admirable character and hardly a source of shame for his son.

Ulysses was an obedient son and student. One of the Georgetown schools Grant attended was a one-room brick schoolhouse that stood on a ridgetop on the edge of town. After the Civil War, one of his teachers from Georgetown described his school days. Grant's teacher remembered him as having a "quiet demeanor, studious attention to his books, and remarkably good behavior."¹¹ His father reported to the *New York Ledger* that his son never swore, and never was "addicted to any pleasure, except horsemanship and marbles."¹² Ulysses no doubt was a typical Ohio boy.

~~Ulysses' favorite indulgence throughout his life was horses, and, as his mother~~ observed when he was a toddler, he understood the animals and they understood him. A few amazing stories circulated about Ulysses' equestrian exploits. These tales are credible because they compliment well-documented stories from his young adulthood.¹³ When he was five, Ulysses learned how to ride a horse standing on its back. By the time he was nine, he could ride "at breakneck speed standing on one foot." He conquered a circus horse that had thrown every other attempted rider, winning admiration for not only staying on the beast but for doing it with a monkey on his back! It was Grant's horsemanship that got him out of the tanyard and into the countryside to plow and haul. Jesse Grant allowed him to travel to near-by communities, and Ulysses often took travelers for hire.¹⁴

9. McFeely, 11; Chambers Baird in Hamlin Garland *Ulysses S. Grant: His Life and Character* (New York: Doubleday and McClure Co., 1898), 27-28.

10. John Fuller found the roots of Grant's hatred of war in the tanyard. J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957), 64.

11. Isaac Lynch to Philip B. Irving, September 26, 1865, unidentified clipping in SIUC-USGA.

12. Paraphrased in Edward D. Mansfield, *A Popular and Authentic Life of Ulysses S. Grant* (Cincinnati: R.W. Carroll and Co., 1868), 24.

13. See in particular Grant's West Point equestrian record and his ride through enemy lines to get ammunition for his company while at the battle of Monterrey in the Mexican War, below, Chapter Four.

14. Marshall, 2.

Ulysses' admiration for horses expanded into a desire to purchase them. During Grant's lifetime, reporters told and retold the story of young Ulysses' first horse purchase. According to some of his neighbors, Ulysses begged his father to let him purchase a particular horse that he had admired on a local farm. Jesse agreed, and he gave Ulysses instructions as to how much he should spend. Ulysses was to offer twenty dollars first; if the farmer would not take that, he could bargain up a little, but he should not give him more than twenty-five dollars. Ulysses rode to the farmer's house, and he told the man what he wanted. The farmer asked him how much Jesse had told him to offer. Ulysses replied exactly as his father had told him: that he was to first offer twenty, then twenty-one, and so on up to twenty-five. The farmer, of course, demanded the twenty-five dollars.

Here the various stories of the trade diverge. One tradition had it that Ulysses paid the highest price. Another story said that Ulysses concluded the trade by informing the farmer that, although his father had told him he could give twenty-five, after seeing the horse up close he wasn't sure if he would even give twenty, and in the end paid the lower price. This story circulated so many times that Grant chose to set the record straight in his own *Memoirs*. There, he reported matter-of-factly that he paid the higher price and learned a valuable lesson. He also said it was a great joke among his friends, but obviously not one so painful that he hesitated to repeat it himself.¹⁵

While hauling for his father, Ulysses sometimes displayed resourcefulness that foreshadowed the qualities he would display as a great general. When he was about twelve, his Jesse Grant sent him into the woods one day to pick up some logs that had been cut. Some men would meet him to load them, and then he could drive the logs back, his father said. No men were there when Ulysses arrived. Rather than wait for them or drive back without the wood, Ulysses used the horses to drag the logs to two fallen trees, and then he rolled the logs up the trees into the wagon. On this occasion and others later in life, his ingenuity compensated for his small stature, and he drove home "triumphant."¹⁶

Ulysses learned valuable life skills working in his father's business as a teamster and as a driver for area residents. He also received what was a superior education at the time.

15. Lloyd Lewis, one of the most scholarly biographers of Grant, addressed the horse story in a letter to USG's grandson Ulysses S. Grant III. He commented that if the incident had been "bitter and galling and had marked him, and made him bashful and silent, he would not have been reciting [it] with humor in his autobiography." Lloyd Lewis to Ulysses S. Grant III, October 10, 1947 in SIUC-USGA. Because almost every Grant biographer from 1864 to 1885 reported some version of this story, individual references are not noted here.

16. Linus Pierpont Brockett, *Our Great Captains: Grant, Sherman, Thomas, Sheridan, and Farragut* (New York: Charles B. Richardson, 1865), 12-13. Brockett listed his source as Jesse Grant, but other authors reported this story from neighbors and all indications are that it is true, if exaggerated.

The Three R's

When Ulysses completed the course of study available to children at the little bluff school in Georgetown, the idea of graded schools, those in which students are separated according to age and ability, had not been proposed by education vanguard Henry Barnard.¹⁷ Ulysses studied in the one-room school at Georgetown, with the echoes of his fellow students' recitations always abuzz in his ears, from 1827 or 1828 through 1836. At Georgetown, he learned the most basic concepts--reading, writing, and a little math. Jesse Grant saw sufficient promise in his son, however, to want to offer him more than this rudimentary education. He sent Ulysses to Maysville, Kentucky, to the Maysville Seminary in 1836 and 1837. Professors Richardson and Rand, two college-educated men, ran the school. Grant's most significant accomplishment at Maysville was his membership with the Philamathean Society, a debating and declamation club. Grant usually chose to pay a fine rather than give a dramatic or pompous declamation, although he readily debated his classmates. The minute book of the society revealed a few of the issues that Ulysses addressed. Grant agreed that Santa Anna should not have been free after he was captured by the Texans, that women "wield greater influence in society" than men, "that intemperance is a greater evil than war," and that Socrates had acted admirably in not escaping prison when given the opportunity. He disagreed with the statement "that it would not be just and politic to liberate the slaves" at that point in time.¹⁸

Two important facts about Grant emerge from the account of his activities with the Philamathean Society. First, Grant was quite capable of speaking publicly and even of carrying on debates when he chose to do so. As the Civil War's frequently lauded general and as president, Grant won fame as the "silent man" who could not make speeches. Grant's record at Maysville suggests that it was his will rather than his ability which prevented pontification. Secondly, Grant thought in depth about the major issues of his day. He was familiar with the events leading up to the Mexican War (in which he was one of the young heroes a decade later). He already developed ideas consistent with abolition, although he himself may never have understood the political ramifications of his disagreement with human bondage in nineteenth-century America. Grant also recognized the power that women held in society, even though their sphere might be restricted to the home. Grant's wife Julia fit this image of womanhood. Without the vote or any public voice, Julia was instrumental in her husband's ascent to the White House. The Jesse Grant and Frederick Dent, Sr., households appear to have been run by the strong women of the

17. David Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974), 13-27.

18. Franklin Spencer Edmonds, *Ulysses S. Grant* (Philadelphia: G.W. Jacobs and Co., 1915), 26-27. One of Edmonds' sources was the papers of Hamlin Garland, who acquired the Philamathean Society minute book for the year Grant attended the school.

family; it was the Grant and Dent daughters who insured that food was on the table and that money was sufficient to pay for the food.¹⁹

Ulysses returned to his little school in Georgetown for the 1837-1838 term, but from 1838 to 1839, he attended the Presbyterian Academy in Ripley, Ohio. In Ripley, Grant boarded with a tanner friend of his father Jesse. A classmate, Chambers Baird, remembered that "Lyss" was "excellent in mathematics," which the two boys studied together. Their course also included beginning Latin, English grammar and literature, philosophy, and geography, including "pictures of Indians and Chinese." Chambers reported that Ulysses enjoyed boating and skating. He also played ball, "and was good at it." Ulysses wrestled for fun, but he never fought in anger. "Everybody liked him," his classmate remembered, "for he was so amiable and friendly and helpful."²⁰ Chambers' recollections of Grant are useful because he indicates that Grant was as personable and outgoing at Ripley as he proved to be later in life when among close friends.

School in the early nineteenth century generally lasted only a few months out of the year, so young Ulysses had plenty of time for work and socializing back in Georgetown. He took advantage of the freedom his father gave him with his horses to win the favor of the young ladies of the area. A neighbor reported that "He was one of the few boys who had a team and sleigh at their disposal, and he took the girls a-sleighbing." The girls liked him because, although he was not showy, he was "kind and considerate of them, never rude and boisterous, and never derisive."²¹ Grant probably directed his attentions in the spring of 1839 toward Mary King of Georgetown, to whom he sent "a love acrostic" quoted from a poem. Gossip around Georgetown indicated that it was affection for Mary King that made Ulysses hesitant to leave for college at West Point.²² But leave he did.

Ulysses Grant did not apply to the United States Military Academy. His father applied for him, and, in accordance with the law he applied through United States Representative Thomas Hamer. Hamer and Jesse Grant had once been great friends, but most recently they had had marked political disagreements, so Jesse was surprised when

19. Correspondence among Grant family members and casual references in Julia's memoirs indicate the degree to which the women involved themselves in family money matters. For example, Julia made it clear that her father spent more time sitting on the piazza at White Haven than he did running the farm. Ulysses noted his sisters' penurious planning for meals. See Chapter Eight. JDG, *Memoirs*, 42.

20. Baird in Garland, 27-28. USG, *Memoirs*, 21-22.

21. Garland, 15.

22. Garland, 29-30; Catalogue: "Oliver Barrett" (1950), 124, SIUC-USGA.



Map 3.
Ulysses Grant's Childhood and Young Adult Life,
1822-1860

Hamer agreed and made the recommendation to the secretary of war.²³ A position was open from his district because the previous appointee had failed and been required to withdraw.²⁴ Perhaps it was for this reason that a few Georgetown residents questioned Ulysses' possibilities for success at the elite East Coast school. Others expected great things from their Ulysses and envied him.²⁵

The United States Military Academy and U.S. Grant

At the age of 17, Grant entered West Point the last week of May 1839.²⁶ He was excited to travel east, but he had no idea of making a career out of the army. He had told his father that perhaps he would enjoy being a riverboat captain, or even a farmer. Consequently, he dawdled on his way to the academy, spending time enjoying the big cities through which he traveled.²⁷ Entering with Ulysses were one hundred other privileged

23. The appointment opened the way for the rift between Hamer and Jesse Grant to heal, and they returned to their former friendship until Hamer's death in the Mexican War. USG, *Memoirs*, 28-29. Grenville M. Dodge, *Personal Recollections of Presidents Abraham Lincoln, General Ulysses S. Grant and General William T. Sherman* (Council Bluffs, Iowa: Monarch Printing Co., 1914), 33.

24. Grant himself told this story regarding a childhood friend of his, Bartlett Bailey, whose father was so angry about his son's dismissal that he forbid him to come home. Grant told the story openly, as if it should have brought no shame on Bailey, but he did comment that no one in Georgetown knew of Bailey's failure until Grant's appointment. "There were no telegraphs in those days to disseminate news rapidly... and above all, there were no reporters prying into other people's private affairs," Grant snapped. USG, *Memoirs*, 28.

Grant proudly reported that Bailey went on to serve in the Civil War, although he died in his first battle. He added that Georgetown, opposed to Abraham Lincoln deeply, nevertheless "furnished the Union army four general officers and one colonel, West Point graduates, and nine generals and field officers of Volunteers..." USG, *Memoirs*, 30. Bethel, Ohio, to which his family moved while he was at West Point, was a contrast to Georgetown. Bethel was a depot on the Underground Railroad. W.E. Thompson, January 22, 1930, in the *Bethel Journal*, Grant Memorial Edition, April 25, 1930, SIUC-USGA.

25. Biographer McFeely reported that Georgetown residents made fun of Grant and predicted he would flunk out. James M. Sanderson, a Georgetown resident, remembered a different reaction: "Of his going to West Point I have a distinct recollection. How we envied him when we heard... Hamer had appointed him to the Military Academy, although I was older than Ulysses. The lad did not say much about the appointment himself until a few days before he started for the East. We all thought him about the biggest [greatest] boy we had ever seen." (Sanderson was a few years older than Grant.) James M. Sanderson to the *New York Times*, July 30, 1885, in "Grant's Early Years," *Ulysses S. Grant Association Newsletter*, IV: 3 (April 1967), 20.

26. Nicholas Smith, 21. Grant stated in his *Memoirs* that he reported May 30 or 31. USG, *Memoirs*, 31. Apparently he had had some free time in the town, because he registered at the hotel there May 26.

27. USG, *Memoirs*, 29.

young men representing every state in the country.²⁸ Their educational backgrounds varied region by region, with young men from the Midwest--Grant's own territory--having the least possibility for success in the four-year college program.²⁹

It was on the way to West Point that Hiram Ulysses Grant became Ulysses Hiram Grant. A relative of Grant's had kindly used tacks to write Grant's initials on his trunk. When Ulysses saw the letters, he realized that it probably was not prudent to begin his military career with the initials HUG. He rearranged the letters, and he registered at Roe's Hotel as Ulysses Hiram Grant.³⁰ When he reported to West Point that last week in May, he lost the name Hiram forever.³¹ Thomas Hamer, having been estranged from the Grant family for some time when he wrote Ulysses' appointment, mistakenly gave his name as Ulysses S. Grant, thinking that Ulysses was his first name and that his middle name was Simpson, his mother's maiden name. Grant's first taste of army bureaucracy taught him that he had to begin West Point as Ulysses S., or he had to get a new appointment. As Hamer was no longer in Congress, a new appointment would be difficult.³² So he simply consented and took a new name--one that would aid him throughout his career, for the mysterious U.S. became "Uncle Sam" at West Point, "Unconditional Surrender" after the fall of Forts Henry and Donelson, and "United States" in presidential campaigns.³³

William Tecumseh Sherman claimed credit for nicknaming U.S. Grant "Uncle Sam" on his first day at West Point. There was a large board with all of the entering cadets' names on it, and Sherman was one of the eager upperclassmen who stood around the board, ready to haze the new students with jokes about their names. The name stuck, and for several years the West Point crowd knew him best as Sam Grant. Several of Grant's classmates who entered with him later served under him or in opposition to him in the Civil

28. Everett Chamberlain, *The Struggle of '72: The Issues and Candidates of the Present Political Campaign* (Chicago, Philadelphia: Union Publishing Co.; San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft and Co., 1872), 116, gives the number of cadets entering with Grant as one hundred, although other authors have given the number as "more than one hundred." The number is significant because Grant's final rank in his class--21 out of 39--does not accurately reflect his competition. Grant in fact was 21 out of the 39 who survived the cut from 100. These statistics were misused by anti-Grant author Augustus W. Alexander in *Grant As a Soldier* (St. Louis: Augustus W. Alexander, 1887), 26-27. A more extensive description of Grant's final rank is given below.

29. Joel Tyler Headley, *Grant and Sherman; Their Campaigns and Generals* (New York: E.B. Treat and Co., 1865), 38.

30. Garland, 31-32. Grant registered at Roe's Hotel May 26, 1839.

31. Grant entered the last week of May 1839. Nicholas Smith, 21.

32. Garland, 30-32.

33. Joel Tyler Headley, *The Life and Travels of General Grant* (Philadelphia: Hubbard Bros., 1879), 32.

War, among them William James Hardee, Rufus Ingalls, and, Frederick Dent, Grant's roommate his last year.³⁴

Grant's life at the academy was like that of the other cadets. He studied languages (French was his worst subject), science, math, and other traditional college courses.³⁵ In three courses he was exceptional. The first was mathematics, as it had been in his younger days. The second area in which he excelled was painting. Cadets were required to take art so that they could learn how to draw landscapes for battle plans. Grant's teacher had long since been bored with the landscape of the Hudson River, and so he encouraged his students to paint the skylines of Europe and the paths of Indians and fur-traders. Grant had a wonderful style in pencil, watercolor, and oil, and had he been born under different stars he might have been admired as a great and innovative American painter who broke free from established styles. He was pleased with his work, so he sent one of his paintings to Mary King of Georgetown. Four decades later he gave his friend Adolph Borie another one of the paintings that he had done at West Point.³⁶

As a cadet, Grant also earned honors in horsemanship, "in which he surpassed every other cadet."³⁷ The program was begun his second year at the academy, and he quickly demonstrated that his small stature (just five feet one inches when he entered), his light body, and his earlier experience on circus horses made him a superior rider.³⁸ James B.

34. George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., from Its Establishment, March 16, 1802, to the Army Reorganization of 1866-67*, 2nd ed., II (1841-1867), (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1868), 72-99.

35. USG, *Memoirs*, 32-33, *passim*. Hostile biographer Augustus W. Alexander sharply criticized the cadets' education at West Point, saying that it prepared them for no profession, taught them no strategy, and taught them little of the three R's. Alexander, 7-8, 26-27, *passim*. With the exception of his assessment of the value of studying ancient warfare, Alexander could not have been further from the truth. The academic and military program at West Point when Grant attended assured him of a superior education to that of most other Americans at the time.

36. G.W. Childs, *Recollections of General Grant, with an Account of the Presentation of the Portraits of Generals Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan at the United States Military Academy, West Point* (Philadelphia: Collins, 1890), 6-7. Several of Grant's paintings are reproduced in monochrome in Ulysses S. Grant, *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, ed. John Y. Simon (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press; London and Amsterdam: Feffer and Simons, Inc., 1967) I, 13-19. Hereafter all references to the published Grant papers will be abbreviated as *Papers* with appropriate volume and page numbers, e.g. *Papers*, I, 13-19. Grant's art instructor was Andrew Weir, a prominent American painter.

37. Marshall, 3.

38. Albert D. Richardson, *A Personal History of Ulysses S. Grant* (Hartford, Connecticut: American Publishing Co.; Newark, New Jersey: Bliss and Co.; Chicago: G. and C.W. Sherwood; San Francisco: R.J. Trumbull and Co., 1868, 1869), 86; Frank A. Burr, *A New, Original and Authentic Record of the Life and Deeds of General U.S. Grant: The Complete Story of the Man, the Soldier, and the Statesman*; introduction by J.P. Newman (Philadelphia and Chicago: National Publishing Co., 1885), 83. Grant was about 5'7" when he graduated and grew another inch to reach his adult height of 5'8".

Fry, who entered West Point as Grant was graduating, remembered his impressive demonstration on his horse, York.

One afternoon in June, 1843... I wandered into the riding hall where the members of the graduating class were going through their final mounted exercises before a large assemblage of spectators. When the regular services were completed... the riding-master placed the leaping bar higher than a man's head, and called out, "Cadet Grant"! A clean-faced, slender, blue-eyed young fellow, weighing about one hundred twenty pounds, dashed from the ranks on a powerfully built horse and galloped down the opposite side of the hall. As he turned at the farther end and came into the straight stretch across which the bar was placed, the horse increased his pace, and measuring his strides for the great leap before him, bounded into the air and cleared the bar, carrying his rider as if man and beast had been welded together. The spectators were breathless! "Very well done, sir!" growled old [H.R.] Hershberger [the riding master].³⁹

Grant jumped either six feet five inches or five feet six inches, depending on which source one reads. The height stood as a record for several decades at West Point and was reported to be the second-highest jump on record in the United States at that time.⁴⁰

Grant participated in the usual extracurricular antics of college students at West Point. The only fight he is ever reported to have engaged in was with Frederick Dent, his senior-year roommate. Arguing about the relative merits of the North and South, they reached an impasse. Determined to defend their respective regions, they began to strip for a fight. Luckily, one of them started to laugh, and the fight ended there.⁴¹ Grant was better known on campus as a man of verbal battles than for his fighting. He was a member of the Dialectic Society, the "only literary and debating association at the Academy," and he served as its president in his senior year.⁴² Like his participation in the Philamathean Society at Ripley, his presidency of the Dialectic Society at West Point makes it difficult to believe that Grant could not make a speech when he chose to do so.

39. Nicholas Smith, 28-29.

40. The jump was more likely 6'5", as Fry reported it was higher than a man's head. Garland, 51; Marshall, 3.

41. Edmonds, 45. Frederick Tracy Dent went with the Union in the Civil War, raising question as to the validity of this anecdote.

42. Edmonds, 45.

In the summer of 1841, Grant received permission along with the other cadets to take a three-month vacation. He traveled back to Ohio, where his family took up residence in Bethel. Ulysses' traveling companion from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to Ohio was a young woman named Kate Lowe. The two formed a fond friendship, and Ulysses took up correspondence with her father thereafter. Kate's presence probably eased Ulysses' return to his boyhood haunts, because his sweetheart there, Mary King, was involved with another young man in his absence. Ulysses spent the entire summer riding through the countryside, visiting old friends, and resting from the rigor and regimen of college life. He wrote of the summer of 1841 in his *Memoirs* that "Those ten weeks were shorter than one week at West Point."⁴³

Returning to school, Grant stood well in most of his classes, although he might have been capable of doing better. Grant tended to be distracted by novels when he should have been attending to other duties, and he had little patience with the rules and regulations of military life.⁴⁴ Father George "Dragon" Deshon, who graduated second in Grant's class, reported that Sam "got a great deal of demerits for trifling carelessness in military matters," which lowered his class rank. Deshon reported that Grant was a perfect gentleman if not a perfect officer. "He was free from all profanity, and his conversation was pure. He did not drink liquor or use tobacco. One of his characteristic traits was a great straightforwardness and a scrupulous regard for truth."⁴⁵ Hamlin Garland, one of Grant's first scholarly biographers, reported that Sam's greatest fault was being late--he was late to church, late to parade, late to drill.⁴⁶ Garland discovered in the West Point records that Grant also once sat down at his post between five and six o'clock in the morning, for which he received eight demerits. Sam was hesitant to report other students for breaking rules when he was a squad leader, and twice he got demerits for failing to make reports. One biographer told a story--probably apocryphal--regarding Grant's demerits; he claimed that Grant was thrown from a horse and received ten demerits and a wink from the riding master for dismounting without permission. There was only one instance when Grant received demerits for bad behavior; he once "spoke disrespectfully to his superior officer on parade." Garland had difficulty believing that Grant had been at fault, and he explained that "the provocation must

43. USG, *Memoirs*, 32-33. Kate Lowe was not the only young lady who caught Ulysses' eye in Bethel. W.E. Thompson reported that he saw Grant riding with Josephine Morris while on leave. W.E. Thompson, January 22, 1920, in the *Bethel Journal*, Grant Memorial Edition, April 25, 1930, 5, in SIUC-USGA.

44. USG, *Memoirs*, 32; Dodge, 33.

45. Despite his college nickname of "Dragon," Deshon became a Catholic priest. George Deshon in Nicholas Smith, 25.

46. Garland, 43. Garland was quoting awkwardly worded and unidentified records of the United States Military Academy. This author took the liberty of changing Garland's "ats" to "tos."

have been very great to lead to this. The probabilities are the officer was mistaken."⁴⁷ Blatant disrespect toward his superiors was never evinced at any other time in Grant's life. He definitely was not inclined to enjoy military discipline, however, making him a better leader in war because he readily departed from tradition when it was expedient to do so.

Grant's final standing at the military academy was twenty-first in his class of thirty-nine, pared down from the one hundred with whom he entered.⁴⁸ His rank was composed of an average of his grades, calculated with the total number of demerits he had received throughout his career there.⁴⁹ Grant noted in his *Memoirs* that he had been sick with a severe cough that he called "Tyler's grip" the last semester of his senior year. One biographer noted this fact and stated that Grant's rank was hurt by this illness.⁵⁰ His "trifling carelessness" toward the military regimen also lowered his position and probably was more to blame.⁵¹ Regardless, Grant's standing at graduation was admirable, and he was far

47. Garland, 43. Grant, incidentally, resented that at the United States Military Academy cadets were forced to attend church. U.H. Grant to R. McKinstry Griffith, September 22, 1839, *Papers*, I, 7.

48. Chamberlain, 116. Garland wrote that Grant entered with more than 100 cadets. Garland, 51.

49. Hamlin Garland gave a detailed account of Grant's record in Garland, 52-53. See also *Official Register of the U.S. Military Academy* [hereafter *Official Register*], June 1840-June 1843 (West Point: United States Military Academy, 1840, 1841, 1842, 1843).

50. USG, *Memoirs*, 34; Nicholas Smith, 30. Grant may have had bronchitis or pneumonia.

51. George Deshon quoted in Nicholas Smith, 25. McFeely, 16, stated that Grant did not enjoy West Point or the peacetime army because of the regimen and inactivity. McFeely inappropriately extrapolated from these assumptions that Grant liked war. Such was not the case. Grant flourished in war, although he despised it.

Nathaniel Lyon, who graduated from the USMA in 1841, provides an excellent point for comparison with Grant academically and regimentally. Nathaniel Lyon excelled in the upper-level engineering course that included "The Science of War" and in artillery (taught by his first cousin and close friend Minor Knowlton) but had a poor or average performance in most other courses. Yet Lyon graduated eleventh in his class of fifty-two because the USMA figured demerits into the class rank. Lyon received only 55 demerits *during his entire college career* and was always near the top of his class in behavior. The average number of demerits for all cadets *for a single year* the year Lyon graduated was 59, and Lyon's classmate Don Carlos Buell was ranked *last* in behavior of all 219 cadets that year with 193 demerits. (Any cadet with more than 200 demerits in a year was removed from the academy, and those cadets are not included here.) *Official Register*, June 1841 (West Point, New York: United States Military Academy, 1841), 18-21. Lyon's low number of demerits does not tell the entire story of his behavior at West Point. As a master of army rules, Lyon rarely received demerits for small offenses; his twelve senior year demerits were earned all at once for a second grade (serious) breach of conduct. Lyon's behavior problems repeatedly brought him under courts of inquiry throughout his military career. See Christopher Phillips, *Damned Yankee: The Life of General Nathaniel Lyon* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990), 22-26, *passim*.

Ulysses Grant, on the other hand, received a total of 290 demerits in his four years at the Academy, almost all of them for minor offenses, as discussed above. These numerous, minor demerits hurt his overall class rank. *Official Register*, June 1840, 18; *Official Register*, June 1841, 20; *Official Register*, June 1842, 20; *Official Register*, June 1843, 18.

ahead of his roommate Frederick Dent, who was thirty-third, and ahead of future Union general Rufus Ingalls, who ranked thirty-second. At graduation, Grant was squarely and comfortably in the middle of his class, and his magnificent jump on York distinguished him and made him memorable.

One West Point administrator claimed to have predicted greatness for him. "Professor Davis" told Assistant Professor of Ethics E.P. Scammon, "The smartest man in the class is little Grant!" One of Grant's fellow cadets, who went with the Confederacy at the outbreak of the Civil War, noted to other Confederates before Grant's appointment in the Union Army, "There is one West Pointer whom I hope the Northern people will not find out. I mean Sam Grant.... I should fear him more than any of their officers I have yet heard of. He is not a man of genius, but he is clear-headed, quick and daring."⁵²

Brevet Second Lieutenant Grant

Ulysses S. Grant (the name was in too many official records to shed it by that time) received his commission as brevet second lieutenant July 1, 1843.⁵³ He received leave for two months to return to his native Ohio and await notification of his assignment. Officers from West Point were granted their choices for assignment based on their rank in class, with the Corps of Engineers being considered the most choice position. The class previous to Grant's was considered exceptional in mathematics and engineering; therefore, there was only one position available in 1843 as engineer. The best ranked student selected it. Ulysses wanted to join the cavalry, but he knew his rank probably was not high enough to get the position. Instead he was assigned to the Fourth Infantry, and he ordered the appropriate uniform from his West Point tailor. He was excited to receive it because he remembered how imposing his hero Winfield Scott had looked in his uniform when he reviewed the cadets at West Point Ulysses' first year there.⁵⁴

When Ulysses' uniform arrived in Bethel, he tried it on proudly and went riding through the streets of Cincinnati, in hopes of attracting the attention of his friends--"particularly the girls," he wrote in his *Memoirs*. Instead he attracted the attention of an unkempt "little urchin," who looked upon Ulysses' polished garments and with either mirth or disdain--Grant did not make clear which--shouted "Soldier! will you work? No, sir-ee; I'll sell my shirt first!!" Back in Bethel, he was lampooned by a stableman who had donned

52. Edmonds, 46-47. No "Professor Davis" was on the staff of the United States Military Academy in 1842-43, but the Paymaster and Treasurer of the Academy during that school year was Charles Davies, and it was he no doubt who spoke to Professor Scammon. *Official Register*, June 1840-June 1843.

53. J.K. Larke and J. Harris Patton, *General U.S. Grant: His Early Life and Military Career with an Account of His Presidential Administration and Tour Around the World* (Deposit, New York: Phillips and Burrows, 1885), 30.

54. USG, *Memoirs*, 33-34.

a pair of blue pantaloons sewn with white strips down the side, intended to look like Grant's new uniform pants. The folks of Bethel enjoyed the joke; Grant did not. He came down a few pegs that day, realizing that a uniform alone would not make people respect him. The two incidents "gave [him] a distaste for military uniform that [he] never recovered from."⁵⁵ The events of the day also gave him an excuse to avoid pretentious costumes after he rose to general.

Ulysses Grant was a typical Midwestern boy who received an atypical opportunity for education. In the first twenty-one years of his life, Grant set the stage for his fame as warrior and statesman. He learned skills for life, and he demonstrated the ability to think for himself. A daredevil, a troubleshooter, an intellectual who retained a pragmatic approach toward life and its dilemmas: these were the developing man.

55. USG, *Memoirs*, 34-35.

CHAPTER FIVE

Love and War in Missouri and Mexico

Ulysses Grant's first army post after graduation was in St. Louis, Missouri, where he met and fell in love with Julia Dent. Before they could be married, the Mexican War began, and Grant had his first taste of battle. His thoughts of Julia and their love was a sustaining force for him as he watched his young friends die, and he dreamed of the time when he could return to St. Louis to marry her.

During the five years from 1843 to 1848, Grant began to weave the fabric of his adult life with the threads spun in his childhood. Ulysses found his childhood pleasure of equestrian activities useful for courting "Miss Julia" on the Gravois farm, and he recreated his daring exploits on horseback in Mexico. The "riting" Ulysses learned in school he used as a link between himself and Julia when they were separated. Julia introduced new textures into his life, and he knew that he would want to braid her threads with his into their fabric, when and if he returned from the war.

Grant reported to his first post, Jefferson Barracks, near St. Louis, Missouri, on September 30, 1843, and joined the Fourth Infantry. Many of his comrades were West Pointers he had known in his college days, so he took with him the nickname Sam. Like most of his comrades, he did not expect to remain in the army long.

Among his pursuits during the early days in St. Louis was reviewing his college mathematics. Grant corresponded with one of his former professors, Albert E. Church, about a possible detail as an assistant professor, and the professor responded favorably. Church said he would make the recommendation when the position became open.¹

Jefferson Barracks was at that time the largest military installation in the country, and soldiers there were unburdened by "vexatious rules or regulations." They were allowed to keep their own horses for personal use, and as long as they were present for roll-calls and drills they could come and go as they pleased. Sam Grant took his opportunity to travel the four or five miles to visit the family of his West Point roommate Fred Dent on their Gravois farm, White Haven.

1. Nicholas Smith, *Grant, The Man of Mystery* (Milwaukee: Young Churchman Co., 1909), 33; USG, *Memoirs*, 40. There were four assistant math professors at West Point when Grant attended. See *Official Records of the United States Military Academy* (West Point: United States Military Academy, 1840-1843).

Falling in Love with a Family, a Farm, and a Future Fiancée

The youngest Dent daughter, Emmy, was roaming the grounds of White Haven with several slave children the day Sam Grant first rode up to the picket fence and turnstile gate that separated the working area of White Haven from the Dent's country home. The little girl was immediately smitten by the young stranger in uniform sitting astride his horse (who apparently looked better to her than he had to the "urchin" of Cincinnati). He inquired for the Dent family, found he had the right house, and walked through the gate and up the front steps to introduce himself to the family as Fred's roommate.²

At home, he found Nellie, Emmy's fifteen-year-old sister, their charming and beautiful mother Ellen, and the old patriarch, "Colonel" Dent. Emmy and Nellie's brothers John and Lewis still lived at White Haven, but they were not at home that day. Their sister, Julia, was in the city staying with John and Caroline O'Fallon for several months. Over time at White Haven, Ulysses found the father, mother, sisters, and brothers he had never had in his own relatives. "As I found the family congenial," Grant wrote decades later, "my visits became frequent."³ He was invited to hunt with the Dent brothers.⁴ With other soldiers stationed at Jefferson Barracks, he attended parties in the Sappington neighborhood.⁵ He also rode horseback with Nellie, and her jealous younger sister believed they rode away to avoid the "sharp eyes of [Emmy] and [her] small cohort of 'black perils.'"⁶ Then, Julia returned from her season in the city.

In the small circle of St. Louis' young society in the early 1840s, it is difficult to believe that Grant had failed to meet his roommate's oldest sister from September 1843 to February 1844 when she returned to White Haven. Julia's cousin, James "Pete" Longstreet, who graduated a few years ahead of Grant at the United States Military Academy, claimed to have introduced the two of them at a party in St. Louis.⁷ One historian reported that

2. Emma Dent Casey, "When Grant Went A'Courtin'," manuscript, James F. Casey Collection, Ulysses S. Grant NHS [ULSG]; This piece was written by Julia's niece rather than by her sister, as some scholars originally believed.

3. Ulysses S. Grant, *Memoirs and Selected Letters: Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant; Selected Letters, 1839-1865*, Mary Drake McFeely and William S. McFeely, eds., Literary Classics of the United States Series (New York: Library of America, 1990), 36. [Hereafter USG, *Memoirs*].

4. Harry Hagen, *This Is Our St. Louis* (St. Louis: Knight Publishing Co., 1970) 185.

5. Hamlin Garland, *Ulysses S. Grant: His Life and Character* (New York: Doubleday and McClure Co., 1898) 59-60.

6. Emma Dent Casey, "When Grant Went A'Courtin'."

7. "Grant and Longstreet," *Ulysses S. Grant Association Newsletter*, II: 2 (January 1965).

Grant began to court Julia while she was still in the city.⁸ Their romance did not bloom, though, until the spring of 1844.

"I have heard him say," Emma Dent Casey, Jr., wrote, "that with him it was a case of love at first sight." Emma believed that Grant had never had any romance but that with Julia, "the one sweetheart of his life. Not even the boyish amours that usually precede a young man's real passion had ever been his." Julia "was the 'lady of his dreams,' the heroine of his romance."⁹ Of course, Grant had flirted with young Nellie, and he had fond memories of Mary King, who had his West Point drawing, and of Kate Lowe, with whom he traveled; but Emmy correctly perceived that from the point when Ulysses realized his love for Julia, all other girls were erased from his mind.

Grant reminisced about his courtship at White Haven in his *Memoirs*. His visits at White Haven became more frequent after Julia returned there, and he began to enjoy them more. The young couple's chief occupation was riding, for Julia was a skilled horsewoman.¹⁰ With Victorian prudishness Grant stated in his *Memoirs* that Julia's brothers or sisters accompanied the two on their rides. Their correspondence and the testimony of Julia's sister, however, indicates that they also spent significant time in privacy. Sometimes they joined their friends for a party or camp meeting.¹¹ Sometimes they chose to sit quietly on the banks of the Gravois, fishing for perch and catfish.¹² One day their ride led them to the cabin of an old black man who had seriously injured his foot while chopping wood. Ulysses and Julia worked as a team, gathering bark and herbs and tearing cloth to bind his wounds. His grateful family told the story to a newspaper reporter years later.¹³

Julia and Ulysses seemed to be made for each other, partners for life.¹⁴ Julia was charming, and, although she was not strikingly beautiful like her mother, she was not unattractive. Her frame was sturdy, strong, and probably trim because of her riding. Grant

8. Hagen, 185.

9. Casey, "When Grant Went A'Courtin'," 8.

10. Casey, "When Grant Went A'Courtin'," 15.

11. USG, *Memoirs*, 37. Emma's daughter, who ghost-wrote for her mother, reported that Emma complained that Ulysses and Julia kept slipping away when they were fishing with her, or that they would gallop away in the twilight hours. Casey, "When Grant Went A'Courtin'."

12. Casey, "When Grant Went A'Courtin'," 11.

13. "Grant's Courtship," *New York Daily Tribune*, November 8, 1896; reprinted from the *Midland Monthly*; clipping in the collection of SIUC-USGA.

14. Nicholas Smith, 44, highlighted the differences in background between Julia and Ulysses but concluded, "There was a lot of good sense as well as natural affection at the bottom of the marriage...." Frank Bristol, the minister who spoke at Julia's memorial service, would have disagreed with Smith and stated firmly that Julia was not "a flippant society belle" and for that reason she recognized the potential of Grant. Dr. Frank Bristol, "Honor to Mrs. Grant," unidentified clipping, SIUC-USGA.

was small in stature but athletic and handsome in his uniform.¹⁵ They gradually developed an intense devotion toward each other, although they did not fully acknowledge it until one day in May 1844.

"Ulys," as Julia called her young lieutenant, received permission for a three-week long leave of absence to visit his family in Ohio. He had just left town on May 1 when the Fourth Infantry was ordered to Fort Jessup, Louisiana, in anticipation of the war with Mexico over the annexation of Texas. A message was sent to him from the barracks, but it reached the docks too late for him to receive it. A friend from the Fourth sent him a letter of warning at his parents' house in Bethel, admonishing him not to open any other correspondence from St. Louis or the barracks until his leave was over; his friend packed Grant's trunk and arranged for its shipment with the rest of the Fourth Infantry. Grant luckily did not receive any orders while in Ohio, and at the end of his leave reported immediately to Jefferson Barracks. The commanding officer allowed him a few days leave before he had to head to Louisiana, and Grant set off at once for White Haven.

"There is an insignificant creek--the Gravois--between Jefferson Barracks and the place to which I was going, and at that day there was not a bridge over it from its source to its mouth," Grant explained. Ordinarily the Gravois was shallow enough to cross easily, but:

On this occasion it had been raining heavily, and when the creek was reached, I found the banks full to overflowing, and the current rapid. I looked at it a moment to consider what to do. One of my superstitions had always been when I started to go any where, or to do anything, not to turn back, or stop until the intended thing was accomplished.

Grant was going to propose to Julia, and the raging "insignificant" creek would not stand in his way. "So I struck into the stream, and in an instant the horse was swimming and I [was] being carried down by the current. I headed the horse toward the other bank and soon reached it, wet through and without [dry] clothes on that side of the stream." Grant continued on to White Haven, where in mis-fitting clothes borrowed from one of Julia's brothers he pledged his love and asked Julia to marry him.¹⁶

15. Albert D. Richardson, *A Personal History of Ulysses S. Grant* (Hartford: American Publishing Co., 1868). William McFeely described Julia as "stout" and as "having more neck than chin" as a young woman. Photographs of her in the early 1860s, however, indicate that this was not true, as Julia was trim and attractive even after having had four children and the passage of twenty years. Julia had slight strabismus (lazy or crossed eyes) so she rarely allowed anyone to photograph her from straight on. A photograph of her shortly before she died in which the photographer took a frontal view indicates that her eye problems were exaggerated; one eye is barely out of place. "Mrs. U.S. Grant Seriously Ill," December 14, 1902, unidentified clipping, SIUC-USGA. In contrast, McFeely acknowledged Julia's physical strength and that she was "a person of great determination." McFeely, 25-26.

16. USG, *Memoirs*, 38-39.

In her *Memoirs*, Julia pretended to have been a "very young" eighteen-year-old when Grant proposed. She was unprepared for marriage, she claimed. On the other hand, Julia had named one of her bedposts on her new bed after Ulysses, and she had dreamed of him. She remembered that he stayed a week at White Haven and only left there on May 22 to take her to a friend's wedding, where she was to be a bridesmaid. It was on the way to the wedding that he proposed that they should get married. She proposed that they should get engaged.¹⁷ With his removal to Louisiana, their engagement of more than four years began.

Moving South

Grant's days in preparation for and during the Mexican War were an odd conglomeration of passionate love letters, camp boredom, and exceptional military service. As he would do in his Civil War days, he could fight a battle, count the dead, and then quietly write Julia about his love for her and his day's work. He was earning a reputation in the service. Having displayed qualities of an efficient businessman, he was appointed quartermaster over his own objections; he spent most of the next ten years trying to get out of the position. He exhibited exceptional bravery in one battle, ingenuity in another, and humanity in a third. When the war was done, he toured the conquered country of Mexico and wrote Julia beautiful letters of what he observed.

Grant's Mexican War career is important because it was there that he first learned and exhibited, as his son Jesse later believed, "the rarer qualities through which he rose to eminence. Circumstances did not pitchfork father into prominence," Jesse determined. His father had not sought glory, but he had risen to fame from the same situation as hundreds of other men. "To my mind, not only the reason for, but the inevitability of, all that followed, lies plain to understanding in the history of his Mexican War service," Ulysses' youngest son wrote.¹⁸ It was in the Mexican War that the many skills and qualities Ulysses S. Grant had been learning all of his life solidified, and the man who would be hero at Appomattox and president of the United States was truly born.

Thomas Hart Benton, whose duel with Charles Lucas prompted Theodore and Anne Lucas Hunt to move to the Gravois farm in 1818, had strong ties with the Mexican War and the Dents; an aside on his involvement is worthwhile here. Senator Benton, who was by this time mature and known throughout the nation more for his years of public service than his dueling, figured prominently in intrigues by President James K. Polk to keep Maj. Gen.

17. Julia Dent Grant, *The Personal Memoirs of Julia Dent Grant (Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant)*, ed. John Y. Simon (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1975), 49-50. Garland embellished Ulysses and Julia's stories in a delightful if fictional account of Grant's proposal. Garland stated that while crossing the swollen Gravois, Julia told Ulysses that she was afraid and would "cling to" him if they went down. When they reached the other side safely, Ulysses asked Julia, "I wonder if you would cling to me all my life?" Garland, 63-64.

18. Jesse R. Grant, *In the Days of My Father, General Grant* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1925), 3-4.

Winfield Scott, the highest ranking general young enough for active duty, from rising to such prominence as to be able to steal the presidency from him.¹⁹ Polk attempted twice to replace Scott with Benton as commander of the armies, but opposition members in Congress successfully blocked him both times. Benton affected the Dents' involvement in the war. John Dent applied to Benton to use his influence to get him a position as an officer in the army during the war, and Benton appears to have obliged.²⁰ Some scholars have alleged that Frederick Dent, Sr., had Benton use his influence to remove Grant from St. Louis and Julia, but this seems unlikely because Grant's move to Louisiana was tied to the movement of a large portion of the United States Army and was part of the massing of troops in preparation for war.

Grant was stationed at Camp Salubrity near Natchitoches in central Louisiana in preparation for hostilities with Mexico over Texas. Texas had declared independence from Mexico in 1836, and its diplomats were negotiating to join the United States. President Polk believed that the eventual annexation would lead Mexico into war with the United States, and he was bringing troops to Louisiana in preparation to enter Texas and possibly Mexico.

Camp Salubrity was created shortly before Grant's arrival there. It was established to accommodate the overflow of soldiers from the nearby Fort Jessup. Salubrity was on a hill, about three miles from Natchitoches. Soldiers found life there expensive, and they could not afford to keep their own horses as they had in St. Louis. Soldiers tried to occupy their time by playing "brag," a card game similar to draw poker. Many of them were court martialed for filling their time in other ways, such as drinking, disobedience, and inattention to duty. Grant was not among this number. One of his chief occupations was studying his college mathematics textbooks. He still hoped that Professor Church from West Point would be able to have him reassigned to the assistantship there.²¹

The accommodations at Camp Salubrity were not elegant. In his early days there, Grant lived in a thin linen tent, which he described as resembling Julia's fishing tent and allowing rain to run right through. His food was cooked in the woods by an old servant woman, and he had a body servant who attended various needs--such as removing a "be-e-eg rattlesnake all twis' up roun'" in Grant's bed.²² When winter came, the soldiers put up crude huts made in the old French *poteaux en terre* style. They did so with shingles rather than plaster and *bouzzilage* to keep the weather from coming through the gaps between the

19. See Chapter Two for Benton's duel with Charles Lucas.

20. USG to JD, October 10, 1845, *Papers*, I, 57. Dent entered the war as a captain, served under Stephen J. Kearney in the far West, and was promoted to the rank of colonel.

21. "With Grant in Louisiana," *Kansas City [?]*, August 13, 1908, partially identified clipping, Grant Collection, MHS; Garland, 62.

22. "With Grant in Louisiana," *Kansas City [?]*, August 13, 1908, partially identified clipping in USG Papers, MHS.

poles. Grant's quarters were better than most because he managed to acquire some plank to put up a respectable shack.²³

From his quarters, Ulysses wrote Julia. His first interest was obtaining permission from the Dents for him and Julia to correspond. He felt it was too soon to ask "Colonel" Dent for her hand, and he told her that he would ask that permission the next time he saw Dent.²⁴ For the first few months Ulysses was stationed in Louisiana, he and Julia appear to have written each other in such a way that Julia's parents did not know they were corresponding. In September 1844, Ulysses sent a letter directly to Julia with another enclosed for her father. He asked that they be allowed to keep company by mail, and, although he never received a direct reply, he and Julia resumed their courtship in earnest and openly.²⁵

On the Gravois, Fighting for Julia

On March 1, 1845, the United States Congress voted to annex Texas. Ulysses knew that his unit, the Fourth Infantry, would be on the move toward hostile Mexican territory, so he requested leave to visit Missouri again. In April 1845, he traveled to White Haven, where he found Julia's father preparing for a trip east. In that year, there were few railroads to carry him rapidly across the country, so Dent's trip was considered dangerous. He wrote out his will before he left, and he took with him a friend, "Brand."²⁶ Lt. Ulysses Grant arrived on the scene of Dent's departure and sat down with him in the parlor of White Haven. Julia's sister Emmy peered through the window shutters and imagined the conversation as the two men discussed the future of the woman they both loved. Dent was concerned about Grant's life in the army. The Fourth had left St. Louis so quickly. A war was upon the nation. At how many posts would he be stationed in his life? Lieutenant Grant countered: war was rare. He did not plan on remaining on active duty in the army. His correspondence with Professor Church had been positive, and he had other possibilities in academia if that did not work.²⁷

Dent may have had other hesitations. Julia was still young, just nineteen. Dent was getting old, and he was suffering financially. His trip east was not for pleasure. He was going to argue his case for some contested land, and he may have been trying to regain

23. USG to JD, January 12, 1845, *Papers*, I, 41.

24. USG to JD, August 31, 1844, *Papers*, I, 36.

25. USG to JD, September 7, 1844, *Papers*, I, 37.

26. USG to JD, May 6, 1845, *Papers*, I, 43-44. Grant asked Julia if Brand had written them from the East, and from this one may assume that Brand was not one of the Dent slaves.

27. Garland, 62.

some of the legendary wealth of his Maryland ancestors.²⁸ Whether Grant or even the women of the Dent household knew this when the two men sat down in the parlor, one cannot know. It is not clear when Dent's visible losses began.²⁹ In 1840, he had only twelve slaves. He began mortgaging his land. His real estate deals were failing. Ulysses S. Grant was not poor, but he was not wealthy. A match with him would not have improved the standing of the whole Dent family as it would have if Julia had married one of her Sappington or Long neighbors or another man of one of St. Louis' old families, those with whom the Dents associated. Ulysses S. Grant was an admirable man with potential, but he was not an immediate solution for the Dents' financial problems. Any of these considerations could have been bothering Dent.³⁰ But he did not put his thoughts on paper. He simply left to go east without giving his explicit consent for Julia and Ulysses to be engaged.

Ulysses spent a blissful week or so at White Haven, and then he left to join his comrades in Texas. His question had not been answered by Dent, but he had received reassurance from Julia that her heart was his. "It seems very strange for me to be sitting here at Camp Salubrity writing to you when only a little more than one short week ago I was spending my time so pleasantly on the Gravois.... Have you heard yet from Col. Dent?" he queried.³¹ In his next letter, he told Julia, "Col. Dent told me he would write to me as soon as he returned from the East; if he has not done it yet, wont you remind him of his promise[?]"³²

Ulysses knew that his regiment was likely to be on the move soon. He corresponded with Julia about the prospects of being stationed together with Fred on the Rio Grande. "That will be the time for Fred. to prove himself a second Napoleon as you always said he would," Grant wrote Julia.³³ While Grant looked forward to seeing his old roommate again,

28. See Chapter Three. Dent traveled to Washington to attempt to solidify his claim on two pieces of disputed land. The land included the main house of White Haven.

29. As discussed in Chapter Three, St. Louis suffered from the failure of the Bank of Missouri in 1839. Dent's difficulties probably originated in this failure, but he did not recover his losses quickly as some other prominent St. Louis citizens did.

30. Biographers generally have stated that it was Ulysses's poverty in comparison to the Dent's wealth that made Julia's father hesitant to give his consent to the marriage. See, for example, McFeely, 26. Jesse Grant, Ulysses' father, was more consistently successful than Frederick Dent, however. At the time of Ulysses and Julia's engagement, Jesse was expanding his business, while Frederick Dent was attempting to rebuild after his severe losses in 1839-40.

31. USG to JD, May 6, 1845, *Papers*, I, 44-45.

32. USG to JD, June [25?], 1845, *Papers*, I, 46.

33. USG to JD, [25?] June, 1845, *Papers*, I, 46.

he worried that his unit would leave Salubrity before he could receive a response from the elder Dent.³⁴ In September 1845, the Fourth moved farther south, to Corpus Christi, Texas. "It was a dull place," according to biographer T.M. Marshall, "and to amuse themselves the soldiers built a theater and gave theatrical performances." Lieutenant Grant took a part in several plays, including *Othello*, directed by his West Point classmate and Julia's cousin, James Longstreet. The younger men had to play the roles of women, and Ulysses was selected to play Desdemona because of his clean-shaven face and slight build.³⁵ The play was disturbingly prophetic and metaphorical of the coming Civil War and Reconstruction. It was the classic study of racial tension, with future Confederate Longstreet prompting the action, Grant as lover of the black man, and the play's depiction of the eventual failure of black and white integration.

While at Corpus Christi, Grant envisioned the Civil War rising from the Mexico-Texas conflict. He believed that pro-slavery politicians, eager to bolster their ranks in Congress by the addition of more slave states, purposely brought on the Mexican War. Four decades later, he reaffirmed his conviction that "Nations, like individuals, are punished for their transgressions. We got our punishment [for the Mexican War] in the most sanguinary and expensive war of modern times," the war that ended slavery.³⁶

With the intensity of Ulysses' desire for Julia deepening, he wrote of her power over him as God-like. "I feel as if I had some one else than myself to live and strive to do well for, You can have but little idea of the influence you have over me, Julia," he wrote passionately. "If I feel tempted to do anything that I think is not right I am shure to think, 'Well now if Julia saw me would I do so' and thus it is absent or present I am more or less governed by what I think is your will."³⁷ Shortly after he wrote this letter, he heard from a friend of Julia who married one of Grant's comrades that he had cause to question Julia's love. "She says I have a dangerous rival in Missouri, and that you do not intend to write to me any more.... Of course, I did not believe this, yet the fact of anyone saying it was so gave me some

34. USG to JD, July 6, 1845, *Papers*, I, 48.

35. Thomas M. Marshall, "An Early Chapter in the Life of General Grant," draft ms, April 27, 1922, MHS, 4; Garland (1898), 67-68; USG to JD, January 12, 1846, *Papers*, I, 69. Ulysses did not write about his part in *Othello*. He did grow a beard in February 1846, perhaps to prevent him from ever being able to play a female role again. USG to JD, February 7, 1846, *Papers*, I, 74.

36. USG, *Memoirs*, 42. McFeely, 35, stated that Grant "took politics for granted" in the Mexican War and the Civil War. Earlier and later, however, McFeely clearly identified political analysis in Grant's *Memoirs* and his correspondence. See, for example, McFeely, 30. For a classic scholarly assessment of the connection between the Mexican War and the Civil War, see Russel B. Nye, *Fettered Freedom* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1949), extracted in "The Great Slave Power Conspiracy," in Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Causes of the Civil War* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1959), 2-6.

37. USG to JD, July 11, 1845, I, 50.

uneasiness."³⁸ When Julia quickly reassured him, he responded, "I never doubted your love Julia for one instant but it is so pleasant to hear it repeated, for my own part I would sacrifice everything earthly to make my Dear Julia my own forever."³⁹

A month later, he renewed his interest in their early marriage, saying, "Dont you think it time for us to begin to settle upon some plan for consumating what we believe is for our mutual happiness? After an engagement of sixteen or seventeen months ought we not to think of bringing that engagement to an end, in the way that all true and constant lovers should?" Ulysses explained that, if the Dents could not accept his offer as an army officer, he would resign to take a position at a college in Hillsboro, Ohio. He referred Julia to a passage in Eugene Sue's *Le Juif Errant*, in which Sue notes that "two rays of light united in one inextinguishable flame, are as the burning and eternal joys of lovers joined in wedlock."⁴⁰ Shortly thereafter, Grant became insistent that Julia's father give definite consent to their marriage; he believed that Julia was being wronged by her father's failure to respond.⁴¹ In one of his next letters, he made it clear that he thought he and Julia should get married regardless of what Dent said. With the perseverance with which he had crossed the Gravois to propose to Julia, he pressed her to marry him. She was slow to answer, but when she finally did, in February 1846, she reconfirmed her commitment and stated that she believed her father would give his consent when the time came.⁴²

"In the Thickest of It All," Fighting for His Country

In March 1846, U.S. troops under Zachary Taylor packed up at Corpus Christi and marched toward Mexico. After two years of idleness they were finally moving into action, with Grant among them. On May 3, having crossed the Rio Grande into enemy territory, Taylor's troops fought their first battle at Matamoros, Mexico. Lieutenant Grant was not

38. USG to JD, [July 17, 1845], *Papers*, I, 52-53, *passim*. Julia's "friend" was Fanny Morrison Higgins, and this was not the first instance when she tried to cause trouble between Ulysses and Julia. She told her younger sister Georgiana that Grant loved her better than Julia, and Georgiana repeated this to Julia.

39. USG to JD, September 14, 1845, *Papers*, I, 54.

40. USG to JD, [postmarked October 13, 1845], *Papers*, I, 59-60. Eugene Sue, *Le Juif Errant*, quoted in *Papers*, 60 n. The physical element of Julia and Ulysses's relationship was intensifying. Given the interactions of the couple through their entire marriage, Ulysses probably used "consummate" in its sexual sense, with which he would have been familiar from common nineteenth century usage and from his exposure to Shakespeare. McFeely, 26, would agree with this.

41. USG to JD, November 11, 1845, *Papers*, I, 61-62.

42. USG to JD, February 7, 1846, *Papers*, Vol. I, 72-73. Julia appears to have doubted Grant's fidelity, and she may have written to him inquiring about Georgiana Morrison or one of his crushes from Georgetown or West Point. Before she died, Julia anticipated publication of the letters that Ulysses wrote to her, which preserved one half of their correspondence, and she censored material that she considered extremely personal, off color, or politically offensive. A large portion of this letter was crossed out.

there, having been sent to Port Isabel on a supply mission. Hearing the din of battle far off, he knew that his time to see Julia would be delayed again. On May 8, back with his unit, he participated in his first battle at Palo Alto. At Resaca de la Palma the next day, Grant fought valiantly and took command of his company after his superior officer was struck. On May 18, U.S. forces occupied Matamoros. Grant's first campaign proved to be provident of the rest of his army career. "Although the balls were whizzing thick and fast about me I did not feel a sensation of fear until... a ball struck close by me killing one man instantly, it knocked Capt. [John] Page's under Jaw entirely off and broke in the roof of his mouth.... Capt. Page is still alive," Grant recounted with horror. "In the thickest of it all," he reassured her, "I thought of Julia."⁴³

For the rest of the summer, Grant's regiment stayed at Matamoros, preparing for an assault on Monterrey. As a token from his first battles, Grant picked a flower from the Rio Grande and mailed it to Julia. She had sent him flowers from White Haven, but the wind caught them as soon as he opened her letter and they were lost into Mexico. Ulysses asked Julia if she would consider coming to Mexico if he were stationed there for a long time. He also offered to resign from the army and stated that his father had asked him to go to Galena, Illinois, presumably to run his business there. Ulysses teased Julia and told her that Fred was calling him his "Brivet Brother."⁴⁴ He also continued to tell her of his passionate love:

When I lay down I think of Julia until I fall asleep hoping that before I wake I may see her in my dreams. I know too Dearest from your letters that I am not forgotten. The many pleasant hours spent with you often pass in review before my memory. ...I often take the ring, which bears your name, from my finger and think of the day I first wore it. You recollect we were returning from the City.⁴⁵

In July, Julia sent Ulysses more petals from White Haven. "I did not let the flowers in your last letter blow away," he told her. Ulysses also revealed that Julia had expressed regret that they were not married when he visited White Haven in April 1845. Julia said "how willing [she] would be to share even a tent with [Ulysses]." Then he turned to lighter matters: he threatened Julia that he would let her brother Fred read her letters if she did not write to him more often.⁴⁶ Ulysses' mind turned often to the Gravois farm that summer. "How

43. USG, *Memoirs*, 63-73; USG to JD, May 11, 1846, *Papers*, I, 84-87.

44. Grant meant Brevet, designating an honorary position given for meritorious service and in anticipation of eventual promotion. USG to JD, June 10, 1846, *Papers*, I, 92-93.

45. USG to JDG, June 10, 1846, *Papers*, I, 92-93.

46. USG to JD, July 2, 1846, *Papers*, I, 99-100. Grant echoed Julia's sentiment in September. USG to JD, September 6, 1846, I, 109.

pleasant it would be now for me to spend a day with you all at White Haven. I envy you all very much...."⁴⁷ He remembered all of the family at White Haven fondly. He did not seem to be aware that his future father-in-law had put the farm and adjoining lands up for sale.⁴⁸

At the beginning of August, General Taylor's army, Grant included, began to move on Monterrey. Grant had been commanding his company since July, and he was frustrated when he was reassigned to the position of quartermaster. His commanding officer explained to Grant and his superiors that it was for the benefit of the service.⁴⁹ As quartermaster, Grant handled the business and record-keeping of his regiment. He was not required to go into battle, and his duty during conflict was to stay with the camp. He was frustrated with the periods of inactivity. "Julia," he wrote, "aint you geting tired of hearing of war, war, war? I am truly tired of it. here it is now five months that we have been at war and as yet two battles. I do wish this would close. If we have to fight I would like to do it all at once and then make friends."⁵⁰

On September 21, Taylor's army began the assault on Monterrey. Grant "voluntarily" (actually against implicit orders) went into battle, and when the regimental adjutant was killed, Grant was appointed to take his place for the rest of the day.⁵¹ On the third day, Grant's regiment and another were cut off from the bulk of the army with a diminishing supply of ammunition. Lt. Col. John Garland called for a volunteer to ride through the streets of the hostile city to alert Taylor to their condition. Grant stepped forward. He knew he could make the ride, and he knew how he would do it. With uncharacteristic immodesty, Grant described his wild dash in his *Memoirs*:

My ride back was an exposed one. Before starting I adjusted myself on the side of my horse furthest from the enemy, and with only one foot holding to the cantle [back] of the saddle, and an arm over the neck of the horse exposed, I started at full run. It was only at street crossings that my horse was under fire, but these I crossed at such a flying rate that generally I was

47. USG to JD, July 25, 1846, *Papers*, I, 101-103.

48. "Improved Land for Sale," *Missouri Republican*, August 5, 1846.

49. Although there is no proof, one wonders whether Grant's commanding at Resaca de la Palma was a threat to this Captain Garland. Grant became acting assistant quartermaster on August 14 or 16, 1846, according to *Papers*, I, 106-107.

50. USG to JD, September 6, 1846, *Papers*, I, 109.

51. USG to JD, December 27, 1846, *Papers*, I, 119. Ulysses did not speak often of his exploits to Julia. He mentioned this service because Dent had told Julia that as quartermaster Grant was safe from harm. Note that Grant did not inform Julia of his heroic ride two days later. See below.

past and under cover of the next block of houses before the enemy fired. I got out safely without a scratch.⁵²

Grant's noble ride was one he undertook for his comrades. That day in Monterrey he saw several fellow officers, his friends, fall. He lost one of his best friends, Robert Hazlitt, with whom he graduated from West Point.⁵³ He felt his ride had meant little, because by the time ammunition was gathered to send back, the two regiments had retreated. Remarkably, Lieutenant Grant mentioned nothing of his ride to Julia when he wrote her that evening. He told her how much he thought of her in battle, recounted the losses, and remarked, "I am getting very tired of this war..."⁵⁴ The next day, Monterrey surrendered.

Lieutenant Grant and his regiment under General Taylor spent the winter in the occupied city. Among Ulysses' pursuits was planning battles in the countryside with Col. Thomas Hamer, the former Congressman turned soldier who had written his appointment to West Point. Hamer and Grant stood on a hill and fought a hypothetical battle. Hamer wrote: "When I thought his imaginary force had my army routed, he suddenly suggested a strategic move for my forces which crowned them with triumphant victory, himself with defeat, and he ended by gracefully offering to surrender his sword." Hamer concluded that Grant was "too young for command, but" that "his capacity for future military usefulness is undoubted."⁵⁵

In the meantime, Ulysses and Julia's devotion continued to deepen. Julia and Ulysses had reached a point at which there was no turning back in their relationship. According to Grant's hometown friend Carr White who was serving with him after Monterrey, Ulysses received a letter from Julia that offered to release him from his marriage proposal. Colonel Dent's business dealings had gone from bad to worse, and Julia believed that she no longer was the catch she had been when her family had money. Ulysses would hear nothing of it.

52. USG, *Memoirs*, 78-81; Jesse Root Grant, *In the Days of My Father*, 6-7. Jesse admired his father more for this gallant although finally moot effort more than anything else his father did.

53. See Cullum, *Biographical Register*, I, of USMA. The battle of Monterrey provides historians with an example by which to examine Grant's uncanny memory. In 1879 while Grant was visiting San Francisco after his round-the-world tour, he met George Lyttleton Upshur. On finding that Upshur was the grandson of W.G. Williams, Grant informed him that Williams had died in his arms, in honor "at the head of the column" in the Monterrey battle. Grant had promised Williams that he would tell his family of the way he died, but apparently he had not been able to do so personally until that day more than thirty years later. "Memory of Grant Honored at Tomb," unidentified clipping (photograph credit Times World Wide), July 24, 1935, SIUC-USGA.

54. *Memoirs*, 77-81; USG to JD, September 23, 1846, *Papers*, I, 110-111.

55. Hamer to a friend, before December 1846, in John W. Emerson, "Grant's Life in the West," *The Midland Monthly*, VII, 1 (January 1897); also Franklin S. Edmonds, *Ulysses S. Grant* (Philadelphia: G.W. Jacobs and Co., 1915), 57; reprinted in *Papers*, I, 121 n. Hamer died shortly after this encounter, and Grant was selected to write the letter of condolence to his widow.

He told White that he would marry Julia with or without wealth, and he wrote her the same.⁵⁶

Double Victory: Mexico City and Julia

After this, their letters became more passionate and physically explicit. Julia told Ulysses that she wished it was the United States that was being invaded by the troops, so that she could be taken prisoner by him. He replied, "If Julia says she will surrender herself my prisoner I will take the first opportunity of making an excursion to [Missouri]. But you must not expect your parole like other prisoners of war for I expect to be the Sentinel that guards you myself."⁵⁷ Since there was no prospect of such an invasion, Julia and Ulysses instead sent thousands of kisses between the Gravois and Mexico.⁵⁸

On February 13, 1847, Grant was transferred to Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott's army. Scott and his men were to launch an assault on Vera Cruz, using ships for transportation. According to his son Jesse, Lieutenant Grant realized the possibility of an outbreak of scurvy (a malady caused by vitamin C deficiency) during the voyage ahead of them, and he purchased lemons to help prevent it. Jesse stated that his father worked with the doctors to distribute the lemons to all of the ships, winning praise from them for his foresight.⁵⁹

The troops landed about three miles from Vera Cruz in early March, and from March 9 through 27, they besieged and finally took the city. On April 8, they began the march toward Mexico City. Ten days later, they engaged in a battle at Cerro Gordo, a fortified "castle" on the ascent to their final prize. Ulysses reiterated his frustration with the war to Julia: "My Dearest dont you think a soldiers life a hard one! But after the storm there must be a calm. This war must end some time and... I will be satisfied with any place where I can have you with me."⁶⁰ Soon after this, Ulysses received the news that Dent had given explicit consent to Julia's union with him.⁶¹

The summer passed with a long, slow campaign on Mexico City. On August 20, Scott's troops, Grant included, fought at the battle of Churubusco, near the capital city. On

56. Lloyd Lewis to USGIII, March 16, 1949, SIUC-USGA. Lewis believed that Julia had anticipated hardship that never developed, but Dent's real estate records indicate that what Julia reported was true.

57. USG to JD, November 7, 1846, *Papers*, I, 116-117.

58. USG to JD, December 27, 1846, February 1, 1847, February 25, 1847, *Papers*, I, 120, 124, 128.

59. JRG, Jr., *In the Days of My Father* (1925), 7.

60. USG to JD, April 24, 1847, *Papers*, I, 133.

61. USG to JD, August 4, 1847, *Papers*, I, 142.

Map 4



Map 4.
Grant and the Mexican War,
1845-1848

September 8, they fought again at Molino del Rey, where Grant assisted with the capture of five or six Mexican officers who had been unable to escape the city. Ulysses also may have saved the life of Fred Dent that day. Ulysses found his old roommate with a thigh wound and carried him to where he could receive medical attention.⁶²

In the days that followed, United States troops continued the drive to take Mexico City. Second Lt. Ulysses Grant conducted a reconnaissance and discovered a church tower from which he could bombard a Mexican garrison. Grant ordered his men to disassemble a howitzer and to carry it through a swamp to the church, avoiding the road because it was in the possession of Mexican troops. Grant explained with his usual dry wit how he gained entry to the building:

When I knocked for admission a priest came to the door, who, while extremely polite, declined to admit us.... I explained to him that he might save property by opening the door, and he certainly would save himself from becoming a prisoner, for a time at least; and besides, I intended to go in whether he consented or not. He began to see his duty in the same light that I did, and opened the door, though he did not look as if it gave him special pleasure to do so.⁶³

The troops reassembled the gun in the belfry and began firing on the garrison, much to the pleasure of Brig. Gen. William J. Worth, who saw the action from the distance and requested through Lt. John C. Pemberton that Grant meet with him. Worth gave Grant another gun and sent an artillery officer to assist him. Although Grant did not have the nerve to tell Worth that only one gun fit in the belfry, he continued pelting the Mexican force all day. In their official reports, Capt. Robert E. Lee, Lt. Col. John Garland, and Brigadier General Worth cited Grant's resourcefulness. On September 14, the U.S. troops entered Mexico City and the "Halls of Montezuma" in triumph.⁶⁴ Although sharing in the thrill of taking the city, he was reminded of his fallen friends when a sniper killed Lt. Sidney Smith.⁶⁵ Grant's regiment suffered tremendous losses, particularly among officers. Except for the first skirmish at Matamoros and Taylor's battle at Buena Vista when Grant was serving under Scott, Grant fought in every battle of the Mexican War. The following February, the U.S. and Mexican commissioners signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.⁶⁶

62. USG, *Memoirs*, 103-104; USG to JD, September 1847, *Papers*, I, 146-148n.

63. USG, *Memoirs*, 106-108.

64. USG, *Memoirs*, 108-109.

65. USG, *Memoirs*, 111; USG to JD, September 1847, *Papers*, I, 147.

66. The treaty was signed February 2 and ratified by the United States Senate March 10, 1848.

The Highs and Lows of Mexico: Grant Explores

In the meantime, the soldiers had much spare time. Grant decided he should see a Mexican bullfight. "The sight to me was sickening," he recalled almost forty years later. He could not understand how anyone could enjoy watching either the bull or the bullfighter be injured or die in the name of sport.⁶⁷ In the variety of bullfighting that Grant witnessed, men attached tiny explosives to the bulls which were ignited to make them angry. Next, mounted fighters with spears and an unmounted fighter carrying a red flag tormented the bull until he was completely confused. Finally, matadors on foot carrying long knives lunged at the bull's chest, trying to strike him in the heart. If they failed, he was lassoed and butchered. The day Grant attended, one of the mounted bullfighters did not turn fast enough on his horse, and the bull gored the horse. The audience believed the rider was also dead. After a matador lassoed and butchered the bull, the horse and the lifeless rider were carried out of the arena. A moment later, though, the "corpse" appeared in the audience to watch the next round. "I felt sorry to see the cruelty to the bull and the horse," Grant confessed. He did not stay much longer.⁶⁸

Grant was more impressed with the natural beauty of the countryside around Mexico City. His first adventure was a trip to the volcano Pococatpetl with a group of officers, including his friend Simon Bolivar Buckner. They edged their way up the volcano on a path that at times was "very narrow with a yawning precipice on one side, hundreds of feet down to a roaring mountain torrent below, and almost perpendicular walls on the other side." They spent the night at the Vaqueria, an abandoned ranchers' cabin that had lost most of its roof but that regularly sheltered climbers. It rained all night, and not far above them on the mountain they knew it was snowing. In the morning, they resumed their ascent only to be disappointed that clouds shrouded what could have been a spectacular view below. With the wind whipping up the snow around them so that they could not see to continue, they regretfully turned back toward civilization. Back in a little town that night, Ulysses and his friends were afflicted with snow blindness. Two days later, they were fully recovered and the mountain top, now under full sun, beckoned again. Buckner was among those who made the second assault and reached the crater. Grant decided he would try spelunking instead.⁶⁹

Grant and his friends explored a huge cave near Acapulco, having negotiated their way through a series of Mexican troops who suspected them of leading another invasion. The wonder of the caves lead them to wander three miles through "a succession of chambers of great dimensions and of great beauty when lit up with... rockets," Grant the explorer described. "The effect of them in that place of total darkness was beautiful." Grant was

67. USG, *Memoirs*, 119-120.

68. USG, *Memoirs*, 120.

69. USG, *Memoirs*, 122-123.

amazed by the massive stalactites and stalagmites. In a letter to Julia, he compared it to Mammoth Cave in Kentucky.⁷⁰ This son of an Ohio tanner was beginning to see the world, discovering its geography, people, hazards, and natural beauty.

The Mexican War affected the course of Ulysses S. Grant's life profoundly. Initially, the war kept Grant from two possible professorships and the relatively sedate life of an academic. In the end, the Mexican War was a precursor to the Civil War. As Grant believed, without the expansion in land below the line of Mason and Dixon, a result of the Mexican conquest, the inadequate Compromise of 1850 would not have been necessary, and the slave states would not have been powerful enough to rebel. Thus the Mexican War kept Grant from his chosen profession, and the politics behind the war led to the profession--as military man--that eventually took him to the presidency.

The Mexican War also kept Grant in the army longer than he had planned, and prepared him for battles he would lead during the Civil War. He learned in Mexico how to fight in the field and how his fellow officers, among them many of the key Confederate and Union military leaders, fought. He watched Capt. Robert E. Lee command soldiers. Years later he believed that in the Mexican War he had learned how to defeat Lee. "A large part of the National army... clothed General Lee with [almost superhuman abilities], but I had known him personally, and knew that he was mortal; and it was just as well that I felt this," Grant recalled in his *Memoirs*.⁷¹

When the spring of 1848 arrived, Ulysses longed for Julia. "Pray that the time may not be far distant when we may take our walks again up and down the banks of the Gravois. Truly it will be a happy time for me when I see that [stream] again," pleaded the young soldier in uncharacteristic religious terms.⁷² In July 1848, Grant's regiment finally departed Mexico for Pascagoula, Mississippi. He immediately obtained a four-month leave of absence and hastened to walk with his Julia.

The previous four years had been hard ones. Ulysses learned in Mexico about the horrors of war, although he had not seen war at its worst--that would come later. Already the young man knew the influence his future bride held over him. The war had delayed their union, and it had prevented him from settling down to the life of a mathematics professor. Ulysses Grant was a military man, on his way to Missouri to take his sweetest prisoner, the one who had captured his heart.

70. USG, *Memoirs*, 125-128; USG to JD, May 7, 1848, *Papers*, I, 157.

71. USG, *Memoirs*, 129.

72. USG to JD, September 1847, *Papers*, I, 148.

CHAPTER SIX

Battles in Peace

In August 1848, Ulysses S. Grant embarked on a career in the peacetime army with his new bride, Julia. From then until July 1854, Grant was stationed at army posts around the Great Lakes and on the west coast. At the former, he enjoyed the company of his wife and first son. To the latter they could not accompany him, and after two years of separation from his family Ulysses resigned from the army and moved back to Missouri.

Ulysses Grant fought battles in Mexico, and he believed when the war ended his life would be peaceful. In 1848 and 1849, he fought army bureaucracy to win his rightful position at regimental headquarters. Crossing the Isthmus of Panama in 1852, he learned that the great enemy disease could kill as easily as bullets; the Fourth Infantry lost one hundred men in a matter of weeks to cholera. On the remote Pacific Coast, Grant fought loneliness and despair; he realized that he did not want to live without his greatest comrade, Julia. He could not risk her and their children crossing Panama or circling South America to be with him, so he returned to them. The love that he and Julia shared, although tested, continued to grow stronger. It was this love they needed to carry them through the trials of the rest of their lives.

To Have and to Hold

The Dents lived in St. Louis rather than at White Haven during the summer of 1848, so Ulysses probably did not stroll with Julia along the Gravois that August. Instead, he spent his nights at the Planter's House hotel and his days with Julia at the Dent townhouse.¹ The returning Lieutenant Grant was different from the man to whom Julia said goodbye more than three years before. A little taller, a little healthier, bearded, and fuller of figure, Grant was the war hero who had saved her brother. Julia was older, and after several seasons of flirting with the young men of St. Louis, she was ready to marry her Ulysses.

Ulysses stayed in St. Louis about a week and then left to visit Ohio, allowing Julia to finish preparations for the wedding. Ulysses hoped someone from his family might return with him to St. Louis, but his sisters assured him that they could not undertake such a journey on short notice. Ulysses missed Julia terribly that week he was in Bethel. Writing to her, he forgot his grammar and his spelling lessons: "I done nothing but think of you, and

1. Julia did not know why they were not at White Haven that summer, but it is possible that Dent had rented the property to help pay his mortgage. JDG, *Memoirs*, 54-55.

of how happy I should be at our next meeting. But then you know how very much I love you and how could we part without ~~without~~ my grieving[?]"² He finished visiting with his family and hurried back to St. Louis.

Julia made the last-minute preparations for their wedding, having spent the past four years making most of her plans. She had not yet selected a dress, however, and she was relieved when her father's cousin, Caroline Schutz O'Fallon, arrived with a beautiful wedding gift: a gown of white watered silk and a veil of "white tulle with lovely wide fringe. This floated around my head and enveloped me in its fleecy folds," Julia softly remembered in her *Memoirs*. Jane Shurlds, an old family friend and the mother-in-law of Julia's brother Wrenshall, coaxed her cape jessamine flowers into bloom for the wedding day. Mrs. Shurlds brought her a bouquet to carry and additional flowers to pin on with her veil.

Ulysses and Julia were married in the Dent townhouse at Fourth and Cerre Streets on August 22, 1848. Julia was attended by her sister Nellie, her cousin Julia Boggs, and Sarah Walker. Ulysses was attended by Cadmus Wilcox, Bernard Pratte, and a third groomsman, possibly James "Pete" Longstreet.³ The Reverend John Linn officiated. As many as two hundred guests may have attended, although Julia insisted that the wedding was much more conservative than Grant biographers later reported.⁴

Julia and Ulysses spent their first night as newlyweds with the Dents but left the next day for ~~Kentucky and Ohio~~. The Grants visited Ulysses' relatives and old haunts for more than a month. Julia spoke of exceptional impressions of Ulysses family in her *Memoirs*, calling his mother the "most self-sacrificing, the sweetest, kindest woman I ever met, except for my own dear mother." Julia noted with a touch of bitterness that she met quite a few family members who years later prevailed on their famous relative for favors.⁵

2. USG to JD, August 7, 1848, *Papers*, I, 164.

3. Julia listed Sidney Smith as the third groomsman, but Smith was killed in Mexico City the year before. JDG, *Memoirs*, 55-56. Emma Dent Casey, Julia's niece, reported that all of Ulysses' groomsmen were army officers. She agreed that James Longstreet had attended, although she said that he was related to the family on her mother's side. She said that her bridesmaids were "Miss O'Fallon, Miss Sherds, Miss Louise Pratt, and, perhaps, Miss Fanny Walsh." Emma Dent Casey, "When Grant Went A'Courtin'," Casey Collection, ULSG. Emma misspelled the Shurlds' family name and may have confused *Miss* Caroline O'Fallon with her mother, Caroline Shutz O'Fallon, who gave Julia the dress. Fanny Walsh was the granddaughter of William Lindsay Long, and Walsh was her married name. Fanny was either a young child or not born yet in 1848. Telephone conversation between Miriam Walsh Benear, daughter of Fanny Long Walsh, and the author, April 1992. James Longstreet told Horace Porter he attended the Dent-Grant wedding. Porter, 47.

4. JDG, *Memoirs*, 55-56. Albert Richardson, in general one of the most reliable of the early Grant biographers, recorded that a "Sante Fe traveler diverted the company with a lively and graceful Spanish dance." Richardson, 129. Julia recorded that one or two of her bridesmaids may have danced one waltz and that the festivities did include music, but beyond that all was exaggerated.

5. JDG, *Memoirs*, 56-57.

By mid-October, the newly-wed Grants returned to White Haven, where Julia confronted her feelings about leaving home. She knew that Ulysses would be stationed in Detroit, far from her family. She had known since she met him that he might move frequently if he remained in the army. But every time she thought of leaving her family and White Haven, she burst into tears. Finally, Grant appealed to his father-in-law for assistance. Old Mr. Dent sat down with his daughter, his first girl to leave home, and told her that she could stay with him and that he would arrange for Grant to get leave and visit them "once or twice a year." Julia considered the proposal before her. She realized that the thought of being apart from Ulysses was even more unbearable than the thought of being apart from her parents. Ulysses told her, "Then dry your tears and do not weep again. It makes me unhappy." In November, they left for Detroit, with Ulysses' sister Clara accompanying them for the winter.⁶

Detroit, Michigan, and Sackett's Harbor⁷, New York

On November 17, 1848, Lieutenant Grant's peacetime army career commenced. He reported to Detroit, Michigan, which was headquarters for his regiment. When he arrived, he learned to his surprise that his duties within his regiment had been taken over by Lt. Henry Wallen, a lower-ranking and less qualified officer, and that he had been reassigned to Madison Barracks at Sackett's Harbor, New York. As regimental quartermaster, Grant therefore contended that he should be in Detroit with his regiment to accomplish his job. Wallen claimed that it would be too expensive and unpleasant for him to transfer to Sackett's Harbor where he belonged. Sackett's Harbor in November was a difficult overland journey around the Great Lakes. The post was located on the northeastern shore of Lake Ontario, where all of winter's frozen fury dumped mountains of snow and brought bone-chilling winds. A winter there would be miserable. Grant had little immediate choice but to protest formally and acquiesce, and he, Julia, and Clara repacked their bags and made the numbing journey east after lodging two formal protests. The trip cost them twice what they were allotted for the transfer and took much longer than it would have had they been able to move in another season when the Great Lakes would have been open for navigation. Their overland progress the last day was so slow that they were forced to stop less than ten miles from Sackett's Harbor, where they spent "such an unpleasant night."⁸

Shortly after the Grants arrived at Sackett's Harbor, army officials realized that it was Wallen, not Grant, who should have gone east. Ulysses was ordered to return to Detroit to

6. JDG, *Memoirs*, 58-59. Correspondence places Grant in Bethel, Ohio, on September 12, and in St. Louis on October 16. See *Papers*, 166-167, various correspondence. USG to JDG, February 27, 1849, *Papers*, I, 178-179.

7. Sackett's Harbor has been spelled with one or two t's since Grant's time there. The author has chosen to standardize the spelling with two t's.

8. USG to JDG, February 27, 1849, *Papers*, I, 179.

take up his rightful position. He protested again, saying that he would prefer to wait until he could go less expensively by ship in the spring. By the time permission was granted, navigation had resumed on the Lakes.⁹

For Julia, the house at Sackett's Harbor was the first home that she ran herself. Ulysses returned from church their first Sunday at Madison Barracks and told Julia that two or three of his friends were coming to dinner. Julia looked at him in disbelief: How could he have invited company without warning her? Her cook was untried. Ulysses said, "All cooks know how to cook, don't they?" Julia remembered, "I asked him to... tell them not to come until we had tried our cook, and he did so." The men did not get their dinner that day, but Ulysses and Julia's meal was wonderful. Sheepishly, Julia asked Ulysses if he would invite them for the next day. At the appointed hour, "They knocked timidly at the door, opened it just a little, and asked if... they could really come." Julia and Ulysses entertained frequently after that. She left the dinners to her cook, but once a week she baked a cake, her only culinary skill.¹⁰

Lieutenant Grant spent his working days at Madison Barracks reviving the old post, arranging for buildings in disrepair to be removed and replaced, acquiring adequate winter clothing and linens for the troops who had shipped too quickly from Louisiana to Sackett's Harbor to receive regular supplies, and arranging other purchases and repairs around the post. His position as regimental quartermaster during the Mexican War prepared him well for the less difficult job of post quartermaster. As company commander, Grant traveled to Oswego to attend a court martial, but for most of the winter he stayed in Sackett's Harbor.

In April 1849, the Grants moved back to Detroit, where Grant resumed the duties of regimental quartermaster.¹¹ Julia took a detour to visit White Haven and her family. While she was there, Ulysses wrote her and teasingly urged her to bring back her younger sister Nellie so that she could meet young men. Ulysses implied that Nellie had toyed too many times with the men of St. Louis, but told her, "Be ready to come back here with us to Detroit and we may be able to find you a beau inasmuch as you are a stranger and people may not have time to find you out."¹² Soon Grant had good reason to want Julia and all of the Dents to move to Detroit because a cholera epidemic broke out in St. Louis. The epidemic began in May and escalated to a frenzy in July, when 145 people died in a single day and 722 in a week. By the end of July, 4,547 people had died in St. Louis of cholera.

9. USG to Oscar Fingal Winship, February 10, 1849, 173-174; Winship to USG, February 20, 1849; USG to Oscar Fingal Winship, February 23, 1849; Francis Lee to Winship, February 24, 1849; Eastern Division Special Order 18, March 2, 1849; USG to Winship, March 9, 1849; William Grigsby Freeman to USG, March 15, 1849, *Papers*, I, 173-181.

10. JDG, *Memoirs*, 59-60.

11. Henry C. Deming, *The Life of Ulysses S. Grant, General, United States Army* (Hartford: S.S. Scranton and Co., 1868), 86.

12. USG to JDG and Ellen Dent, May 26, 1849, *Papers*, I, 189-190.

Among the dead were William Lindsay and Elizabeth Sappington Long, who built White Haven, and Pierre Chouteau, aged ninety-one, who founded and built St. Louis.¹³ Fortunately, all members of the Dent family were spared.

The Grants lived in two homes during their two years in Detroit, entertaining as they had in Sackett's Harbor. They also enjoyed the balls and parties of the city, and Grant purchased a race horse so that he could indulge in equestrian pleasures.¹⁴ Julia's social pursuits were limited throughout the spring of 1850, because she was pregnant. In late spring, on the advice of her army doctor, she returned to White Haven to deliver her first child at home. On May 30, 1850, she gave birth to Frederick Dent Grant. Unable to go to Missouri with her, Ulysses was pleased when she was able to move back to Detroit.¹⁵ In 1851, Julia returned to St. Louis again for the summer, and Ulysses wrote her in veiled but knowing terms about the pregnancy, impending labor, and delivery of a daughter to one of her friends in Detroit.¹⁶

In mid-June, Ulysses moved the Grant belongings back to Sackett's Harbor when the regiment moved its headquarters there.¹⁷ Ulysses ordered new furniture crafted by a carpenter to surprise Julia. She and Fred moved in later in the summer.

Because Grant anticipated living in Sackett's Harbor longer this time, he took the opportunity to become active in religious and civic organizations. Grant attended the Episcopalian Church with Julia and Fred. He also joined the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, a fraternal and social service organization. He was exceptionally outspoken for a newcomer in this organization, and through his involvement he met Charles Ford, who became a friend for life. The early 1850s was a high temperance era due to the agitation of Neal Dow and other supporters of his "Maine Law," and Grant became caught up in the movement. While at Sackett's Harbor, he founded with several other soldiers a local lodge of the Sons of Temperance and abstained from drinking distilled alcohol.¹⁸

13. James N. Primm, *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri* (Boulder: Pruett Publishing, 1981), 162-163.

14. USG III to Robert I. Ebners, July 20, 1950, SIUC-USGA; Deming, 82; Gurney C. Gue, "Grant Famous as Horseman from Boyhood," *New York Herald Tribune*, April 27, 1930, 16 II, SIUC-USGA.

15. Nicholas Smith, *Grant, the Man of Mystery* (Milwaukee: Young Churchman Co., 1909), 44-45.

16. USG to JDG, May 21, May 28, June 4, 1851, *Papers*, I, 201-204, *passim*.

17. USG to JDG, June 11, 1851, *Papers*, I, 209.

18. Early temperance reformers believed that only distilled alcohol was addicting, not brewed or fermented alcohol. The "Maine Law" provided for prohibition of distilled liquor beverages in the state of Maine and was copied by several other states. The Sons of Temperance is most comparable in 1992 to Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD). It was *not* an organization for recovering alcoholics, such as Alcoholics Anonymous. For more information on the temperance movement in the United States, see Jack S. Blocker, Jr., *American Temperance Movements:*

The Grants found Sackett's Harbor much more bearable in the spring, summer, and fall than they had in the winter. They were sad to learn in the spring of 1852 that the Fourth Infantry was moving again, this time to the far west. The Grants faced a difficult dilemma because Julia was pregnant again. Could she, the baby she was carrying, and toddler Fred survive the trip? The Grants reluctantly decided against the move. Julia and Fred left Madison Barracks for Ohio, where they planned that Julia would give birth at Jesse and Hannah Grant's home. At the end of the summer, after the birth, she would return to her parents in St. Louis until Ulysses could send for her and their children.¹⁹

Before Grant left the east coast, he traveled to Washington, D.C., in an attempt to clear a government debt from his quartermaster's record. At the close of the Mexican War, one thousand dollars of quartermaster funds were stolen from Grant. Although he had been cleared of any responsibility in the matter, he was still required to replace the money. Only an act of Congress could release him from his obligation. Ulysses hoped that speaking directly to a member of Congress would push the matter forward. Unfortunately, he arrived in the city on the day of elder statesman Henry Clay's funeral. He was unable to conduct any business with Congress that day, and although he did eventually meet with some members of Congress, he returned to New York with the black mark still on his account.²⁰

Crossing the Isthmus: The Cholera Epidemic

On July 5, Ulysses departed from New York City aboard the ship *Ohio*. After eight days, they arrived at Aspinwall (now Colon, Panama). The railroad across the Isthmus of Panama was not complete at the time, so the party, comprised of seven hundred members of the Fourth Infantry, plus their wives and children, and some random civilians, made their way up the Chagres River in native boats to either Gorgona or Cruces. Most of the troops marched the remainder of the journey to Panama City. The civilians, troops sufficient to

18. (...continued)

Cycles of Reform (Boston: Twayne, 1989), 42-48, *passim*. For Grant's personal involvement in civic organizations, see Richardson, 136-137; Garland (1898), 111; Edmonds, 68; G. Kenneth Hubbard to USG III, March 13, 1952, March 15, 1955, SIUC-USGA.

19. Julia may have selected Ohio rather than Missouri to give birth to her second child for two reasons. First, St. Louis had been the site of cholera outbreaks or epidemics in the three previous summers. Even traveling through the city on the way to the country would have been hazardous for a pregnant woman and toddler. Second, Julia may have been trying to improve relations with Ulysses's parents by putting her trust in them to help her through her delivery.

20. McFeely, 46. It was common for quartermasters to seek relief from financial obligation after being cleared from wrongdoing when funds or receipts were lost. Nathaniel Lyon, also regimental quartermaster, tried in vain for several years to get his accounts cleared. He succeeded in 1854 by traveling to Washington and speaking to members of Congress. It took Lyon a month to clear up the matter, however, and Grant did not have a month to spare in July 1852. Phillips, 74-75.

assist with baggage, all cargo, and Grant as quartermaster were supposed to meet pack mules in Cruces. Unfortunately, the man who had pre-arranged with the steamship company to provide the animals had rented them to gold rush travelers, and the civilians of the Fourth were forced to wait a week until mules could be procured. Because cholera broke out, Grant sent ahead the remaining troops who were healthy and could be spared. He stayed behind with the families and the sick who could not travel and continued to negotiate to get pack animals. Finally, the depleted force crept across the Isthmus only to arrive in Panama City to find that cholera had broken out there, too.

Grant arranged for a quarantine area for the sick soldiers and civilians. Then he watched his friends die one by one. He procured medicine regardless of the cost. He had the heart-rending task of sending home the wives of soldiers who had died and of comforting the soldiers whose families had died. He had the painful task of helping to bury the soldiers, civilian adults, and children.

One-seventh of the Fourth Infantry died in a matter of weeks, and one third of the entire party died. All of the young children succumbed, as did many of the wives and older children. Ulysses and Julia had decided wisely. Had Julia gone with him, she would have delivered her baby while on the pack mule trail in the jungle. Neither she nor the baby could have been expected to survive. Maybe that was a consolation to Ulysses as he finally boarded the steamer that was to take the remainder of his band through the Pacific Ocean to California on August 5.²¹

The ordeal of the Isthmus was the most difficult yet of Ulysses S. Grant's young life. Although he was but thirty years old, the burden of moving more than seven hundred unseasoned soldiers and civilians through a jungle fraught with disease and danger fell on his shoulders. Lieutenant Grant revealed glimmers of his future greatness as he flexed army rules to procure mounts, set up a hospital in which to care for the sick, and met with the pain of losing friends he had known for all of his army career. On the west coast, newspapers carried accounts of his abandoning the sick and straggling, but all who traveled under him were quick to retort that Lieutenant Grant had acted with uncommon courage and wisdom, never leaving those who needed him most. The officers who served with Grant were especially quick to support him.²² Remaining with the sick and dying, Grant placed himself at greater risk than he had ever been. In describing the ordeal of the Panama crossing, Charles Ellington said of Grant, "A lifelong impression had been made on the young captain."²³ Just as much, however, the young *brevet* captain had made a lifelong impression on those who survived the journey with him.

21. USG, *Memoirs*, 131-134; Charles G. Ellington, *The Trial of U.S. Grant: The Pacific Coast Years, 1852-1854* (Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1987), 39-70; Nicholas Smith, 47.

22. Ellington, 65-70.

23. Ellington, 64.

"The Place Is Good Enough, But I Have Interests at Others"

To describe Ulysses S. Grant's life from September 1852 to April 1854, inevitably confronts tales generated years later claiming that these were two of the lowest years of Grant's life. While the Isthmus crossing had been a physical trial, for the next two years Grant suffered the pain of separation from his wife and children. In the days when mail took months to travel back and forth and there were no telephones or intracontinental telegraphs, Ulysses missed Julia, and his constant thought was bringing her and the children to join him or getting back to Missouri, in the army or out.

On July 15, before the Central American cholera epidemic began, Ulysses wrote Julia, "What would I not give to know that you are well at this time? This is about the date when you were supposed to be sick and my being so far away I am afraid may affect you." Grant used a common euphemism for pregnancy and delivery--Julia was going to be "sick" having her baby. "Before receiving this dearest I [hope] the little one will be born. If it is a girl name it what you like, but if a boy name it after me."²⁴ Grant believed he would hear soon about the health of Julia and his new baby.

The first place Grant went after reaching San Francisco on August 18 was to Benicia, the nearby army base where he officially was stationed for the last week of August and part of September. What Grant saw in San Francisco and Benicia made him believe he should resign from the army, go into business for a year, and then retire on his wealth at White Haven.²⁵

Grant decided that he would recuperate from his journey by traveling around California until he received his next orders. One of the first places Ulysses visited on the west coast was Knight's Ferry, where his brothers-in-law John, Lewis, and G.W. (Wrenshall) Dent had opened a hotel and operated the ferry. Lewis had made his mark in California already as a delegate to California's constitutional convention and as justice of the peace in Knight's Ferry. John had been granted a local Indian agency. Wrenshall moved to Knight's Ferry about the same time Ulysses arrived, and he was appointed postmaster in 1855. The Dent brothers tried to change the name of the community to Dentville, but the name never stuck.

Ulysses and his brothers-in-law enjoyed each other's company while Grant visited, and Ulysses had the opportunity to meet John's wife, Ellen Dean, whom John met and married in California since Grant last saw him at White Haven.²⁶

24. USG to JDG, July 15, 1852, *Papers*, I, 247-248.

25. USG to JDG, August 20, 1852, *Papers*, I, 257.

26. Ellington, 85-86.

Grant stayed at Knight's Ferry this time only a week or so, and his time in Knight's Ferry and the Stockton area in general was brief over the next two years, despite a myriad of stories from people who allegedly knew Grant "when he lived at Knight's Ferry." Grant visited the site three times, each for less than a week. He indulged in family conversation, watched the busy ferry, and enjoyed meeting incoming stage coaches. He never served there in any official capacity, and he did not work while he was there.²⁷

On September 14, Grant and part of the Fourth left Benicia for Columbia Barracks, near Portland, Oregon Territory.²⁸ Grant lived at Columbia Barracks from September 20, 1852, until the end of 1853. Fort Vancouver, as Columbia Barracks had been called for some time, was up the Columbia River from Astoria, the fur post of John Jacob Astor's traders. Vancouver was controlled by the old Hudson's Bay Company, although since the United States had gained possession of the area in 1849, the British company's influence was disappearing. A few Native American tribes lived in the area, but in official reports and letters to his family Grant demonstrated that he looked on them as needing protection from white people rather than the other way around.²⁹

Grant's first concern on arriving was hearing from Julia, but it was not until December when he learned that Julia had survived delivery, as had their second baby boy. Julia named him after her husband, although friends and family nicknamed him "Buck" because he was born in the Buckeye state, Ohio. By the time Ulysses heard news from home, Julia and the children had moved to White Haven with Ulysses' sister Jenny. Ulysses asked Julia, "What does the S stand for in Ulys.'s name? in mine you know it does not stand for anything!"³⁰

During the time Grant was at Fort Vancouver, between one hundred and three hundred men of the Fourth Infantry were stationed there. Grant served as regimental quartermaster and, after the post quartermaster was transferred, filled his duties as well. Army officers were allowed (and even expected) to involve themselves in civilian businesses on the west coast, and Grant was no exception.³¹

Quartermaster Grant was amazed at the high prices paid by incoming settlers and soldiers for food, so he and two other officers leased farmland and began planting potatoes and other basic crops. He also chopped wood and loaded it on the riverbank for

27. Ellington, 87-88.

28. The post became part of Washington Territory when it was created in March 1853, and Columbia Barracks was officially renamed Fort Vancouver in July 1853.

29. USG to Major Osborn Cross, July 25, 1853, *Papers*, I, 310; USG to JD, March 19, 1853, *Papers*, I, 296.

30. USG to JDG, December 3, 1852, *Papers*, I, 274-275; USG to JDG, March 31, 1853, *Papers*, I, 298.

31. Ellington, 112-113.

steamboats. Ulysses took a great deal of pleasure out of working the land, but in the spring the Columbia River flooded and he failed to realize a profit on his hard work.³²

Grant also loaned Elijah Camp, the post sutler, \$1500 with which to open a store. The store was so prosperous that Camp decided to pack up and move back to regimental headquarters in Sackett's Harbor. He left owing Grant \$800, which Grant tried to collect through Charles Ford.³³ Grant entertained the idea of collaborating with a San Francisco company on speculations, but instead he and other officers invested in an ice venture. Their hopes literally melted when the ship carrying the ice from Alaska to San Francisco met warm headwinds. They lost a shipload of chickens traveling there in the same manner. They also invested in a building in San Francisco that they wanted to open as a lounge for soldiers. This also failed when their manager ran away with the investment money.³⁴

Each speculation Grant undertook had one purpose: to make enough money to bring Julia and the children safely to him or to resign and go to them himself.³⁵ Julia had dreams of her Ulysses together with another woman, and Ulysses responded, "It is hard enough for us to be separated so far without borrowing imaginary troubles." His tone suggested that he had suffered from bad dreams, too.³⁶ Apparently the Dents argued that the two boys should remain with them, to which Ulysses cried, "How can your pa & ma think they are going to keep Fred. & Ulys always with them? I am growing impatient to see them myself."³⁷ Ulysses tried vainly for several months to obtain permission to return east on the pretense of attending to his bad accounts. His requests were denied, and shortly thereafter he was ordered to Fort Humboldt in an isolated region of northern California.

Ulysses Grant arrived at Fort Humboldt on January 5, 1854, to take command of Company F, Fourth Infantry, under Bvt. Lt. Col. Robert Christie Buchanan. Prior to his arrival, Grant referred to Humboldt as a "detestible" post where mail service was infrequent and family quarters unavailable. He had only been in town a few days when he felt the walls of the cove penning him in on three sides, the winds and sea blocking him on the other.³⁸

Almost all of the officers at Humboldt were new, like Grant. Lewis Cass Hunt, Grant's friend for several years, was at the post, as was the infamous Colonel Buchanan. He was enough to make any man feel penned in, had the countryside not already

32. USG to JDG, June 15, 1852, *Papers*, I, 301.

33. USG to JDG, June 15, 1853, *Papers*, I, 301.

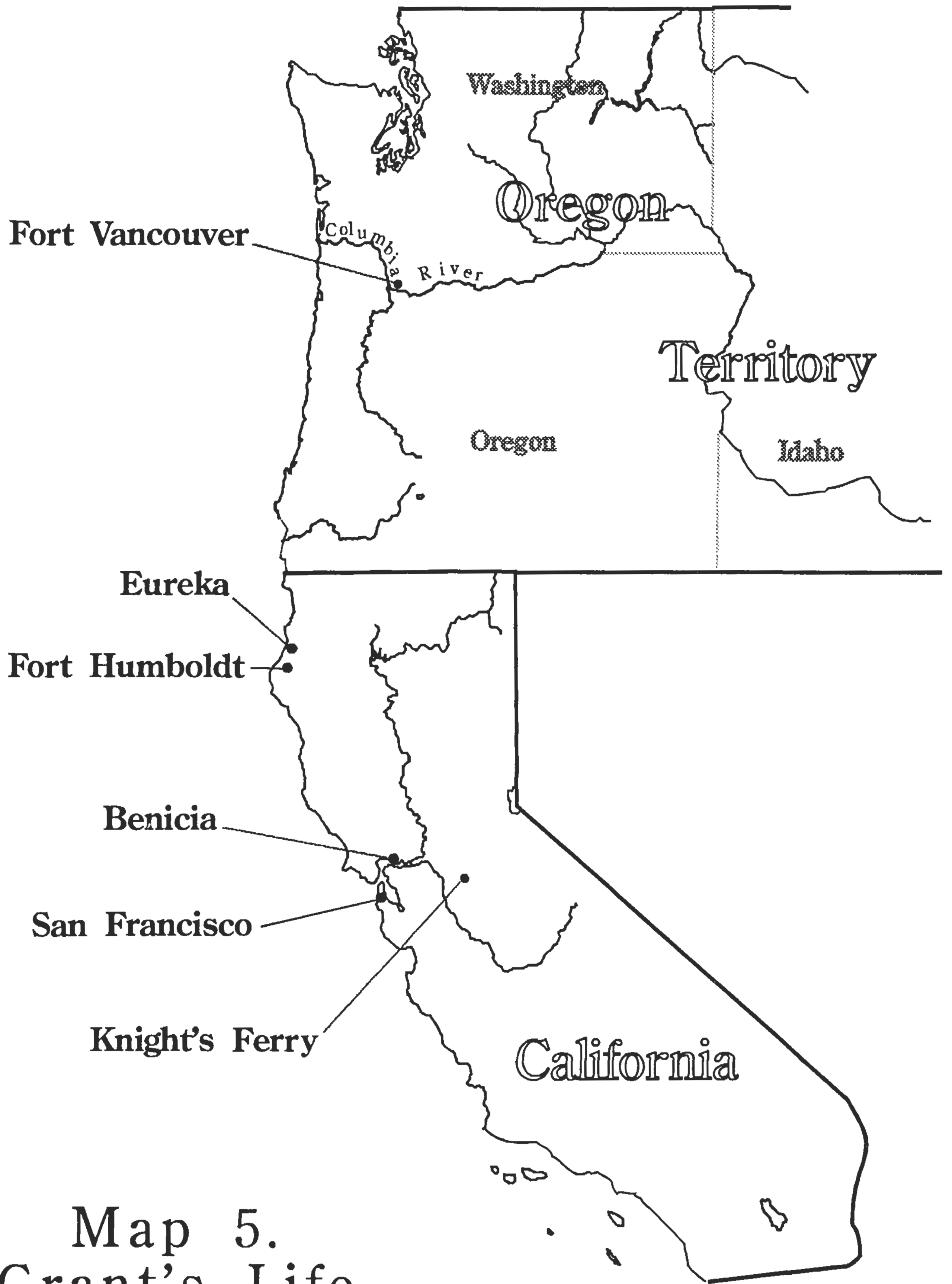
34. USG to JDG, June 28, 1853, *Papers*, I, 305; Ellington, 118-122, *passim*.

35. See USG to JDG, May 20, 1853, *Papers*, I, 300, for an early reference to Grant's leaving the army.

36. USG to JDG, March 31, 1853, *Papers*, I, 296-297.

37. USG to JDG, July 13, 1853, *Papers*, I, 307.

38. USG to JDG, January 18, [1854], *Papers*, I, 315.



Map 5.
Grant's Life
in the West,
1852-1854

accomplished the same. Buchanan was an unpleasant man, as Hunt had already warned Grant. Ulysses needed no introduction to his senior officer, having served with him at Jefferson Barracks, at Natchitoches, at Corpus Christi, and at Benicia. He knew that serving directly under Buchanan would be difficult.³⁹

The monotonously chilly, dreary days of Fort Humboldt affected him almost as soon as he arrived. "You do not know how forsaken I feel here! The place is good enough,"-- Grant attempted to sound cheerful:

but I have interests at others which I cannot help thinking about day and night.... I feel again as if I had been separated from you and Fred. long enough and as to Ulys. I have never seen him. He must by this time be talking about as Fred. did when I saw him last. How very much I want to see all of you.⁴⁰

Julia had not been writing as frequently as he thought a devoted wife should, or if she had he had not received them. Brevet Captain Grant explained to his wife and children:

There is no regular mail between here and San Francisco so the only way we have of getting letters off is to give them to some Captain of a vessel to mail them after he gets down. In the same way mails are received.... Sometimes, owing to adverse winds, vessels are 40 and even 60 days making the passage, while at others they make it in less than two days.⁴¹

Considering that mail had been two or three months delayed when Ulysses was at Vancouver, these additional delays from Humboldt to San Francisco alone were unbearable. By the end of March, only one six-month-old letter from Julia had gotten through to Ulysses, but he hoped one day all of her letters would reach him at once. "How very anxious I am to get home once again," he wrote.⁴²

In February, Ulysses had to have a false tooth removed, and as a consequence his face was swollen and numb almost beyond recognition. He could not shave, and no doubt his speech was hindered. Post returns appropriately listed him as sick. He wanted to go home so much that he considered leaving without permission, and he reported that his fellow

39. Ellington, 133; Cullum, *Biographical Register*, I, 617. Lloyd Lewis found evidence that Grant and Buchanan has "messed" (eaten) together at Jefferson Barracks and had an unpleasant run-in there that neither man ever forgot. Lloyd Lewis, *Captain Sam Grant* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1950), 108.

40. USG to JDG, February 2, [1854], *Papers*, I, 316.

41. USG to JDG, February 2, [1854], *Papers*, I, 317.

42. USG to JDG, March 25, 1854, *Papers*, I, 326.

officers felt the same.⁴³ Ulysses spent most of his time in the next month sitting around his house, occasionally venturing out to nearby Eureka and the pleasant company of officers and settlers at Ryan's Store. In April, Grant was sick again with what Dr. Johnathan Clark, who treated him then and in April, called "severe attacks."⁴⁴ On May 1, Buchanan reported that Grant was "too sick to travel just yet."⁴⁵ By that time, Buchanan knew Grant would be leaving soon.

On April 11, 1854, Ulysses S. Grant received and wrote a letter accepting his commission as captain in the Fourth Infantry, a position he had attained in August of the previous year. His appointment had been delayed like his letters from Julia were. That same day, he wrote another letter to the appropriate authorities: "I very respectfully tender my resignation of my commission as an officer of the Army, and request that it may take effect from the 31st July next." His resignation was approved and forwarded through a series of higher authorities, including Irvin McDowell, an old friend and former administrative officer at West Point. Grant had to get his old quartermaster accounts and company reports in order, and then he could begin civilian life. He obtained a 60-day leave of absence to settle his accounts and begin the trip home on May 9.⁴⁶ His days at Fort Humboldt were over, and in or out of the army he would see his family.

Jesse Grant was afraid his son Ulysses might resign, but he thought that a leave of absence to get his family might keep him in the army. Consequently, Jesse Grant wrote his representative, who in turn wrote Secretary of War Jefferson Davis requesting that Grant be given a leave of absence or be assigned to recruiting duties. Grant's resignation had been accepted five days before Davis received the request. Next, Jesse Grant wrote Davis personally and asked that his son's resignation be denied or revoked. Davis, finding no exceptional reason for Grant to remain in or leave the service, replied that the resignation was final.⁴⁷

43. USG to JDG, February 6, 1854, *Papers*, I, 321.

44. USG to JDG, March 6, 1854, *Papers*, I, 323. Clara M. George Shields interviewed old residents such as Clark of the Fort Humboldt area around the turn of the century and published her findings in "General Grant at Fort Humboldt in the Early Days," [Eureka] *Humboldt Times*, November 10, 1912, reprinted in the *Ulysses S. Grant Association Newsletter* and drawn on in Ellington, Chapter V: "How Forsaken I Feel Here."

45. Ellington, 227; *Papers*, 332.

46. USG to Col. Samuel Cooper, April 11, 1854; USG to Col. Samuel Cooper, April 11, 1854; both in *Papers*, I, 328-329, with annotations by other officers. A discussion of Grant's quartermaster accounts appears in *Papers*, I, 330. Grant's request for leave is also dated April 11, USG to 1st Lt. Joseph B. Collins, *Papers*, 331; and USG to Bvt. Major E.D. Townsend, May 7, 1854, *Papers*, 333.

47. Various letters related to Grant's resignation are in *Papers*, I, 330-331. See particularly Jesse Grant, Sr., to Jefferson Davis, June 21, 1854, *Papers*, I, 330-331, in which he gives Ulysses's separation from his family and unusual length of service without a six-month leave as his probable reasons for leaving the service. Jesse's motives for wanting Ulysses to remain in the army are unclear.

Why did Grant resign? Was he forced to submit his resignation by Buchanan for abuse of alcohol, as some biographers have contended? "All of the rivers of alcohol" in Grant's life "flow from the Fort Humboldt days," William McFeely wrote.⁴⁸ Few scholars have denied that Grant drank alcoholic beverages at Fort Humboldt and throughout his life. He lived in the company of fellow army officers who drank alcohol, and he openly drank it in moderation himself. No reliable evidence exists, however, to support the idea that Grant was an alcoholic, yet scandal sheets and a few scholarly works tie alcoholism to his resignation from the army in 1854. Hamlin Garland gave two stories of Grant's resignation. In one, Grant began to drink heavily at Humboldt, and Buchanan required that he fill out a resignation to be sent to Washington if he drank again. Then he drank again. In the other, Grant attended official duties drunk, and Buchanan demanded that Grant tender his resignation or stand trial. No evidence in official reports, contemporary diaries or letters, or even in the martinet character of Buchanan exists to support Garland's stories.⁴⁹ Grant's resignation on the day he received his promotion to captain also contradicts these stories. Grant's resignation immediately after accepting his commission suggests that he, not Buchanan, selected the date he resigned.

In 1908, future President William Howard Taft brought the issue of Grant's drinking before the public again in a speech widely condemned for its "recklessness of statement and brutal lack of good taste." He is credited to a large degree with reviving "[slanderous]" rumors that Grant was a heavy drinker and had been forced to resign.⁵⁰ From Taft's speech and Garland's biography truly flow the imaginary "rivers of alcohol."

William McFeely believed that Grant "left the army because he was profoundly depressed."⁵¹ Each biographer who rejected alcohol-related theories posited his own idea. "Major Penniman"--a pen name--proposed in 1864 that Grant left the army because it was dull in peacetime.⁵² In 1865, another author believed that it was the lack of opportunity for advancement in the officer-glutted army that led Grant to seek employment elsewhere.⁵³ Biographer Edward D. Mansfield, writing in 1868, suggested that the constant moving drove Grant out of military service.⁵⁴ Frank Burr in 1885 reverted to the theory that Grant was bored with the peacetime army, while J.K. Larke and J. Harris Patton in the same year

48. McFeely, 53.

49. Garland (1898), 124-128. Early twentieth-century authors repeated Garland's stories, such as Thomas M. Marshall, "An Early Chapter in the Life of General Grant," draft ms, MHS lecture April 27, 1922, 6.

50. "General Grant's Veracity Vindicated," [Cascade County] *Great Falls Tribune*, June 22, 1908, partially identified clipping, SIUC-USGA.

51. McFeely, 55.

52. Charles Dennison, *The Tanner-Boy* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1864), 81.

53. [Brocket?], *Our Great Captains*, 16-17.

54. Ed Mansfield, *A Popular and Authentic Life of Ulysses S. Grant* (Cincinnati: Carroll Co., 1868), 41-2.

combined theories and concluded that Grant was bored and he thought he could make a better living as a civilian.⁵⁵ Decades later Nicholas Smith reached yet another conclusion:

Humboldt Barracks was a dreary place. To Captain Grant military life in such an isolated spot was monotonous in the extreme. If there had been Indians to fight, or a regiment to feed, he would have felt differently. But the amusements, common in lazy barracks life, in which other officers would freely indulge, did not appeal to the Captain. He was a sober-minded, shy domestic man, and when not actively employed he had intense longing for home, and it seems that he had lost his grip on himself.⁵⁶

Smith knew part of Grant's problem: Fort Humboldt could be an unpleasant place to anyone, and Ulysses missed his family. Lloyd Lewis believed that he "hungered to see Ulysses Grant, Junior."⁵⁷

Grant wrote in his *Memoirs* that he resigned because he missed his family and his pay was inadequate to bring them to join him.⁵⁸ Acknowledging his father's statement, Grant's youngest son Jesse added that boredom contributed to his father's decision.⁵⁹ Lloyd Lewis discovered that Grant's pay probably was even more meager in 1854 than it had been in 1853, although he had been promoted to captain. Two other officers serving with Grant had received pay cuts of one third of their annual income. No government policy existed to explain the entire substantial pay cut.⁶⁰ In addition, at Fort Humboldt Grant had little opportunity to earn extra income as he had at Fort Vancouver. He had legitimate financial reasons to resign.

Finally, as Jefferson Davis discovered, there was nothing exceptional about Grant's resignation. An examination of the *Biographical Register* of U.S. Military Academy graduates revealed that many of Grant's fellow West Point cadets resigned in the early 1850s, and many resigned immediately at the close of the Mexican War.⁶¹ For example, William Tecumseh Sherman, three years ahead of Grant at the Point, resigned in 1852. Sherman

55. Frank A. Burr, *A New Original and Authentic Record of the Life and Deeds of Gen. U.S. Grant* (1885), 122; J.K. Larke and J. Patton, *General U.S. Grant* (Deposit, New York: Phillips and Burrows, 1885), 42.

56. Nicholas Smith, 49-50.

57. Lewis, 328.

58. USG, *Memoirs*, 141.

59. Jesse Grant, *In the Days*, 9-10.

60. Lloyd Lewis to USG III, December 28, 1948, SIUC-USGA.

61. Cullum, throughout volume I.

and Grant's resignations probably *raised* their ranks when the Civil War began; because they were no longer regular army officers, they could be appointed at much higher ranks than they held previously. In contrast, Grant's superior officer at Fort Humboldt, Robert Christie Buchanan, was a career army officer from his graduation in 1830 until after the Civil War. Buchanan received his rank as lieutenant colonel in the regular army in September 1861, a few months after Grant became a full colonel in the volunteer army.⁶²

Grant resigned from the army because he missed his family. He was frustrated with his work, location, and opportunity for advancement in the army. He wanted to improve his income. In May, he traveled to visit John Dent at Knight's Ferry, and a week or so later he left San Francisco by ship for New York City. As a retiring army officer, Ulysses received standard courtesy passage which was a relief to him because he had been unable to collect his last army pay or money owed to him by San Francisco residents. Grant left the west coast on June 1 and reached New York on June 25, having crossed to the Atlantic through Nicaragua.⁶³ He wrote quickly to Elijah Camp at Sackett's Harbor to warn him that he needed to collect the remaining \$800 Camp owed him, but, not surprisingly, Camp left town before Grant arrived. He then made his way back to New York City, where former cadet Simon Bolivar Buckner loaned him a little money and secured his hotel bill while he waited for his father to send him enough money to pay his bill there and get home. Within a week or so, Grant proceeded to Ohio to visit his family and then on to White Haven. Charles Ellington estimates that, allowing for Grant's side trips and traveling time, he arrived at White Haven sometime in August 1854.⁶⁴

At thirty-two, Ulysses Grant saw more of the world than most Americans. He was well-educated in local grammar schools and at the prestigious United States Military Academy. He learned about army camp life in Louisiana and Texas, and he saw his friends fight and die in the Mexican War. He fought valiantly, and his superior officers took note of the brash young man. After the fighting was over, he accomplished what he had hoped to do since the fighting began in Mexico: meet the people and get to know their land. He married at twenty-six and lived a few quiet blissful years before being separated from his wife and children. He moved several hundred people through the jungles of Panama, managed an epidemic, and handled the bad press that followed. He lived two unpleasant years away from his family and decided that he could make a better life out of the army. In August 1854, Ulysses S. Grant was ready to make good on the promise he had made when he left Fort Humboldt and the west: "Whoever hears of me in ten years, will hear of a well-to-do old Missouri farmer."⁶⁵

62. Cullum, I, 961.

63. JDG, *Memoirs*, 72-73. Some biographers claimed Grant lost all of his money on the west coast. Mary and William McFeely stated Grant was owed \$1750 in San Francisco. McFeely and McFeely, 1126.

64. Ellington, 198-200.

65. Lloyd Lewis was among the authors who recorded this legendary statement. Lewis, 332.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Grants by the Gravois:

The Civilian Years in St. Louis and Galena

*"In late summer of 1854 I rejoined my family, to find in it a son whom I had never seen, born while I was on the Isthmus of Panama. I was now to commence, at the age of thirty-two, a new struggle for our support. My wife had a farm near St. Louis, to which we went, but I had no means to stock it. A house had to be built also. I worked very hard, never losing a day because of bad weather, and accomplished the object in a moderate way. If nothing else could be done I would load a cord of wood on a wagon and take it to the city for sale. I managed to keep along very well until 1858, when I was attacked by fever and ague.... It lasted now for over a year, and, while it did not keep me in the house, it did interfere greatly with the amount of work I was able to perform. In the fall of 1858 I sold out my stock, crops and farming utensils at auction, and gave up farming." Ulysses S. Grant, *Memoirs*, 141.*

The crops were high in the fields as the former army captain, Ulysses Grant, made his way to White Haven, where his wife and two young sons lived with her parents. On his way along the old Gravois Road, he saw that more land had been cleared and put under cultivation in the past few years. Everywhere there were signs of the expansion of German immigrants into the countryside. They owned small but extremely productive vegetable farms, and their homes reflected that they were moving up in the world, although they did not own vast tracts of land. Grant passed the Sigerson Nursery tract, where the old enemies of his brothers-in-law lived and worked.

He crossed River des Peres and, winding his way southwest, reached the Gravois Creek. Perhaps he paused his horse for a drink in the cool and shallow water, hearing the distant sounds of children at the Sappington school. He could catch a glimpse of Lewis Dent's brick and stone house on the bluff above the creek, scarcely visible through the summer trees. Lewis built the house about the time Ulysses and Julia married. He turned up the lane that led to White Haven, now following the path he had taken when he first rode to White Haven in 1843 and met Emma swinging on the gate; when he courted Julia and walked the country lane to go fishing; when he emerged from Gravois Creek soaked through from the spring deluge to propose to her in May 1845; and when he rode up as the dashing lieutenant returning from the Mexican War in 1848 to wed the oldest Dent daughter. Now he was on his way to see Julia, to reintroduce himself to his son, Fred, and to see for the first time his two-year-old namesake, Ulysses Jr., whom the family called Buck.

Mary Robinson, a Dent family slave, described the scene. Ulysses saw his older son on the porch, scooped him up, making him afraid of this strange man who seemed vaguely

familiar. Then came Julia and Buck, wife and younger son, to draw Ulysses into the big old house. Ulysses pictured this boy so many times. He dreamed once that he had a daughter, but here was his second son, bright, babbling quietly.¹ Julia and Ulysses did not record the details of their reunion, but likely it was intimate; nine or ten months after Grant returned, Ellen Wrenshall Grant was born on July 4, 1855.

The Paradox of Poverty and the Self-Made Man: How Much Was U.S. Grant Worth in 1854?

In 1854, Ulysses Grant was beginning life again. Over the next seven years he worked hard at every task he undertook. He was a farmer, real estate salesman, and leather goods clerk. He strengthened his family and gave his wife and children the affection and confidence they would need after he became famous. He built a relationship with the Dents, his wife's family, and joined in their family farm. He supervised the work of slaves, working alongside them. He also freed a slave. He developed strong political beliefs and saw war on the horizon for his country. These years were some of the most formative of Grant's life.

In 1854, the United States was a hodge-podge of native and immigrant, wealthy and poor, cultured and backwoods. Much of the United States had been opened to settlement, although few settlers ranged beyond the security of eastern communities and kin. For some, ~~Grant's total worth of approximately \$3000 to \$4000 would have been a fortune;~~ to others, a pittance. By his early thirties, Grant accomplished more than most American men: he was among the youngest officers in the Mexican War; he accumulated enough to purchase a farm and tools when he could collect on his debts; he had sufficient training in mathematics and surveying to qualify for a faculty appointment at a small college; and he served for almost a decade as regimental quartermaster, in essence, the businessman of the army. He could command, but he did so with kindness and fairness.

Ulysses S. Grant came to White Haven to farm, a profession he had practiced as a child and while an army officer on the west coast. Biographers have had difficulty reconciling Grant's life as a farmer and manual laborer during this period with his later success. They express admiration or disdain for the work he did, and they frequently project their own feelings on Grant and those who knew him. One author said of this period in Grant's life, "Perhaps [the average American] has heard that Grant was an unsuccessful man or that he sold cordwood in a rather unsuccessful attempt to make a living for his family, but few have a coherent idea of that formative period when the man's character was in the making."² Grant and his acquaintances knew that the struggle made him stronger and his experience made him more sympathetic toward all people.

1. Mary Robinson in Grant Memorial Edition, *Missouri Republican*, July 24, 1885.

2. Thomas Maitland Marshall, "An Early Chapter in the Life of General Ulysses S. Grant," typed draft ms. of a lecture presented before the Missouri Historical Society, April 27, 1922, Missouri Historical Society.

Isaac Sturgeon, a St. Louis native whose family knew Grant, wrote, "General Grant was never awkward to tell of the days when he had to haul wood to town to sell but after this his opportunity came & he filled the most distinguished office of our country & the crowned heads of Europe took off their hats to him."³ With personal knowledge of the general and statesman, Sturgeon treated Grant's stint as a manual laborer as a normal progression within his life rather than as a paradox.

For some Americans, Grant's life as a common man brought discomfort. For others, his St. Louis years were support for the notion that any American could become president.

This fact strikingly illustrates the democratic nature of our institutions, and most nobly vindicates the dignity of labor. That Abraham Lincoln was... a rail-splitter... does not detract from his worth and eminence as President of the United States; that Lieutenant-General Grant... should have split and marketed cord-wood, in no way lessened the soldier's true greatness. As the Southern rebellion was based upon the idea of the inherent *baseness* of labor, it was well that the two men most potent in its suppression should be representative "mudsills," and haters of compulsory, unpaid service.⁴

Grant's sojourn in the Gravois fields provides a place where two conflicting concepts of good American leadership meet. Were the best leaders, as the early Federalists believed, men who were disinterested in power and money because they already had it? Or were the best leaders common folk, indicative of the potential for almost any American boy to grow up to be president? Grant was raised in the comfortable merchant class, but he knew of hard labor. He experienced academic success at West Point and glory in the Mexican War, but he had not achieved financial success. Some people preferred to believe that he had been in abject poverty if he were not rich and famous; he could not have been average. Biographers in favor of and opposed to Grant as a leader demonstrated repeatedly that they could not comprehend him being *average* at any point in his life, which he was.

Working at White Haven: A Family Venture

The Dents' Gravois farm was still a family venture in the 1850s. Julia's father was 67 or 68 years old in 1854, and he had neither the desire nor the energy to run his substantial farm. Grant returned in 1854 to participate in its operation as Julia's brothers

3. Isaac H. Sturgeon to Mr. Ryan, March 20, 1906, Isaac H. Sturgeon Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

4. Edward Willett, *The Life of Ulysses Sidney Grant, General U.S. Army* (New York: Beadle and Co., 1865), 18. Note that Willet incorrectly gave Grant's middle name as Sidney.

had done periodically during their adulthood. As one biographer wrote, "That autumn and winter Captain Grant... lived at the Dent homestead and took a hand in anything which needed to be done about the place."⁵ Frederick and Ellen Wrenshall Dent's children and their spouses worked the thousand-acre farm with the expectation that the land would be divided and distributed to them according to their commitment to it when the elder Dents died. Each child had a tract of land designated for his or her use, and Lewis Dent had already been deeded the southernmost portion for his house and fields (although he had left it briefly for California). Nellie, Emma, Julia, and Fred's sections were blocked off in the northernmost area and were largely undeveloped. If he chose to return from California, John would probably inherit the primary 200 acres on which his father lived. Wrenshall owned his own farm closer to downtown St. Louis and an interest in Knight's Ferry in California. He contributed little to production at White Haven. In the tradition of Grant's biographers, Julia "fortunately owned a small farm near St. Louis... without a dwelling house," but this does not adequately explain either the ownership or the process by which Grant came to work at White Haven.⁶ Grant was entering a family venture, similar to his father's tanning and leather business, in which all contributed and all benefitted. As long as there was room, all lived together under one or two roofs.

As it had been in earlier years, White Haven was a stock and dairy farm on which much of the labor was performed by a few slaves. In 1850, Frederick Dent owned thirty slaves, eighteen of which lived at White Haven. They were primarily women in their twenties and children. The Dents raised cattle for beef and for dairy produce, and they probably grew grain to supply feed. They would have grown their own vegetables, and they had fruit trees and berries.

Although some biographers have contended that Ulysses was unfit for farm work, having never performed it in his life, his record proves otherwise. As a youngster, Grant farmed his own family's land in exchange for being relieved of duties in the tanyard. At West Point he was unused to agricultural work, but the equestrian program kept him physically fit. In Louisiana, Texas, and Mexico, he participated in the construction of shacks and huts for the Fourth Infantry whenever they were encamped for long periods of time. In Oregon, Grant planted a potato crop and other vegetables. Hamlin Garland wrote that Lincoln had come from humbler beginnings than Grant, but that Lincoln "had no trial more difficult than Grant's return to severe manual labor after having been fifteen years accustomed to the routine and security of army life."⁷ Garland's assertion that Grant was sedentary for fifteen years was incorrect, although Ulysses was entering the leanest years of his life.

5. Hamlin Garland, *Ulysses S. Grant: His Life and Character* (New York: Doubleday and McClure Co., 1898), 131.

6. Walter Allen, *Ulysses S. Grant* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, and Co.; Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1901), 38.

7. Garland, 131.

Working at White Haven: The Woodsman and the Farmer

Grant's first project in the winter of 1854-55 was to begin clearing the forested plot of land that Frederick Dent had designated for him and Julia. As he cleared, he cut the wood to lengths for cordwood and coal mine props. Then, as his neighbors did, he hauled the wood to the Twelfth Street market in St. Louis, Jefferson Barracks, and to the coal mines between St. Louis and the farm, near what is now Tower Grove Park. Wood was Grant's first cash crop. During the winter months and whenever other work on the farm lagged, Grant could continue clearing, chopping, hauling, and selling his loads of wood. Thus he earned a steady income even in the months when there were no crops for sale on the farm.

On his trips to St. Louis and the barracks, Grant dressed as a "sturdy woodsman." He wore a blouse, his pants tucked into his boots, sometimes a felt hat, and on colder days his worn but serviceable army coat. He frequently saw old friends in both places, and he met other St. Louis residents while delivering wood to them.⁸

After his rise to fame, Ulysses Grant enjoyed hearing stories of his wood venture, as did most Americans. Here was a man who had delivered wood and become the highest ranking general in the United States. Benjamin Butler once said to Senator Nesmith that Grant had won American hearts with his victory at Fort Donelson in 1862. Nesmith corrected him: "No, I think he first touched the popular chord when he hauled wood from his farm and sold it at full measure in St. Louis."⁹

His work was lucrative, as metropolitan St. Louis needed as much fuel in the 1850s as it had needed bread and grain decades before. Grant could earn \$4 to \$6 from one load of wood. Had he sold wood six days a week, he could have earned almost \$1,900 a year, a sizable income for the average American in those days and a sum favorably comparable to his army pay. Grant guarded the wood on his farm as did other Gravois residents, and he did not hesitate to stop a man who had been stealing his wood.¹⁰ Those who looked down on Grant for selling his wood (one recent biographer attached the misnomer of deliveryman to him because of his wood-selling activities) were foolish; Grant was exhibiting good business sense by selling a product in demand that he had in abundance.¹¹

8. Albert D. Richardson, *A Personal History of Ulysses S. Grant* (Hartford, Connecticut: American Publishing Co.; Newark, New Jersey: Bliss and Co.; Chicago: G. and C.W. Sherwood; San Francisco: R.J. Trumbull and Co., 1868, 1869), 153.

9. Walter B. Stevens, *Grant in St. Louis* (St. Louis: Franklin Club of St. Louis, 1916), 27.

10. Richardson, 156-57; Walter B. Stevens (1916), 33-34.

11. St. Louis historian Nini Harris referred to Grant casually as a "deliveryman" in her history of Carondelet. Nini Harris, *A History of Carondelet* (St. Louis: Patrice Press, 1991), 33.

When Grant returned to White Haven in late summer of 1854, there were crops to bring in. Grant did whatever field work was needed, working with the family's slaves on cradling and binding the wheat harvest.¹² The next year, on his own newly cleared fields and on the Dents' older fields, Grant planted crops. His primary agricultural interests in 1856 at White Haven were potatoes and wheat. Because he had horses and probably other barnyard animals, he no doubt also raised feed grain such as oats and corn. During the 1850s, a technological agricultural revolution was underway. Grant probably used an iron or steel plow and may have had access to a mechanical reaper. His potatoes would have been cultivated and harvested by hand, however. Grant worked with one to three other men, both slaves and hired hands.¹³

The slaves with whom Grant worked belonged to Julia, but, as with the land, they may not have been transferred to her outright. She grew up with four or five slave playmates who were to be her own, and now the men were of age to contribute as full hands in the fields. Grant also occasionally hired extra hands, and a few neighbors claimed that he overpaid them. In keeping with local tradition and necessity, he worked with his employees and slaves without hesitation.¹⁴

Grant treated the men who worked for him with respect, too much respect, some neighbors claimed. Others recorded that the Grant animals around White Haven were pets more than they were beasts of burden.¹⁵ Perhaps his neighbors did not know his distaste for meat and poultry and wondered why he rarely butchered an animal.

Julia claimed to have been a "splendid farmer's wife." She raised Shanghai, Bantam, and Brahma chickens. She churned butter once (successfully, to her surprise), and she sewed, did fancy work, and socialized about the neighborhood.¹⁶

**Working at White Haven:
The View from the Dents, the Neighbors,
the Grants, and the Barracks**

The Grant family's St. Louis years are often presented by biographers as having been poor ones. In 1854, Grant had land warrants from Washington Territory, and he was owed

12. Garland, 132-33.

13. Nicholas Smith, *Grant, the Man of Mystery* (Milwaukee: Young Churchman Co., 1909), 56; USG to JRG (Sr.), December 28, 1856, *Papers*, I, 334.

14. *Life and Services of Gen. U.S. Grant*, issued by the Republican National Committee (Washington: Philip and Solomons, 1868), 9-10; Garland, 132-33.

15. Owen Wister, *Ulysses S. Grant*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Small, Maynard, and Co., 1900, 1901), 28.

16. JDG, *Memoirs*, 77-80.

about three thousand dollars in San Francisco and from Elijah Camp, who was now in Sackett's Harbor. Grant had the means with which to purchase a team of good horses when he arrived in St. Louis, and with his wife owned four or five slaves and eighty to one hundred acres of wooded land. The Grant family had ample means with which to launch a comfortable life for themselves.

Frederick Dent has been perceived as a wealthy planter with an abundance of slaves, a "southerner of considerable means, a successful, substantial citizen" who spoke in "uncomplimentary language" about Grant and his pecuniary health.¹⁷ One source recorded that Dent magnanimously gave Ulysses and Julia one thousand dollars with which to begin again in 1854.¹⁸ Another suggested that he grudgingly allowed Grant to live at White Haven for the sake of Julia.¹⁹ These interpretations over-simplify the relationship between Grant and his father-in-law and ignore the financial distress under which Dent had been suffering for ten or fifteen years. Dent probably did not have one thousand dollars to lend or give to Grant, and, with his sons on their own places or operating the ferry in California, he desperately needed Grant to assist him with the farm operations.²⁰ In comparable financial situations, their need was mutual. Around the neighborhood, the Grants were *equals* among young society and farmed and lived as their neighbors did.

The Grant children, who were raised in surroundings varying from Civil War encampments to the White House, had telling memories of their lives along the Gravois. Although biographers have stressed the "rigors of want" and allowed that Grant had not progressed beyond "very moderate success" after much privation and hard labor, the children and neighbors of Grant remembered otherwise.²¹ "No member of the Grant family looked back upon that farm life as it has been presented by some of the biographers," Walter Stevens wrote. "There was none of that poverty which has been pictured to heighten the contrast with the fame that came later."²² Fred Grant, the oldest son, recalled that his father "raised crops successfully...."²³ Julia commented, "Ulysses really was very successful at farming. His crops yielded well--," but she tempered her praise by adding, "that is, much

17. Harry M. Hagen, *This Is Our St. Louis* (St. Louis: Knight Publishing Co., 1970), 186; Robertus Love in James L. Post, ed., *Reminiscences by Personal Friends of General U.S. Grant and the History of Grant's Log Cabin* (St. Louis: James L. Post, 1904), 30-31.

18. Franklin Spencer Edmonds, *Ulysses S. Grant* (Philadelphia: G.W. Jacobs and Co., 1915), 78-79.

19. Garland, 131.

20. As was discussed in Chapter Three, Frederick Dent was deeply in debt. As he aged, he was less able to oversee the affairs of the farm.

21. Allen, 38; Nicholas Smith, *Grant, the Man of Mystery* (Milwaukee: Young Churchman Co., 1909), 56.

22. Walter B. Stevens (1916), 31; Marshall, 7-8.

23. "Reminiscences of General Frederick Dent Grant," *Ulysses S. Grant Association Newsletter*, VI: 3 (April 1969), 19.

better than papa's, but not as much as he anticipated from his calculations on paper....¹²⁴ Grant fared as well as his neighbors, and they had no reason to criticize his accomplishments.

As a St. Louisan, Grant knew a variety of citizens from his Gravois neighbors to members of the "old families" of St. Louis. Occasionally he met friends from his army days. He had a good reputation among those who knew him. While delivering mine props and wood, "He made a lasting impression on his neighbors and the people of St. Louis," his grandson Ulysses S. Grant III wrote.²⁵

Mr. Hendricks, who lived on the way from White Haven to St. Louis, remembered his many casual meetings with Grant fondly: "He was considerably older than I, but he was very friendly with me. I never met him in the road that he didn't speak to me cordially, and, perhaps, stop and talk a while. Grant was a very friendly man. Everybody on the road liked him."²⁶

Two groups of comfortable society lived around Sappington in the 1850s: the older Creole and English slave-holding families, who were land-rich but cash-poor; and the newer German families, who were cash-rich but land-poor. Grant appeared to have been more friendly with the first group than the latter, as he operated his farm the same way they did, with slave labor augmented by his own elbow grease. The Dents had experienced quite a few serious feuds with some of their immigrant neighbors. Among these neighbors, Grant's reputation was soured a bit by his association with the Dents.²⁷

Among the poorer farmers of native and foreign extraction Grant was held in high esteem. One particular incident contributed to this. One afternoon as Grant was returning from St. Louis along the Gravois Road, he met a group of men who were discussing a neighbor. The neighbor had lost everything in a fire the night before, and his friends had gathered to discuss what they could do for this family. Grant gave the group five dollars, the proceeds from his wood-selling, saying, "I know that man--he is a good man.... I wish I had more to give."²⁸

Because Grant married into a socially prominent St. Louis family, he knew and was related to several other prominent families in the city. Caroline O'Fallon was related to

24. JDG, *Memoirs*, 77.

25. USGIII, *Ulysses S. Grant, Warrior and Statesman* (New York:, 1969), 104.

26. "Wagon Used by Grant Still Intact," partially identified clipping, St. Louis *Globe-Democrat* Morgue, Mercantile Library.

27. Garland, 132; William Taussig, "Address" in Post, 85.

28. General John W. Noble on the word of Henry C. Wright in Post, 44.

Frederick Dent, so Grant came to know John O'Fallon.²⁹ Maj. Gen. William Harney, of course, Grant knew from the army. Dr. Barrett was a neighbor, and Isaac H. Sturgeon was a friend from about town. Grant delivered wood to the Henry Blow household, and on his triumphant return to St. Louis after achieving fame he requested to see a tree at the Blow residence. Grant accidentally hit it one day after he dropped off his load of wood, and Mrs. Blow had chastised him severely for it.³⁰

Even in later years Grant did not hesitate to retell stories related to his days as a manual laborer to those in St. Louis who were better off than he in those days. At one White House dinner, Mrs. Sturgeon commented that she hated getting up early in the morning. Grant confessed that he had never bothered to haul his wood at the crack of dawn because it was too cold. "When I would be going into town with my load I would meet the other fellows coming back. They had jumped up with the chickens and in the cold whilst I took it comfortable and easy. They could only make one load a day and I did as much as they and much more comfortably."³¹

Grant saw his old army friends around St. Louis and when he delivered wood to Jefferson Barracks. Some apparently snubbed him when they saw him in civilian clothes, but most greeted him familiarly and were "glad to welcome him and talk over other times." They treated his hauling as they did any job.³² James "Pete" Longstreet, who claimed very distant kin to Julia by marriage and stood with Ulysses at his marriage, met him one day near the barracks. Grant was "poorly dressed in the garb of a farmer," but nonetheless eager to join his old army chums in a game of cards. The next day he returned with a gold piece for Longstreet, in payment of a debt incurred some six to ten years previously. (Longstreet had forgotten it, but he finally accepted Grant's money when pressed.) The next time the two men met was at Appomattox.³³

Years later with fame, rumors began to surface that Grant had been an alcoholic while farming in St. Louis. Friends and acquaintances repeatedly denied the accusations, and newspaper reporters seeking gossip could find no one to substantiate the slanderous stories. For example, the St. Louis correspondent to a Milwaukee paper wrote in 1864, "About his being an inebriate, I find nothing to confirm it." The journalist said he heard that

29. O'Fallon was a colonel in the War of 1812, but he made his fortune in St. Louis in the eastern trade and as a large slave-holder. Harriette L. Ely to Mrs. Netti Harney Beauregard, April 13, [19]29, John O'Fallon Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

30. Harris, 25-26.

31. Isaac H. Sturgeon to Mr. Ryan, 20 March, 1906, Isaac H. Sturgeon Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

32. Marshall, 7; Robertus Love in Post, 30-31; *Life and Services of General U.S. Grant* (1868), 9-10.

33. Walter B. Stevens (1916), 34-35.

Grant might have taken one drink on a cold day at the market but that was the extent of it.³⁴ Henry Wright, who lived near White Haven, stated clearly, "No one considered him a drinking man, and there were no stories abroad then concerning his immoderate use of whiskey." Thus, neither among his old army friends nor St. Louis citizens did Grant appear as anything except upright and respectable.³⁵

Just as people concocted stories of insobriety during Grant's St. Louis years, others who had never met him claimed to have known him personally or to have assisted him in some way. In the case when the relationship was factual, Grant as general and president embraced his old St. Louis friends. For example, Mrs. Amanda Masure invited Grant to join her for dinner several times when he was returning late from hauling his wood. After Grant became president, he remembered her kindness and invited her to dine at the White House. When she was leaving the city, he had a picnic hamper prepared with "the best lunch which the White House could prepare."³⁶

On the Border of Kansas in 1854-55

During Grant's first year back in St. Louis, politics loomed passionate on the Missouri scene. During the winter of 1854-55, settlers and others on their way to the Kansas battle zone were caught by early snows and ice and were forced to spend several months huddled in St. Louis.³⁷ ~~Grant left no record of his opinion of this mass of people and the ways of life which they were advocating, but they once again put him in the midst of the struggle between slave and free ideology (as he had foreseen in the Mexican War and the consequent American territorial expansion).~~

St. Louis in the 1850s was undergoing a power struggle of its own between the old Anglo and Creole alliance and the new German population, with its growing economic power. The on-going feud between the Dents and Sigersons, discussed in Chapter Two, was a manifestation of this power struggle. The old families believed that they had just cause to restrict immigration, since for several years incoming foreigners brought cholera with them. In the summer of 1849, this disease wiped out thousands of residents. Older

34. J.K. Larke and J. Harris Patton, *General U.S. Grant: His Early Life and Military Career with an Account of His Presidential Administration and Tour Around the World* (Deposit, New York: Phillips and Burrows, 1885), 47.

35. Garland, 135-139, *passim*. Walter Allen, writing in 1901, stated that Grant could not have avoided drunkenness and universally believed him to be an alcoholic and general failure. He offered no evidence to substantiate his assumptions, however.

36. Walter B. Stevens (1916), 104.

37. Jay Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border, 1854-1865* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1955; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 15.

residents of St. Louis could point to the cholera epidemic and its link to immigrants as evidence that the newcomers should be feared and controlled.

The local community no doubt affected Grant's views of slavery in his early days in St. Louis. Most of the Dents' neighbors with whom they associated were farmers and slaveholders. There were those political leaders of the metropolitan area such as the O'Fallons who held large numbers of slaves and were cousins to the Dents. They were not plantation lords, and they preserved some of the concepts of rights of slaves that had been established when St. Louis was Spanish-Catholic territory. Some masters chose to emancipate faithful slaves, as they had in colonial St. Louis, and, unlike in other states, freed slaves could remain in the city if they chose.³⁸ The urban nature of St. Louis also tempered slavery; many slaves performed work that required a great deal of independence from their masters, and they frequently came into contact with free blacks. Census takers counted 3,000 slaves in St. Louis in 1850, but by 1860, that number had dwindled to a mere 1,500 out of a total population of 160,000. Fewer than 200 masters held these slaves. In St. Louis and across the state of Missouri, the average number of slaves per master was only eight, the lowest average in the country. The city atmosphere, the nature of city jobs, and low ratio of slaves to masters affected the character of Missouri slavery and contributed to the tenor set by Creole St. Louis slaveholders.

The general attitude of masters toward slaves was paternalistic rather than tyrannical. Slaves were still people held with few human rights in involuntary servitude, but they were treated as children more than animals as they were in some parts of the country. Grant's greatest exposure to blacks and slavery came under this system.³⁹

Ulysses also knew leaders who were opposed to slavery, such as Thomas Hart Benton. For years, the Dents relied on their connections with Benton to get appointments, demonstrated by John Dent's appointment to the army as colonel during the Mexican War. The Dents' slave-holding tendencies apparently did not hurt their relationship with Benton. While anti-slavery politicians generally recognized St. Louis slavery as a mild form of the "peculiar institution" and associated with families such as the Dents, they would not deny the fact that it was human bondage and that free blacks did not have the same rights as St. Louis whites. E.P. Holmes, a former Georgia house slave who did not experience want until after he was emancipated, explained in 1883, "Most anyone ought to know a man is better off free than as a slave, even if he did not have anything.... I fared just as well as any white child could have fared when I was a slave, and yet I would not give up my freedom."⁴⁰

38. See Suzanne Lebsack, *The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1984), 90-92, for information on manumission restrictions.

39. Garland, 132. Because of the few number of slaves in Missouri comparable to populations in other states, few first-hand accounts of slavery exist.

40. Quoted in Eric Foner, *Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy*, Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures in Southern History (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 7.

In 1843 and 1847, the Missouri legislators enacted laws restricting the movements and education of blacks. The laws were not particularly effectual in the city, where a core community of free, educated blacks prospered. The law's real success could have been in keeping blacks out of Missouri's new public school system. Although free blacks were prohibited from entering the state, Missouri did not enact legislation ordering manumitted slaves to leave the state within a certain period of time, as had been required in Virginia since the early 1800s. The population of free blacks increased slowly but steadily in the city, while the proportion of whites to slaves decreased. In the last full decade of slavery in Missouri, the number of slaves was reduced by half in St. Louis.⁴¹

Within the framework of the politics, culture, and law of local race relations, Ulysses Grant and old Frederick Dent lived under the same roof. Neighbors have sometimes claimed that Dent and Grant were at odds politically, constantly in the heat of argument over the merits of slavery. Grant was said to have been a staunch abolitionist, and Dent was pro-slavery, of course. There is little evidence to support claims of any deep-seated hostility that was allegedly building between Dent and Grant at this time.⁴² It is more plausible that both men discussed the conflict in Kansas, the immigrant invasion, and slavery, all the while refining their personal views of slavery. Most likely they found some grounds for agreement, such as dilemmas that would be created if America's slaves were freed instantaneously.

Wish-ton-wish and Hardscrabble, 1855-1856

In the spring of 1855, the Grant family moved to Wish-ton-wish, an "English villa"--actually a two-story brick house with stone accents reminiscent of German homes in the area--constructed by Julia's brother Lewis in 1848-49.⁴³ Wish-ton-wish was on the triangular

41. See Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1975), 312-313, for the comparably harsh treatment and degradation of blacks in colonial Virginia. For other comparative perspectives, see Stanley M. Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life*, 3d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959, 1968, 1976), and Winthrop Jordan, *The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974). Compare these with Lloyd A. Hunter, "Slavery in St. Louis, 1804-1860," *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin* (July 1974), 233-265. Although Hunter's thesis is that slavery in St. Louis was much more harsh than contemporaries believed, the evidence he presents supports the contrary. See Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1974), II, 98-101, for comparative information on manumission and the decline of the slave population in border cities, 1850-1860.

42. F. A. Weber to Mrs. Eugene (Louise) Marsh, February 7, 1920, Louise Marsh Papers, Missouri Historical Society. This letter states that Dent gave Grant the farmland north of White Haven to give both of them breathing space for their opinions. As has been discussed previously, Julia's land was given in accordance with family tradition and in the same area as the other children's land.

43. Wish-ton-wish is a species of Missouri prairie dog in a Native American tongue. However, the early nineteenth-century writer James Fenimore Cooper mistranslated the word as whippoorwill in his novel *The*
(continued...)

piece of ground southeast of White Haven, near what is now Eddie and Parke Road.⁴⁴ Lewis returned to California, so he appreciated having trustworthy relatives to care for the property in his absence. The Grants lived at Wish-ton-wish until October 1856, when they moved to a log house Grant had built on the property Dent gave to Julia, close to the Grant fields.⁴⁵

In the spring and summer of 1856, Grant began cutting and hewing the logs for a new house, to be located on Julia's land on what is now Rock Hill Road. Living at White Haven and Wish-ton-wish, Grant had been one or two miles from his crops, and getting to them each day took a large percentage of his time. In addition, with no family members living within a mile or so, the crops were threatened by poachers, just as the standing trees on the estate had been. The Grants had three children now, ranging in age from one-year-old Nellie to six-year old Fred. They needed their own home.⁴⁶

Julia desired that their home be frame, but old Mr. Dent urged Ulysses to make his home of logs because it would be warmer. Dent won the argument.⁴⁷ Grant's cabin was built in the grand pioneer tradition of constructing log houses. Grant worked on his own and with Julia's few slaves until he assembled all of the component parts. Then, he designated a day for the "raisin," when his Gravois neighbors joined to help him. Perry Sappington, John Parke, Wilson Wells, Jonah Sappington, Linton Sappington, Joe Berry, and Harrison Long's slave, Budd, helped to lift the walls into position. Old Mr. Dent, perched on a white horse, directed the action. Charles Weber, a local cabinet-maker and later proprietor of Weber Nursery, made the sashes and door frames with Grant's assistance. On his own, Grant laid the floors, built the staircase, and shingled the roof. The house was

43. (...continued)

Last of the Mohicans and in his story, "The Wept of Wishtonwish." See Frederick Webb Hodge, ed., *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico*, Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 30 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1910), Part 2, 965. Lewis Dent may have been familiar with both meanings of Wishtonwish when he named his house, although traditionally Grant biographers have used Cooper's mistranslation when describing Lewis's house.

44. The title abstract for the White Haven estate and correspondence between Ulysses and Julia Grant in the 1860s indicates clearly where Wishtonwish was located. See Chapter Eight.

45. JDG, *Memoirs*, 76.

46. A few St. Louisans have suggested that Frederick Fayette Dent and Ulysses Grant had such vehement arguments over slavery that Dent gave Grant the land to get him out of his house, Grant gladly accepting his offer. As will be discussed throughout this chapter, however, Grant and Dent's politics were largely in accord in 1856 when Grant was building his house. Both men supported the Democratic Party and voted for James Buchanan in 1856. F.A. Weber to Mrs. Eugene Marsh, February 7, 1920, Louise Marsh Papers, Missouri Historical Society. Margaret Barrett, "The House with a Proud Pedigree," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, September 30, 1956, 6. The reliability of Barrett's article was discussed in Chapter One.

47. JDG, *Memoirs*, 79.

finished in the summer of 1856. In late September after the harvest was complete, the Grant family moved to their new home, which Ulysses dubbed "Hardscrabble."⁴⁸

The name Hardscrabble represented Grant's approach to his life and was one of many facetious names that he applied to the objects of importance in his life. Keeping in mind the grandiose names of "White Haven" and "Wish-ton-wish" that the Dents applied to their homes, Grant selected a mocking name for his house. Hardscrabble, young Jesse Grant wrote, "was bestowed in humorous recognition and defiance of the conditions father understood and voluntarily faced" around St. Louis.⁴⁹ The origin of the name could be twofold. First, near Galena, Illinois, where both Frederick Dent and Jesse Grant, Sr. had businesses, is a town now called Hazel Green but formerly known as Hardscrabble. Grant may have had in mind the Galena businesses when he named his home. Equally plausible is that Grant took the name from a newspaper satire of the Iron Mountain railway construction, Carondelet, River des Peres, and the Gravois neighborhood. In the summer of 1855, a whimsical article which made fun of the entire area appeared in the *St. Louis Republican*, the newspaper which Dent and Ulysses Grant read. Grant would have appreciated the humor of the article. Carondelet was renamed Hardscrabble by the satirist. As one researcher commented, "In light of Col. Dent's litigation with that city, that would be a bit ironic."⁵⁰

A substantial log house, Hardscrabble was composed of two two-story cabins that were attached with an enclosed dogtrot. The dogtrot was neatly framed and covered with clapboard, forming central hallways on both floors. On each side of the dogtrot was a room. Most people remembered that there were four rooms altogether, although Julia's sister Emma remembered five. Her memory may serve as evidence that the second-floor central hall was used as additional living space.⁵¹

The Grants furnished their house comfortably. Although Julia thought it crude and rough, her friends were complimentary.⁵² The house was comparable to the neighbors'

48. F.A. Weber to Mrs. Eugene Marsh, February 7, 1920, Louise Marsh Papers, Missouri Historical Society; account sheet from Sappington Coal Company, E. Sappington, Manager, 190-, Ulysses S. Grant Papers, Missouri Historical Society; Marshall, 6; JDG, *Memoirs*, 79.

49. Review and excerpt: Jesse R. Grant, in collaboration with Henry Francis Granger, "Recollections of my Father, General Grant," as told by Jesse R. Grant. clipping, *St. Louis Globe-Democrat Morgue*, December 28, 1924.

50. Grant and Granger, "Recollections", 1; Jesse Root Grant, *In the Days of My Father, General Grant*, in collaboration with Henry Francis Granger (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1925), 9; Garland, 134; John Lindenbusch to John Y. Simon, August 16, 1979, Ulysses S. Grant Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

51. Emma Dent Casey, "When Grant Went A'Courtin'," corrected ms., James Finney Casey Collection, Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site.

52. JDG, *Memoirs*, 78-80.

houses. For example, the William Lindsay Long house, occupied by his son John Fenton Long since the death of Lindsay and Elizabeth in 1849, was a house of similar size. The nearby Zephaniah Sappington house was also composed of logs, although substantial additions made it a much larger house. Other neighbors lived in log, stone, frame, and, most recently, brick houses, all of similar size and shape as Hardscrabble.

Ulysses loved the house, having built it with his own hands. Julia did not. Therefore, when her mother died on January 14, 1857, just three months after the Grants moved to Hardscrabble, they moved back to White Haven to help old Mr. Dent.

The memories that local residents have of Hardscrabble are amazingly clear, considering the Grants' short stay there. Some recalled long evenings of playing checkers with Ulysses.⁵³ Many biographers mistakenly report that the family lived several years at Hardscrabble. Among these was Grant scholar John Y. Simon, who initially placed the Grants at Hardscrabble from 1854 almost to the Civil War.⁵⁴ Jesse, the youngest Grant child, admitted, "I regret that my memory does not carry back to the days when we lived at Hardscrabble. Strive as I may... no faintest impression remains. But I have heard much of the life during that period, and I know we were all there--...."⁵⁵ In fact, Julia's *Memoirs* prove that Jesse could not remember Hardscrabble because he was born after the Grants moved back to White Haven.⁵⁶

Hardscrabble was important to the life of Ulysses S. Grant because it was a creation of his own design and own hands. He reported with pride and modesty in his *Memoirs* of his efforts, "I worked very hard, never losing a day because of bad weather, and accomplished the object in a moderate way."⁵⁷ Grant's log house is significant to understanding the developing character of the man who lived on the Gravois farm.⁵⁸

53. Robertus Love in Post, 34.

54. See Kim Plummer, "See Restored Grant's Cabin: Hardscrabble Log Cabin Shows Pioneer Spirit," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* Morgue, September 22, 1978, St. Louis Mercantile Library.

55. Jesse Root Grant (1925), 10.

56. Jesse Root Grant was born February 6, 1858, a year after the Grants left Hardscrabble. See JDG, *Memoirs*, 78-80.

57. USG, *Memoirs*, 141.

58. Unfortunately, Hardscrabble has been dismantled and moved three times since Grant's possession. In the 1890s it was moved to Webster Groves, Missouri, and in 1903 it was set up in Forest Park, St. Louis, as advertisement for the C.F. Blanke Coffee Company at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. A few years later it was moved back to the Gravois Farm, this time to the land that had belonged to Lewis Dent and near where he built Wish-ton-wish. Since that time the cabin has been owned by the Augustus Busch family. It is currently on display as part of Grant's Farm.

While living at Wish-ton-wish and building Hardscrabble, Grant continued his farm work. In the summer of 1856, Grant put in twenty bushels of potatoes, which yielded about three hundred fifty bushels. He had twenty-five acres of wheat and grew corn and oats for feed. In his plans for the following year, he hoped to raise an additional twenty acres of Irish potatoes, five acres each of sweet potatoes, corn, cabbage, beets, cucumbers for pickling, and melons. He had limited funds with which to purchase seed, however, and only the cash from what he had made from hauling wood.⁵⁹

In the winter of 1856-57, Grant wrote twice to his father asking for a loan. Jesse Grant, Senior, had offered Ulysses \$1,000 with which to start farming when he returned from the west coast, but like many of Jesse's offers the money never materialized. Without the anticipated cash to make capital improvements and without the money from Elijah Camp and his California debtors, Grant found it difficult to make the best use of his farm. Nevertheless, he persevered and proclaimed, "Every day I like farming better and I do not doubt but that money is to be made at it." With the loan from his father, he believed he could do well. Without it, he anticipated selling out.⁶⁰

Politics on the Gravois: The Election of 1856

In 1855 and 1856, Grant continued to watch the political scene. Grant and old Mr. Dent subscribed to the *Missouri Republican*, a newspaper sympathetic with the Democratic Party. Through this newspaper, he learned of the escalating blood bath in Kansas, of John Brown's revenge on proslavery settlers who had moved against Free-Soilers at Pottawatomie in late May, and of a new political party which formed a month later in Illinois, the Republican Party.⁶¹

Grant watched the political situation closely, because this would be his first opportunity to vote for the president of the United States. In the previous elections, he was at army posts or in transit to new posts; without fulfilling residency requirements, he was not

58. (...continued)

The log house suffered during the moves and subsequently. At one time, logs were removed for gifts to St. Louis benefactors. For example, one of the Rockefellers received a log in gratitude for a donation to the St. Louis Public Library. In the 1970s, several deteriorated logs were replaced with logs from an old barn of comparable age found in another part of Missouri. ("Grant's Home To Open to Public Next Month," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, August 17, 1978, St. Louis Mercantile Library). While Hardscrabble remains a unique and fascinating resource as a surviving cabin built by an American president, it lacks structural and locational integrity.

59. USG to JRG, Sr., December 28, 1856, *Papers*, I, 358.

60. USG to JRG, Sr., December 28, 1856, *Papers* I: 334-335; USG to JRG, Sr., February 7, 1857, *Papers*, 336-337.

61. Monaghan, 60-68, *passim*.

eligible to vote.⁶² In 1856, he realized the significance of the election nationally, fearing that a victory by the new Republican Party would result in war. He considered Kansas, which was nothing less than a war zone in the summer before the election. He considered the candidates: President Millard Fillmore on the American and Whig tickets; James Buchanan on the Democratic ticket; and John C. Fremont on the Republican ticket.

The American Party, which met on February 22 before the worst of the trouble in Kansas broke out, made nativism the focus of its platform. The Democratic National Convention, which met on June 2 as news leaked out about the Brown family's massacre of proslavery men in Kansas, supported the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act in the interest of peace. The Republican Convention met two weeks later, as the Kansas conflict peaked, and advocated congressional territorial restriction of slavery and the admission of Kansas as a free state. The fading Whig Party, which met in September, declared that it would avoid planks altogether in the interest of holding together the party, North and South.

The Whig convention expressed the ambiguity that many Americans felt at the time. Old allegiances were dissolved. New ones were being formed. Abraham Lincoln himself seemed a bit confused about what he might become. He spoke at a Democratic rally alongside free-state veterans from "Bleeding Kansas." Who was the sensible candidate for president?

Grant rejected the American Party candidate and, in doing so, rejected his old loyalty to the Whigs. He would not support Fremont: "It was evident to my mind that the election of a Republican President in 1856 meant the secession of all of the Slave States, and rebellion. Under these circumstances I preferred the success of a candidate whose election would prevent or postpone secession, to seeing the country plunged into a war the end of which no man could foretell." Grant voted for the man whom he believed would preserve the United States, James Buchanan, with the uncomfortable knowledge that he had supported a pro-slavery candidate. He hoped that Buchanan's election would buy his country time and that within four years the "passions of the people would subside...." If not, by 1860 the country at least would be better prepared if a rebellion followed.⁶³

Back to White Haven

After a long illness, on January 14, 1857, Ellen Wrenshall Dent died. White Haven seemed very empty to old Mr. Dent and Emma, the only remaining Dent child at home.

62. USG, *Memoirs*, 143.

63. USG, *Memoirs*, 143-44. Incidentally, Grant and Dent probably voted in concert, contrary to popular belief.

Therefore, the Grants left Hardscrabble and returned to the rambling white house.⁶⁴ From January or February 1857 to October or November 1858, the Grants lived at White Haven and worked old Mr. Dent's land. They experienced a major setback each year, but they joyfully added their last child to their family.

Grant continued farming at White Haven as he had previously. On August 22, 1857, he wrote to his family that all of his crops would provide large yields except for his wheat, which had been damaged through the winter and which he believed would be seventy-five bushels as opposed to the four to five hundred bushels he originally expected. He believed he would have at least fifteen hundred bushels of potatoes and additional sweet potatoes, melons, and cabbage for market. Grant also wrote that a friend of his at Sackett's Harbor could get the money owed to Grant by Elijah Camp if the accounts could be forwarded quickly from the Grant family in Ohio.⁶⁵ Two days later, a prestigious insurance company went broke in New York, sparking a nationwide financial panic and brief depression known as the Panic of 1857. Grant probably made little from his crops, and no doubt he lost the chance to get the money from Camp. On December 23, Grant may have pawned a gold watch for \$22. The date of the questionable pawn ticket suggests that he used the money to purchase Christmas presents, and he expected to return for the watch within a month.⁶⁶

The new year brought a new baby to Ulysses and Julia, a son named Jesse Root Grant after Ulysses' father. Jesse was the Grant's last child, and as a result he was coddled by his parents. ~~This did not bother his brothers and sister, however.~~ Late in their lives, the four Grant children discussed their childhood and "discovered with vast amusement a common conceit that until then had been collectively, unsuspected," Jesse confided in his memoirs. "Each, during childhood, had considered him or herself the favorite of our parents: Fred, because he was the eldest; Buck, because he bore father's name; Nellie, in the serenity of the only girl; and myself because I was the youngest. And in this hidden

64. JDG, *Memoirs*, 80; USG to JRG, Sr., February 7, 1857, *Papers*, I, 337.

65. USG to Mary or Clara Grant, August 22, 1857, *Papers*, I, 338.

66. See copy of pawn ticket, USG to J.S. Freligh, December 23, 1857, in *Papers*, I: 339. This ticket was offered for sale in 1910 by Louis H. Freligh, who claimed to have been present at the signing and who claimed to have kept the ticket quiet out of respect for Grant's family. The ticket itself was "discovered" about twenty years ago at the Illinois Historical Society by an archivist. The 1857 City Directory for St. Louis lists an L.L. Freleigh, on Locust near Fourth Street, Pawnbroker; Louis H. Freleigh is listed as his agent. There is no J.S. Freligh in evidence. The two spellings of Freleigh and the incorrect initials of the pawnbroker pose some difficulties with regard to validation of the document.

Additional research revealed an Eliza L., widow of J.S. Freligh, Pawnbroker, 12 Vine, residence south side of Washington Avenue, west of 17th Street, in the 1860 directory, with the correct spelling. Louis L. Freligh, also a pawnbroker, was at the same address. Louis H. Freligh, clerk, boarded at the same address. *St. Louis Directory, 1860*. St. Louis: R.V. Kennedy and Co., 1860.

This still leaves J.S. Freligh to question, however. How long had Eliza been widowed? A John Freligh of St. Louis died in St. Paul August 8, 1856 of typhoid at age 52. Should J.S. be John Freligh, the ticket is a forgery because he died before it was made out.

belief each confessed to a half-regretful sympathy for the others."⁶⁷ With the true love of their parents, the Grant children in these early years acquired the strength and confidence required to withstand the limelight they endured after their father became general and president.

Ulysses S. Grant continued to develop his political allegiances in 1857 and 1858. He maintained White Haven using slave labor, yet he treated the slaves with little difference from hired hands. Jesse Grant remembered that his nurse was a slave, but "This did not impress upon me a sense of ownership. All my life I had been accustomed to persons around me who were either slaves or servants. The distinction between these in my mind, was that I loved the slaves. They belonged to me and I to them. We were of the same family."⁶⁸ Whether or not the slaves agreed with Jesse Grant, Sr. is, of course, unknown. Ulysses traveled to St. Louis to hear political speeches increasingly throughout the year.⁶⁹ He heard Frank Blair "possibly several times," enough to recognize him in a crowd three years later.⁷⁰

The Grants' farming venture progressed well at White Haven through the early spring. Grant was farming the central portion of the estate exclusively, which included 200 acres of cleared land fit for cultivation and another two hundred fifty acres of wooded pasture that he fenced. He continued his crop routine, growing 20 acres of corn, 25 of oats and meadow, 50 of wheat, other feed such as clover, and garden items for market. Ulysses or Mr. Dent owed money to a bank and did not anticipate making the payment on time, but the money from his crops might have covered it.

Then summer came, and young Fred was dangerously sick first with "billious," then typhoid. Seven of the slaves were sick as well, apparently also with typhoid. Julia and Ulysses were sick with malaria (fever and chills). Julia's sister Nellie and one of her children were also sick, either with typhoid or with malaria. On a farm the size of White Haven, the widespread illnesses had an enormous impact. The Panic of 1857 was followed now by the sickness of 1858, and the Grants decided they could do better off the farm.

In mid- to late September, Jesse Grant traveled from Covington, Kentucky, his current home, to St. Louis to see his oldest son. Ulysses also visited him in Covington. Father and son discussed Ulysses going to work in the family leather business. They agreed that Ulysses would receive a percentage or commission for his work rather than a fixed salary. Ulysses preferred this so that he could set his own work pace and, he hoped, eventually start a business of his own. They planned for Ulysses to start the following spring.

67. Grant and Granger, 1a.

68. Jesse Root Grant (1925), 59-60.

69. USG to Mary Grant, September 7, 1858, *Papers*, I, 343.

70. USG, *Memoirs*, 155.

Upon his return to St. Louis, Ulysses discussed his plans with Julia's father. Dent suggested that Ulysses take with him a slave boy belonging to Julia who was "a very smart, active boy, capable of making anything," so that the boy could be trained as a veterinarian. Ulysses wrote his father that he would bring him if he liked. It appeared as if everything were set.⁷¹

On October 16, Ulysses hired a surveyor to mark the boundary between Dent's and Harrison Long's properties. The shifting Gravois composed their common line and had been used previously as a landmark, and Dent wanted to clarify the limits of his property before he sold or rented it. Within weeks, Grant and Dent auctioned off the equipment and the stock on the farm. They rented a large portion of the farm.⁷² In late fall or early winter, seventy-one-year-old Mr. Dent retired to his townhouse near Fourth and Cerre streets.

The Firm of Boggs and Grant: Real Estate, Bought and Sold

Grant did not move to Covington, however. Instead he moved to St. Louis and established himself with a partner. Little information is available on why Ulysses did not go into business with his father, although Julia blamed it on meddling by Grant's sisters.⁷³ The Grants had discussed going into business together on previous occasions, the earliest in the 1840s. In 1854, Jesse had demanded that Ulysses move to Galena and Julia and the children either live in Covington to "benefit from [the Grants'] school of economy" or remain in St. Louis, to be supported by the Dents.⁷⁴ This was unsatisfactory to Ulysses in 1854, and would have remained unsatisfactory in 1858. In a conciliatory gesture, Grant suggested that his sisters visit them in their new St. Louis home in March 1859, but Julia would not visit the Grants in Covington. Ulysses claimed she could not bring the children for a visit without the assistance of a slave, which they did not want to do because they would be traveling in free

71. USG to JRG, Sr., October 1, 1858, *Papers*, I, 334.

72. *Papers*, II: 20n. reported that Grant and Dent sold White Haven in 1858. This is reported in error, as can be demonstrated by the relevant deeds at the St. Louis Recorder of Deeds. Deed of Trust, Frederick Dent to Henry Boggs' Trustee (J.G. McClellan), June 26, 1858, Book 205, page 151.

73. JDG, *Memoirs*, 80.

74. JDG, *Memoirs*, 76.

territory on the way.⁷⁵ His explanation sounded like an excuse, and Julia's *Memoirs* indicate that she simply did not get along with the Grants and did not want to live near them.

Over the winter of 1858-59, Grant moved to the home of Harry and Louisa Boggs, cousins of Julia on her mother's side, on South Fifteenth Street in St. Louis.⁷⁶ The city and county of St. Louis had about 160,000 inhabitants then.⁷⁷ Ulysses and Harry entered into a real estate partnership, calling their company Boggs and Grant. Julia and the children remained at White Haven for a few months. In February or March, Grant rented a house at Seventh and Lynch Streets and in moved Julia, the children, and four slaves belonging to Julia.⁷⁸ Simpson, Ulysses' brother, visited them in the house on Lynch Street.⁷⁹ In October, Grant purchased a house at 1008 Barton Street, near Eighth Street.⁸⁰ The house on Barton was "a comfortable little one just suited" to the Grants. "We have one spare room and also a spare bed in the childrens room so that we can accomodate any of our friends that are likely to come see us," Ulysses wrote encouragingly to his father.⁸¹ The Grants lived on Barton Street until May 1860, when they rented the house and moved to Galena.

75. On March 6, 1857, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled on a Missouri court case begun in 1846 on the fate of Dred Scott, a slave who had lived with his master for several years in free territory. Scott sued for his freedom on the grounds that he could not have been a slave while living in free territory. The court did not acknowledge his argument, preferring to avoid the conundrum posed by the Northwest Ordinance and subsequent laws that made slavery illegal in Northern states. Instead, it ruled that Scott, as a slave, was not a citizen and therefore not able to sue for his freedom in court. Scott was represented by St. Louisan Frank Blair, who was rising as a great figure on the political scene. Although the court upheld the right of a master to take a slave into free states, the decision angered many Northerners, and they refused to support the law. See Donald E. Fehrenbacher, *Slavery, Law, and Politics: The Dred Scott Case in Historical Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

One must question why Grant was willing to bring a slave to Covington, Kentucky, to learn a trade in October 1858, but did not believe his wife should bring her children's nurse along the same path a few months later. It appears to have been an excuse.

76. Richardson, 159. The address was 209 South Fifteenth Street.

77. James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri* (Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing Co., 1981), 201.

78. The slaves were Eliza, Julia, Dan, and John, and they ranged in age from twelve to eighteen. JDG, *Memoirs*, 83.

79. USG to Samuel Simpson Grant, October 24, 1859, *Papers*, I, 353.

80. One journalist erroneously placed Grant in the Barton Street house for "several years," despite acknowledging that he moved there in 1859, then moved to Galena, and then left for the Civil War. "The Grant Home," Old St. Louis Houses Series, *Star*, June 3, 1943, St. Louis *Globe-Democrat* Morgue, St. Louis Mercantile Library. The house at 1008 Barton Street is extant but has been changed so radically since the Grant's occupation as to be unrecognizable.

81. USG to JRG, Sr., March 12, 1859, *Papers*, I, 346.

Grant has been caricatured as a faded failure of a man during the year and a half he spent in St. Louis. A string of fictitious jobs was created by writers who at the close of the Civil War had difficulty determining what Grant had done in the city. One early biographer reported that he was a collector of county taxes but that he was "no match for the craft and deception of delinquent taxpayers...." Similarly, this author reported that Grant had been an auctioneer, but it was "no better suited to his tastes."⁸² Another early writer claimed that Grant had attempted to collect debts for his neighbors.⁸³

With regard to Grant's genuine business in St. Louis, many myths persist and fact blends with fiction. Charles Johnson, who later became governor of Missouri, commented a half-century after the fact that the future general "never made a dollar as a real estate agent..." and consequently applied for the position of superintendent of county roads.⁸⁴ Robertus Love, a St. Louisan, wrote a half-century later, "He couldn't sell or rent property. He lacked the faculty of bartering, bargaining, cajoling customers into doing business."⁸⁵ Although Johnson worked in the same building with Grant, his reminiscences indicate that he did not know Grant well and "knew" Grant more from other people's stories than his own.⁸⁶ Love did not know Grant in 1859 and spoke from hearsay. Both men were correct in suggesting that Grant's business had not been prosperous, but they probably incorrectly identified the cause.

The real estate partnership of Boggs and Grant was a family venture. Harry Boggs' mother had been Ellen Wrenshaff Dent's sister. Harry's wife Louisa was the daughter of a military man, probably Col. William Whistler, with whom Grant had served at Sackett's Harbor, Detroit, and St. Louis.⁸⁷ The firm bought and sold properties, collected rents, and negotiated loans from 35 Pine Street.⁸⁸

82. Linus Pierpont Brockett, *Our Great Captains: Grant, Sherman, Thomas, Sheridan, and Farragut* (New York: Charles B. Richardson, 1865), 17.

83. Joel Tyler Headley, *Grant and Sherman: Their Campaigns and Generals* (New York: E.B. Treat and Co., 1865), 39-40.

84. Charles P. Johnson in *Post*, 19. Grant did not apply for the position of Superintendent of Roads.

85. Robertus Love in *Post*.

86. Johnson said that he visited Grant in Washington in 1865, and Grant asked at great length about an old black laundress who had made Grant hot coffee every morning and a German tobacconist with whom Grant enjoyed talking. Johnson also said, however, that Grant smoked both pipes and cigars incessantly in 1859. Johnson in *Post*, 19; Marshall, 7. Grant did not become a heavy smoker for three or four more years, which hurts the credibility of Johnson's general testimony.

87. Boggs was the son of one of two maternal aunts of Julia who married men named Boggs. Louisa, Harry's wife, poses more serious problems for identification, although it is likely that she was Louisa Whistler, frequently mentioned in the Grants' correspondence from 1848-1852. At the outbreak of the Civil War, Louisa was a Southern sympathizer.

88. Richardson, 160, *passim*. The street address was changed to 219 Pine Street before 1868.

Grant's initiation into the real estate business may have been mortgaging White Haven to Henry [probably Harry] Boggs. For the sum of \$4,800, Dent mortgaged all of his remaining White Haven land for two years, beginning in June 1858. Dent apparently did not inform Boggs of his mortgage to David Irvin.⁸⁹

Grant continued working on the Dent property by selling his own eighty-acre Hardscrabble farm to Joseph White, in exchange for White's city house and six promissory notes: one note for \$3,000 due in five years, and five notes of \$180 each, due one per year. White also was to pay an existing mortgage on his city house. The total value changing hands was more than \$7,000. Joseph White and Grant first agreed on the terms in the spring, but White backed out on their verbal agreement at least once.⁹⁰ They finally drew up the documents in late August and completed the initial transaction in September.⁹¹ Grant wrote his father that he hoped to reassign White's \$3,000 note so that he could take the cash and use it to build two rental houses.⁹²

The County Engineership Application

The firm of Boggs and Grant was moderately successful for a time. In August, however, Grant decided the business was not making enough money for two families. Grant applied for the position of county engineer, "an office of respectability and emolument which

89. Deed of Trust, Frederick Dent to Henry Boggs' Trustee, J.G. McClellan, June 26, 1858, St. Louis Recorder of Deeds Book 251, page 151.

90. Nicholas Smith, 59-60; Edmonds, 81. Both authors cite anecdotal evidence that lists White by name, but they assume that Grant and White were friends at the time when they struck the deal.

91. Deed in Fee, Frederick Dent to Joseph W. White, August 23, 1859, Book 224, page 304; Deed of Trust, Joseph W. White and wife Emily S. to Frederick Dent's trustee, W.D. W. Barnard, August 23, 1859, Book 224, page 335.

Hamlin Garland reported a garbled version of Grant's house trade, in which Grant purchased the house on Lynch Street but lost it because the title was bad. Then, according to Garland, Grant had to take a "still humbler [house], though the Lynch Street house seemed humble enough." Garland was in error about which house Grant owned, about why he left it, and about the faulty title. After the Civil War, Grant took White to court and won for non-payment of his debts on Hardscrabble and the Barton Street house, as will be discussed in greater detail below. Garland, 144.

In the *Papers*, John Y. Simon repeated Albert D. Richardson's account of the transaction and neglected to mention the annual interest payments also due. *Papers*, I, 353n; Richardson, 162.

92. USG to JRG, Sr., typescript, September 23, 1859, Ulysses S. Grant Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

would have been very acceptable to me at that time."⁹³ Grant's West Point education had trained him for engineering, and he looked forward to the regular salary the position provided.⁹⁴ Grant's letter of application was accompanied by a petition of endorsement signed by prominent citizens of St. Louis representing various political parties of the time.

Some of his supporters were friends of the Dents and Grants along the Gravois, while others were friends and co-workers from St. Louis. Old St. Louis and Gravois family members included L.A. Benoist, William Pipkin, Dr. J. Addison Barret, K. MacKenzie, Robert Renick, J. McKnight, Taylor Blow, Lemuel Pardee, and John Darby. Former president of the American Medical Association Dr. Charles Pope and his father-in-law, John O'Fallon, were distant relatives of Julia by marriage. Missouri Senator Daniel Frost had served with Grant at West Point and at various army posts for nine years. (Frost later became a Confederate brigadier general). The sister of George Fishback, an owner of the *Missouri Democrat*, was married to John Lowe, a friend of Grant's from Ohio. Charles Ford, an agent of an express company, knew Grant in Sackett's Harbor, and they remained close friends until Ford's death in 1874.

Grant's greatest endorsement came from Washington University Professor Joseph Jones Reynolds, who graduated with Grant at West Point. Reynolds wrote of Grant, "He always maintained a high standing and graduated with great credit, especially in mathematics, mechanics, & Engineering." He similarly commended Grant's honesty and work ethic. Reynolds' recommendation was strong. Grant added weight to the other signatures by stating, "I have made no effort to get a large number of names, nor the names of persons with whom I am not personally acquainted." Each person would be able to speak about Grant's qualifications.⁹⁵

Grant's possibilities for getting the appointment seemed strong, but C.E. Salomon, a federal assistant surveyor of German descent, was hired for the position. Salomon was the brother of the governor of Wisconsin, and his current job as surveyor made him a better candidate than Grant in some respects. In addition, the appointment was to be decided by the St. Louis County Board of Commissioners, all elected officials. Three of the commissioners have been identified as Free-Soilers: John Lightner, William Taussig, and Benjamin Farrar. Farrar was a friend of the Dents and an acquaintance of Grant, and Grant had hoped that he would support him.⁹⁶ The other two commissioners were

93. USG, *Memoirs*, 142.

94. The job paid \$160 per month. Richardson, 167.

95. It was John Lowe's sister, Kate, who Grant admired while on furlough from West Point in 1841. See Chapter Three. USG to County Commissioners, August 15, 1859, *Papers*, I, 348-349. William McFeely, *Grant: A Biography* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981), 64.

96. USG to JRG, Sr., September 23, 1859, *Papers*, I:352. Julia gives the name of the man as Bernard Farrar, but she identified him as a "Wide-Awake," or Republican, and as a "Know-Nothing," a very

(continued...)

Democrats: Alton Easton and Peregrine Tibbets. When the vote was taken, the Democrats voted for Grant and the others voted for Salomon.

Ulysses was uncharacteristically bitter over losing the appointment. In his *Memoirs* and to his father, he reported that he had been beaten by his own New England heritage. "There is, I believe, but one paying office in the county held by an American unless you except the office of Sheriff which is held by a Frenchman who speaks broken English but was born here," Grant wrote to father Jesse.⁹⁷ Grant repeated this assertion in his *Memoirs*: "My opponent had the advantage of birth over me (he was a citizen by adoption)..."⁹⁸ It may have been in the wake of this disappointment that Grant joined the Know-Nothing Party.⁹⁹

Grant renewed his application for the job in February of the following year based on a rumor that Salomon would vacate it. Salomon did not do so for many years, although he did serve in the Missouri volunteers during the war.¹⁰⁰ Grant also considered applying for a position as professor at Washington University, but the job was filled by one of the founders of the United States Naval Academy, a professor of almost twenty years who turned down an appointment at Yale to take the position in St. Louis.¹⁰¹

According to some sources, Ulysses Grant next became a clerk in the customs house. His salary was \$1,200 to \$1,800 annually, and he was selected by the customs collector to begin in November. Unfortunately, the collector died unexpectedly a month later. Grant lost the job when the new collector filled the position with his own choice.¹⁰²

96. (...continued)

different political fish. Julia probably was in error in her description of the man as a "Know-Nothing," having never had the opportunity to participate in politics herself. JDG, *Memoirs*, 81-82.

The published *Grant Papers*, suggested that "Grant's friend" on the board was William Taussig, but as mayor of Carondelet, Taussig had been involved in the bitter court case with Frederick Dent over his land in Section 16 of the township. Grant would not have expected his support.

97. USG to JRG, Sr., September 23, 1859, *Papers*, I: 352-353n.

98. USG, *Memoirs*, 142.

99. See above, note 34.

100. USG to John H. Lightner, February 13, 1860; Richardson, 169.

101. USG to JRG, Sr. August 20, 1859, *Papers*, I:350-351n.

102. No primary sources exist to substantiate the claim that Grant worked in the customs house. He wrote to his brother anticipating the position and stating the salary levels, but he did not write to confirm that he had the position. USG to Samuel Simpson Grant, October 24, 1859, *Papers*, I, 354. The following sources list Grant's job in the customs house: Richardson, 169; Garland, 144; "The Famous Grant Cabin Changes Hands" in *Post*, 36; Marshall, 7-10.

In 1859 and 1860, national politics was growing every day as the topic of discussion. Grant's politics in the period immediately before the war have been examined extensively and are worth repeating here. The most definite political action that Grant took in 1859 was freeing his slave, William Jones. According to the deed of manumission, Jones was a thirty-five-year-old man, about the same height and age as Grant and with fair black skin. Grant wrote that he purchased Jones from Frederick Dent, and that he was being freed in exchange for "divers good and valuable considerations"--probably nothing, as nothing was specified. Josiah McClellan and William Hillyer, lawyers in the same building with Boggs and Grant, witnessed the document.¹⁰³

Grant did not state why he freed Jones, but one may assume that the abolitionist seeds that were planted in him in Maysville and at home in Ohio were beginning to sprout and flourish. Had he simply wanted to be relieved of the burden of keeping a slave in the city, he could have sold him. A corollary to this is that, had Grant been poverty-stricken during this period, he would have had little choice but to sell him. Instead, Grant gave him his freedom.

Grant was also considering what party he might side with in the upcoming presidential election. He knew from the unsuccessful county engineer application that he was associated with the Democratic Party, but he would not claim them outright.¹⁰⁴ He joined and left the Know-Nothing Party, but he retained some edge of anti-immigrant sentiment. Grant feared the Republican Party because he thought they might precipitate a civil war.¹⁰⁵ Now it was March 1860. With the presidential election eight months away, there were other pressing matters about which to be concerned.

The Firm of J.R. Grant, Galena, Illinois

Although he continued to do business with Boggs, Ulysses Grant had not settled into a good position in St. Louis, and the Grant store in Galena, Illinois, needed him more and more daily.¹⁰⁶ His brother, Simpson, who had managed the store, was dying of tuberculosis. By March 1859, the family knew that Simpson would probably not survive; he traveled south in a futile attempt to alleviate the tightness in his chest, possibly to "take the cure" at one

103. Manumission of Slave, signed by USG, March 29, 1859, U.S. Grant Papers, MHS. Julia's slaves were freed by the terms of the new Missouri state constitution in 1865.

104. In a brief analysis of Grant's political allegiance, John Y. Simon concluded that Grant was a Douglas Democrat in the years 1859-1860. *Papers*, II, 5n.

105. USG to JRG, September 23, 1859, *Papers* I, 352.

106. USG to Mr. Davis, August 7, 1860, U.S. Grant papers, Missouri Historical Society. This letter suggests that Grant had continued doing real estate business until he left for Galena. Grant's *Memoirs* concur. *USG Memoirs*, 142.

of the hot sulphur springs in Arkansas or Georgia.¹⁰⁷ The youngest Grant brother, Orvil, moved to Galena to assist with the management of the store in his absence.¹⁰⁸ By August, Ulysses was pleading for Simpson to visit him by steamer. "If it should prove necessary for anyone to accompany him, I would take him home," he wrote with a touch of morbidity.¹⁰⁹ Simpson survived the trip to St. Louis.

The following March, Ulysses set out for Covington to visit Simpson, now under the care of his mother and sisters as well as his father. There they made arrangements for Ulysses and his family to move to Galena, too, where Ulysses would join the firm of *J.R. Grant*.

Ulysses Grant never lived in Galena before May 1860. He moved there specifically to assist with the leather store.¹¹⁰ Some St. Louisans concluded that it was Frederick Dent's politics or even Grant's "dependent position" at White Haven that prompted him to move.¹¹¹ As has been discussed previously, it was Frederick Dent who was dependent on his son-in-law at White Haven in the late 1850s, both because of his financial straits and because of his advanced age. Once Dent abandoned farming and rented White Haven, Ulysses did not need to assist him. The business situation in Galena pulled Grant to that city, where he could put to use his experience as regimental quartermaster, the businessman of the army, and where he could take Simpson's place as manager of the store.¹¹²

In May 1860, Ulysses, Julia, Fred, Buck, Nellie, and Jesse Grant packed up their belongings on Barton Street and boarded the steamboat *Itasca*.¹¹³ Julia recorded that the trip took four or five days, and Ulysses spent most of the time on deck lounging in one of

107. USG to JRG, Sr., March 12, 1859, *Papers*, I, 346.

108. Steven Repp, *Ulysses S. Grant: The Galena Years* (n.p.: Steven Repp, 1990), 87.

109. USG to JRG, Sr., August 20, 1859, *Papers*, I, 350. Simpson was able to visit on his own. USG to Samuel Simpson Grant, October 24, 1859, *Papers*, I, 353.

110. F.A. Weber wrote that Grant "decided to move to his old home in Illinois" to get away from Frederick Dent. [F.A. Weber] to Mrs. Eugene Marsh, February 7, 1920, Louise Marsh Papers, Missouri Historical Society. Weber was incorrect, as the Grants even asked Mr. Dent to accompany them to Galena.

111. William Taussig, "Address" in *Post*, 93.

112. Augustus Chetlain, a Galenan who knew the Grant family well, stated authoritatively in his reminiscences that Ulysses moved to Galena to take Simpson's place. Augustus L. Chetlain, *Recollections of Seventy Years* (Galena, Illinois: Gazette Publishing Co., 1899), 65-66.

113. A few sources list April as the date the Grants left St. Louis, but Grant himself gave the date as May. "Grant--Our Citizen," Photograph Album, SIUC-USGA; Hagen, 187-188; USG, *Memoirs*, 142. Julia confirmed that the family traveled by steamship. JDG, *Memoirs*, 83.

the family rocking chairs. Julia regretfully hired out her four slaves to families in St. Louis who promised to care for them.¹¹⁴

The family arrived in Galena and lived for about two or three weeks with Orvil Grant and his wife Mary. In the meantime, Ulysses found a house on High Street that rented for one hundred dollars annually. The house had seven rooms, was brick, and was not too far from the center of town. It had one disadvantage, however; High Street was perched on a bluff and was true to its name. To reach the house, one had to edge like a mountain goat up the slope or climb a dizzying height of several hundred stairs to reach the front door.¹¹⁵ In August 1860, when the federal census-taker visited the Grant's home, he counted Ulysses and Julia, the four children, and Emily Hodgkens, a sixteen-year-old house servant.¹¹⁶ Simpson joined the household soon thereafter.¹¹⁷

The family firm Grant joined was called *J. R. Grant* and was founded several years previously by Jesse Grant.¹¹⁸ The elder Grant never lived in Galena himself, but in 1841, he started a leather goods store there with E.A. Collins. Jesse Grant operated a tannery in Georgetown, Ohio, but moved to nearby Bethel to take over a tannery Collins ran. Collins in turn pooled their leather goods and opened the store in Galena. The business grew quickly, and Jesse Grant importuned his oldest son Ulysses to resign from the army as soon as the Mexican War was over to assist Collins in Galena.¹¹⁹ Ulysses did not choose the leather business then, however, and Jesse's next oldest son Simpson went to Galena instead. ~~In 1853, Collins and Grant amiably parted, splitting the hundred-thousand dollar business equitably.~~ Grant kept the tannery in Ohio and Collins retained the Galena store.

Jesse Grant was a frequent correspondent with the local newspapers, as discussed in Chapter Three, and he chose this occasion to pen a poem:

114. JDG, *Memoirs*, 83. Charles Wesley Bender, who met Ulysses Grant while he was on a business trip in the upper Midwest, recalled the Grant's mode of travel because the Benders had travelled almost all of the way to Iowa on land. Their trip was rough and had damaged some of their furniture. Dorothy Palmer Malloy to USGIII, March 24, 1965, SIUC-USGA.

115. Garland, 149. Galena resident Mr. LeBron said that the sidewalk and stairs were not in existence in 1860, making the climb to the house even more difficult. LeBron was correct about the sidewalk but may not have been about the stairs. Lawrence E. Blair to USGIII, May 27, 1947, SIUC-USGA.

116. Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: 3rd Ward, Galena, Joe Daviess County, Illinois, 101, Schedule of Population.

117. Garland, 149.

118. Some biographers have reported the name of the firm as Grant and Son and stated that the company was founded when Grant moved to Galena. They are incorrect on the second point. See, for example, Headley (1865), 40; Brockett, 17; Repp, 29; Richardson, 170.

119. USG to JDG, June 5, 1846, *Papers I*, 101-103.

In eighteen hundred forty-one
Our partnership was first begun,
We two then became as one,
 To deal in leather,
Some little business we have done,
 While together,

For a dozen years we've toiled together,
In making and in vending leather;
Suited to every stage of weather,
 Ere dry or rain;
But now the time has come to sever,
 And we are twain.

E.A. Collins is still on hand,
And occupies his former stand,
In which he always held command,
 To buy and sell,
As matters now are being planned,
 May he do well.

J.R. Grant, the old off wheel,
As firm and true as smitten steel,
Does yet a strong desire feel,
 To do some more,
Expect then within the field,
 A brand new store.

Our hearty thanks we humbly send,
To every customer and friend,
Who has stood by us to the end,
 With free good will,
And say in the future we intend,
 To serve you still.

Now one thing more we have to say,
To those who owe we want our pay,
Then send it on without delay,
 The full amount,
For still we have some debts to pay,

On firm account.¹²⁰

In August of the same year, Jesse Grant opened his own leather goods store that specialized in harnesses, bridles, coach and carriage leather, hardware to accompany the foregoing items, boots and shoes, and general hardware.¹²¹ Simpson took over his business. Jesse Grant sold out his tannery in Bethel and moved his operations exclusively to Portsmouth, Ohio, where he had a large tannery business. In 1854, he retired at the age of 60 to Covington, Kentucky.

Under Simpson's management, the business in Galena expanded rapidly and within a few years he moved the store to a better location in a three-story building with a cellar. The Grants also built a two-story brick work and storehouse in the rear. Simpson did business with farmers in Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota and had branches in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, and Dubuque, Iowa.

In 1858, Simpson's health began failing, however, and Melancthon T. Burke moved to Galena to clerk at the firm. Burke was the brother-in-law of Orlando Ross, Hannah Simpson Grant's nephew. His familial ties to the Grants were tenuous, but they respected him and considered him kinfolk. Lank, as he was known, was still clerking at the business in 1860 when Ulysses arrived, and he became partner and manager of the LaCrosse branch in April 1862.

In 1859, Simpson and Lank were joined in Galena by Orvil Grant, the youngest son of Jesse. Orvil, ten years younger than Simpson, was only twenty-four years old. In 1857, Orvil married Mary Merdary, and it was in their home that the Ulysses Grant family resided until they rented the High Street house. Orvil was too young to run the substantial Grant business, but Jesse hoped he would learn it in time. In September 1861, when Simpson died, Orvil became general manager of the Grant business in Galena.

One may question Orvil's business capacity in 1860 using hindsight of the rest of his life. In the year Ulysses arrived, Orvil was high strung, "almost as loud and explosive as his father."¹²² Grant was distrustful of him during the war and instructed Julia that Lank, not Orvil, should keep their accounts with the store. Orvil desired to do well in business, and in January he eagerly formed a partnership with Charles Perkins, with whom the Grants had conducted business for several years, and purchased the stock of E.A. Collins, Jesse's old partner. Orvil abandoned that business just a year later to open his own store in Chicago.

120. Advertisement, *Galena Gazette*, April 1, 1853; reprinted in Repp, 11-12, and in the *Galena Gazette*, June 16, 1966, SIUC-USGA. Another of Jesse Grant's poems is reproduced in Richardson, 53-55, from the *Castigator*.

121. Repp, 12-13; Richardson, 172.

122. Ishbel Ross, *The General's Wife: The Life of Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1959), 105.

His goods were destroyed in the Chicago fire in 1871, and he unsuccessfully dabbled in other pursuits for the next decade. In 1875-76, he was suspected of fraud in the Whiskey Ring scandal.¹²³ He was twice admitted to an insane asylum in Morristown, New Jersey, for unknown reasons, and it was there that he died in 1881.¹²⁴ Should Orvil have had mental problems or been an alcoholic, it would have been characteristic of the Grant family to have been tight-lipped and protective of him.

Also clerking in *J.R. Grant* in 1860 was Orlando Ross, a maternal cousin of Ulysses and his siblings.¹²⁵

Ulysses primarily worked with the accounts, and cut and distributed goods. He was not familiar with the prices of the various products the business sold, and according to Galenans generally ducked into the back office when he saw a customer coming. He was amiable with people he met while doing business, among them William Rowley, a clerk in the circuit court. On at least one occasion, Ulysses traveled through the upper Midwest in the winter of 1860-1861 selling goods.¹²⁶

Julia set up housekeeping in Galena with her cook, a young lady whom she believed she could teach how to make Maryland biscuits. Unfortunately, Julia knew no more of cooking in 1860 than she had when she and Ulysses had married, so the biscuits were a fiasco. From that point on she left all of the household duties to her capable cook.¹²⁷

Neighbors knew the Grants for their exceptional methods of child-rearing. In the other households in the neighborhood, children played outside but sat quietly on stiff chairs inside. Julia allowed all of the neighborhood children to tramp in and out, and she allowed her children to raid the cookie jar for themselves and their friends.¹²⁸ When Ulysses came home, he often found his youngest son waiting on the steps for him. "Mister, do you want to fight?" Jesse always asked. "I am a man of peace; but I will not be hectored by a person of your size," his father answered. Then the two would begin a mock fight, with Jesse always winning. He was suspicious that his father was toying with him; after all, Ulysses managed to conveniently land on a sofa or bed "and stretched contentedly there..."¹²⁹ In the

123. William B. Hesseltine, *Ulysses S. Grant, Politician* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1935), 385.

124. Repp, 87-89, *passim*.

125. Orlando was the son of Ann Simpson Ross. *Papers*, I, 351n.

126. USG to JDG, *Papers*, I, 358-359; Dorothy Palmer Malloy to USGIII, March 24, 1965, SIUC-USGA.

127. JDG, *Memoirs*, 83-84.

128. Lawrence E. Blair to USGIII, May 27, 1947, SIUC-USGA.

129. Jesse Root Grant (1925), 10-11.

evenings, Ulysses quietly read to Julia and the children from Dickens and other popular novelists.¹³⁰

The Grant children had great freedom in their games, but Julia insisted on dressing them slightly better than was standard in rustic Galena. As the only girl, Nellie grew up playing what Julia called "boys' games," marbles and so forth. Buck, on the other hand, was subjected to the torments of the Lord Fauntleroy fad. Julia did not cut his curly blond hair until he was eight years old and it hung down to his waist. His friends all begged for the curls when Julia's "little lamb was sheared."¹³¹

Ulysses and Julia Grant were making friends, too. Julia renewed her friendship with Adele Hempstead Washburne, the wife of Congressman Elihu Washburne who spent part of her childhood in St. Louis, and her brother Charles Hempstead.¹³² Elihu Washburne became a key political ally of Grant. Ulysses also met, as aforementioned, William Rowley, who would later serve on his Civil War staff. John Rawlins, Grant's future chief of staff, handled the leather store's legal work.¹³³

Galena residents who met Grant and spoke to reporters about their memories of him held the same opinion. If Grant did not know you, he could be as quiet as a log. Once he made an acquaintance, however, he became genial and was full of incredible stories of his life.¹³⁴ Another aspect that Galenans remembered about Grant was that he exhibited no unusual drinking habits. No one remembered if he ever took a drink or did not take a drink in the evening at the country store with the other men, and a neighbor of his commented that there was no way Ulysses could have made it home drunk. The route from downtown to his High Street house was too treacherous.¹³⁵

Politics was an unavoidable topic anywhere in the United States in the winter of 1860 to 1861. Because Grant did not meet the residency requirement in Illinois at the time of the presidential election, he could not vote. He watched the candidates closely, however. Republican Abraham Lincoln was elected. In Galena, Ulysses helped drill the Republican Wide-Awakes but did not join their organization.¹³⁶ One by one the Southern states seceded. On April 12, 1861, Confederate shore batteries attacked federal Fort Sumter, in

130. Garland, 150.

131. JDG, *Memoirs*, 84-85.

132. Marie Lisa Washburne Fowler, "My Mother and I," Marie Lisa Washburne Fowler Collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

133. Repp, 23, 26.

134. *Ibid.*, 24-25.

135. Lawrence E. Blair to USGIII, May 27, 1947, SIUC-USGA.

136. USG, *Memoirs*, 145.

the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. On April 15, President Lincoln declared that the South was in "insurrection" and called for 75,000 volunteers. On April 16, Galena held its first mass meeting about the war.

Charles Hempstead opened the meeting, and Mayor Robert Brand was selected to chair the meeting. Elihu Washburne, Charles Hempstead, Bushrod Howard, and John Rawlins spoke. Two nights later, Galenans held another meeting, and this time they selected Ulysses Grant to lead it (he presumed because he was a former army officer). After the meeting, Grant organized and began drilling a group of volunteers. "I never went into our leather store after that meeting, not to put up a package or do other business," Grant wrote in his *Memoirs*.¹³⁷

The next day, Grant composed a letter to his father-in-law. He warned him, "Now all party distinctions should be lost sight of and evry true patriot be for maintaining the integrity of the glorious old *Stars & Stripes*, the Constitution and the Union." He told the elder Fred Dent that his son would side with the North: "I have just rec'd a letter from Fred... He is for the old Flag as long as there is a Union of two states fighting under its banner and when they dissolve he will go it alone."¹³⁸ On April 21, Ulysses wrote his father and explained why he left the leather goods store; he had more pressing business for his country.¹³⁹ On April 25, he left Galena and traveled with the Galena volunteers to Springfield. Throughout May, he mustered in the Illinois volunteers and served as a special aid to the governor.¹⁴⁰ While on duty he was close enough to visit St. Louis and the Gravois farm. He stayed at Wish-ton-wish with the Dents and learned that their house was divided. Julia's sister Nellie and most of her brothers would support the Union. Emma and her husband would be for the Union, too. John Dent and the old family patriarch might side with the Confederacy. Frederick Dent claimed to be for the Union, but he was opposed to the use of force to maintain it.¹⁴¹ Grant also witnessed the break-up of Missouri militia amassed at Camp Jackson and the melee following. It was here that Grant introduced himself to Frank Blair.¹⁴²

137. Repp, 40-44; USG, *Memoirs*, 152-153. Grant met Washburne at this meeting.

138. USG to Frederick Dent, Sr., April 19, 1861, *Papers*, II, 3-4.

139. USG to Jesse Root Grant, Sr., April 21, 1861, *Papers*, II, 6-7.

140. USG, *Memoirs*, 154-155.

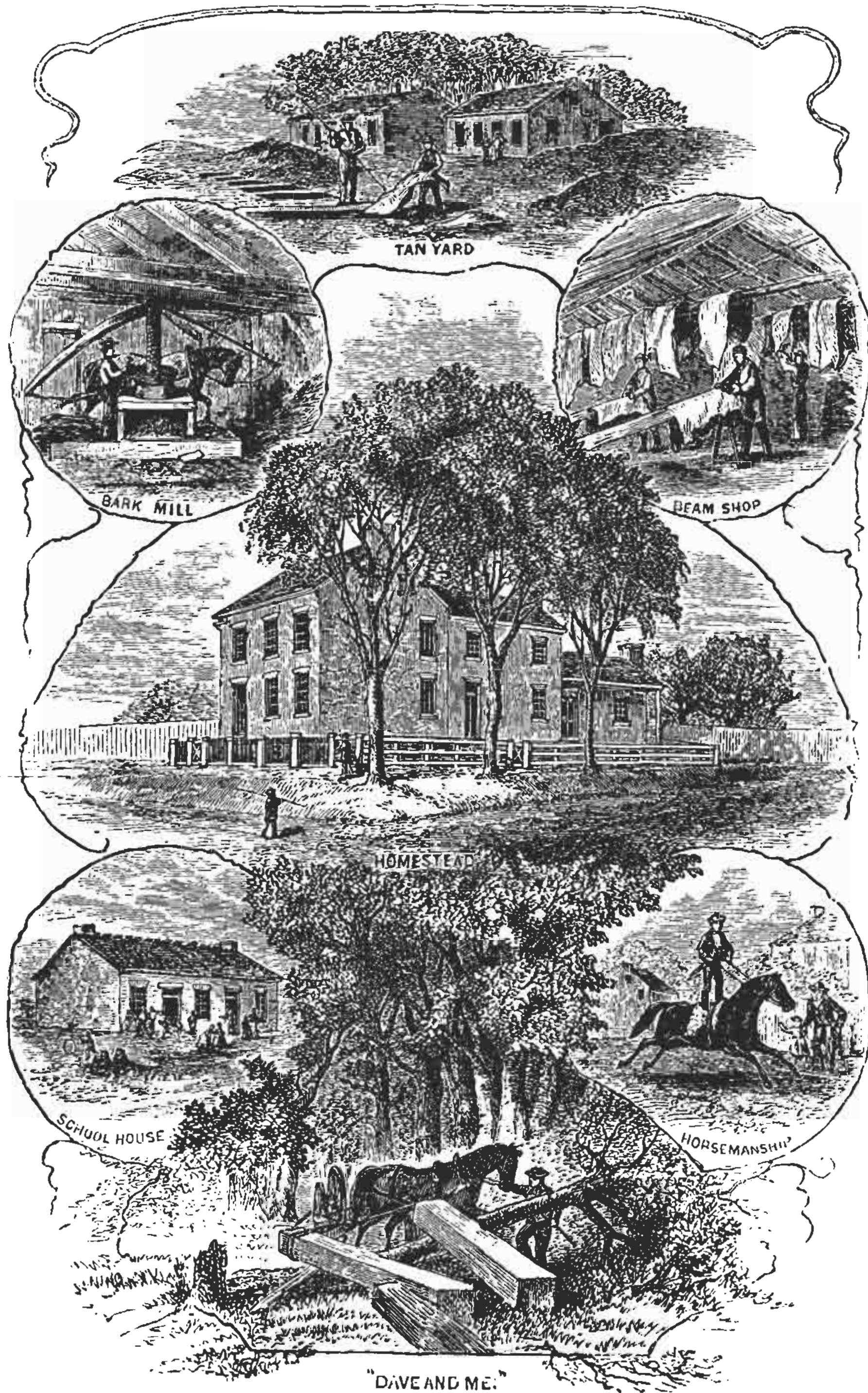
141. USG to JDG, May 10, 1861, *Papers*, II, 26-27; USG to JDG, May 15, 1861, *Papers*, I, 30-31.

142. USG, *Memoirs*, 154-155. For information on the Camp Jackson affair see Christopher Phillips, *Damned Yankee: The Life of General Nathaniel Lyon*, Missouri Biography Series (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990).

On May 24, Ulysses Grant wrote to Washington to offer his services to the Union, but his letter was misfiled. In June, he traveled to the Cincinnati area to visit his family and to seek an appointment under Maj. Gen. George McClellan. He never got to see McClellan. Frustrated, he returned to Springfield by way of LaFayette, Indiana, where he visited his old West Point friend Joseph Jones Reynolds. There he learned that he had not gone unnoticed. Illinois Governor Richard Yates had appointed him colonel of an Illinois regiment. Ulysses S. Grant was now in position to become the highest ranking Union general of the Civil War.¹⁴³

Ulysses Grant did not mind that he resigned from the army, farmed, sold cordwood, or clerked in a leather store with his family. He spoke freely of all these experiences, expressing no discomfort over any of it when he was in the company of close friends. He held honest jobs for honest wages, and, like his army duties, they prepared him for a military career that required him to understand supply sources, common farmers, Southerners, Northerners, and even mules. Grant's life from 1854 to 1861 put him in a position to rise to power.

143. USG, *Memoirs*, 1128-1129; USG to Brevet Brigadier General Lorenzo Thomas, May 24, 1861, *Papers*, II, 35-36.



GRANT'S BOYHOOD IN GEORGETOWN, OHIO.

Figure 5. Scenes from the Boyhood of Ulysses S. Grant in Georgetown, Ohio.
 From Albert D. Richardson, *A Personal History of Ulysses S. Grant*. Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1969.



Figure 6. Hannah Simpson Grant, Ulysses S. Grant's mother.
Courtesy St. Louis Mercantile Library



Figure 8. Ulysses S. Grant's Birthplace, Point Pleasant, Ohio.
Courtesy Ohio Historical Society

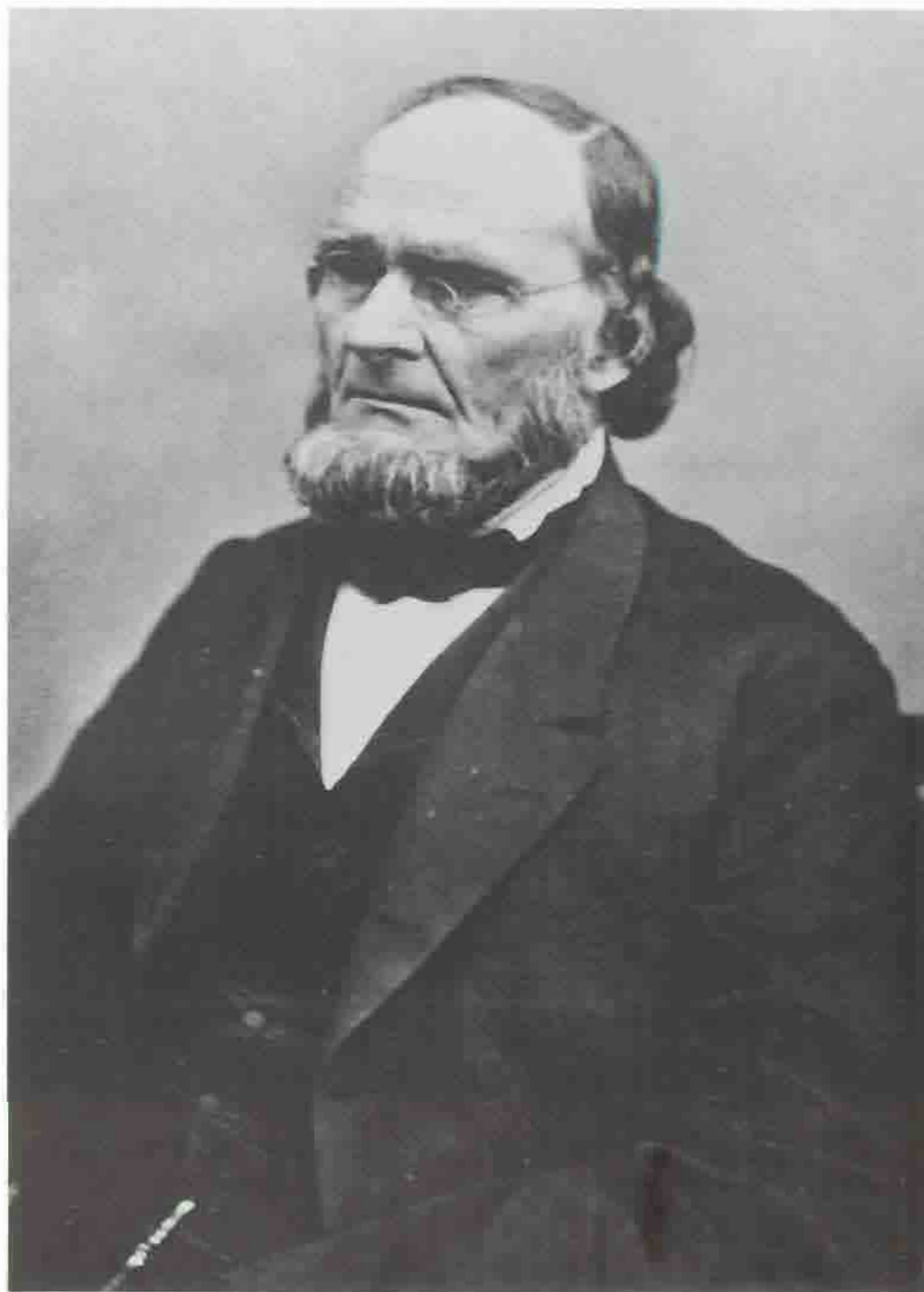


Figure 7. Jesse Root Grant, Ulysses S. Grant's father.
Courtesy Library of Congress

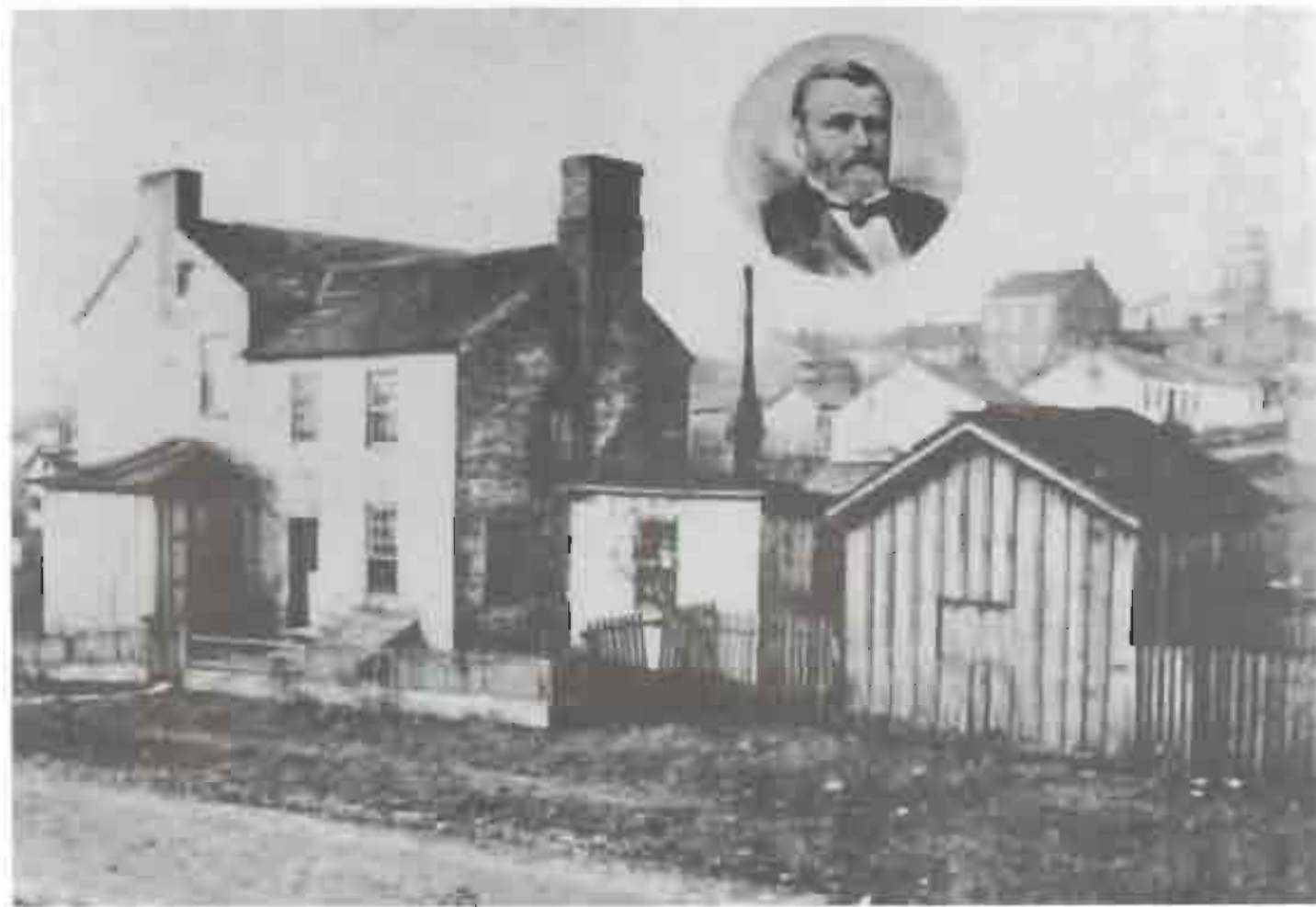


Figure 9. Jesse Grant Residence in Georgetown, Ohio.
Courtesy Ohio Historical Society



Figure 10. Jesse Grant's Tannery and Residence in Bethel, Ohio.
Courtesy Library of Congress



Figure 11. Scenes of Ulysses S. Grant's Life at West Point. From *Albert D. Richardson, A Personal History of Ulysses S. Grant*. Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1969.



Figure 12. Ulysses S. Grant and Alexander Hays, from an 1844 daguerreotype. Courtesy of St. Louis Mercantile Library



Figure 13. Ulysses S. Grant, 1847. *Courtesy Missouri Historical Society*



MONTERREY. LIEUTENANT GRANT GOES FOR AMMUNITION.

Figure 14. Grant Riding for Ammunition at the Battle of Monterrey. *From Albert D. Richardson. A Personal History of Ulysses S. Grant. Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1969.*

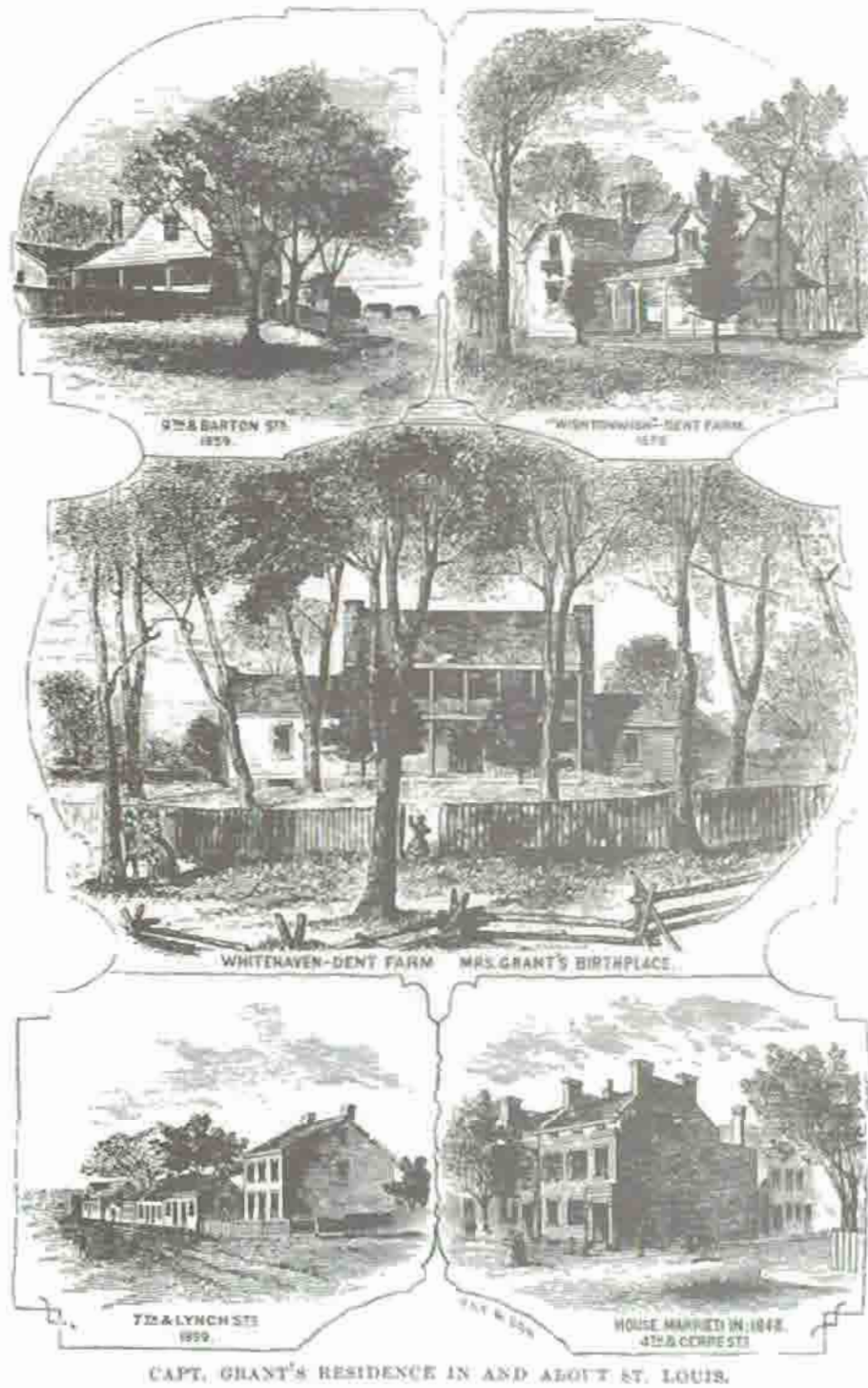
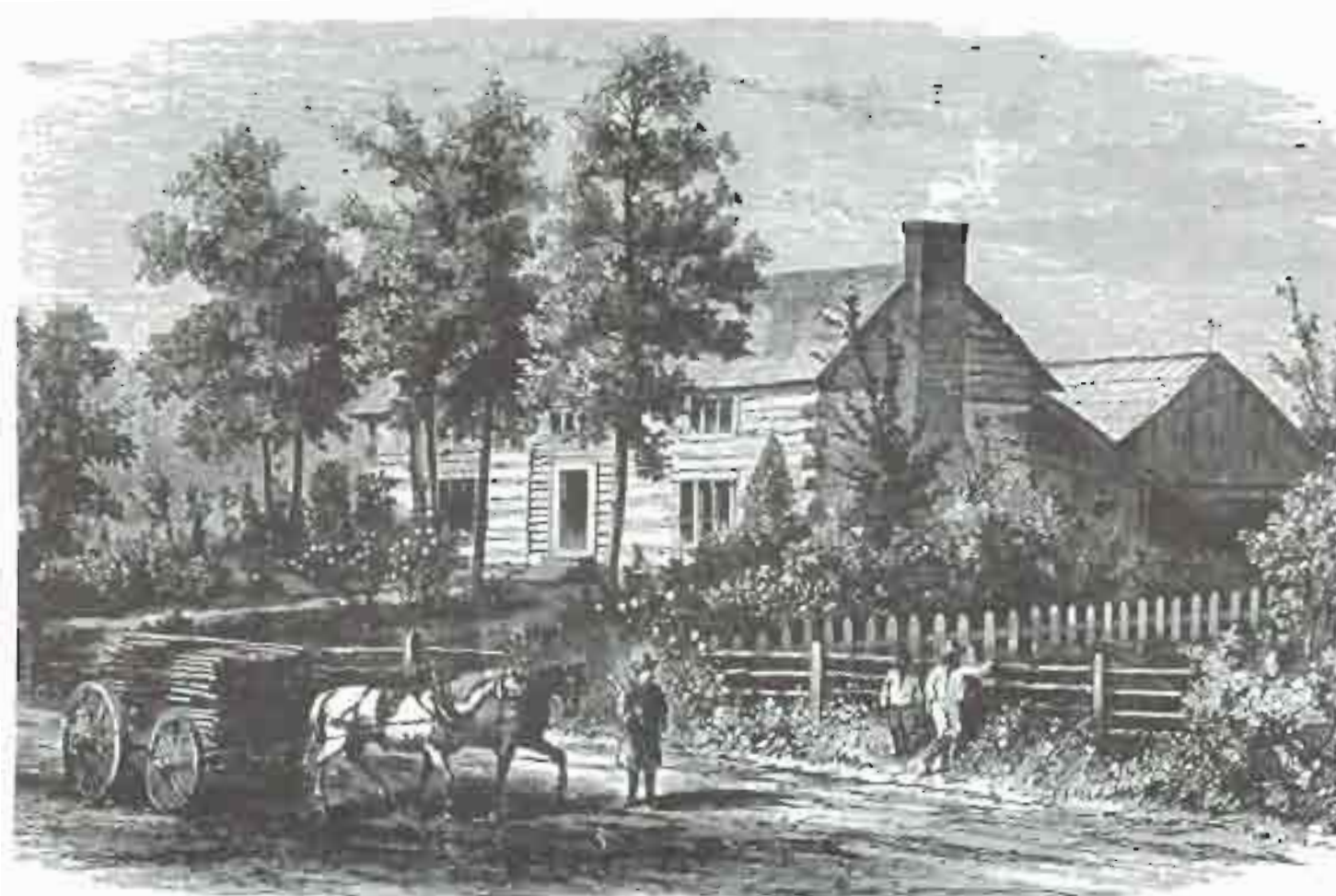


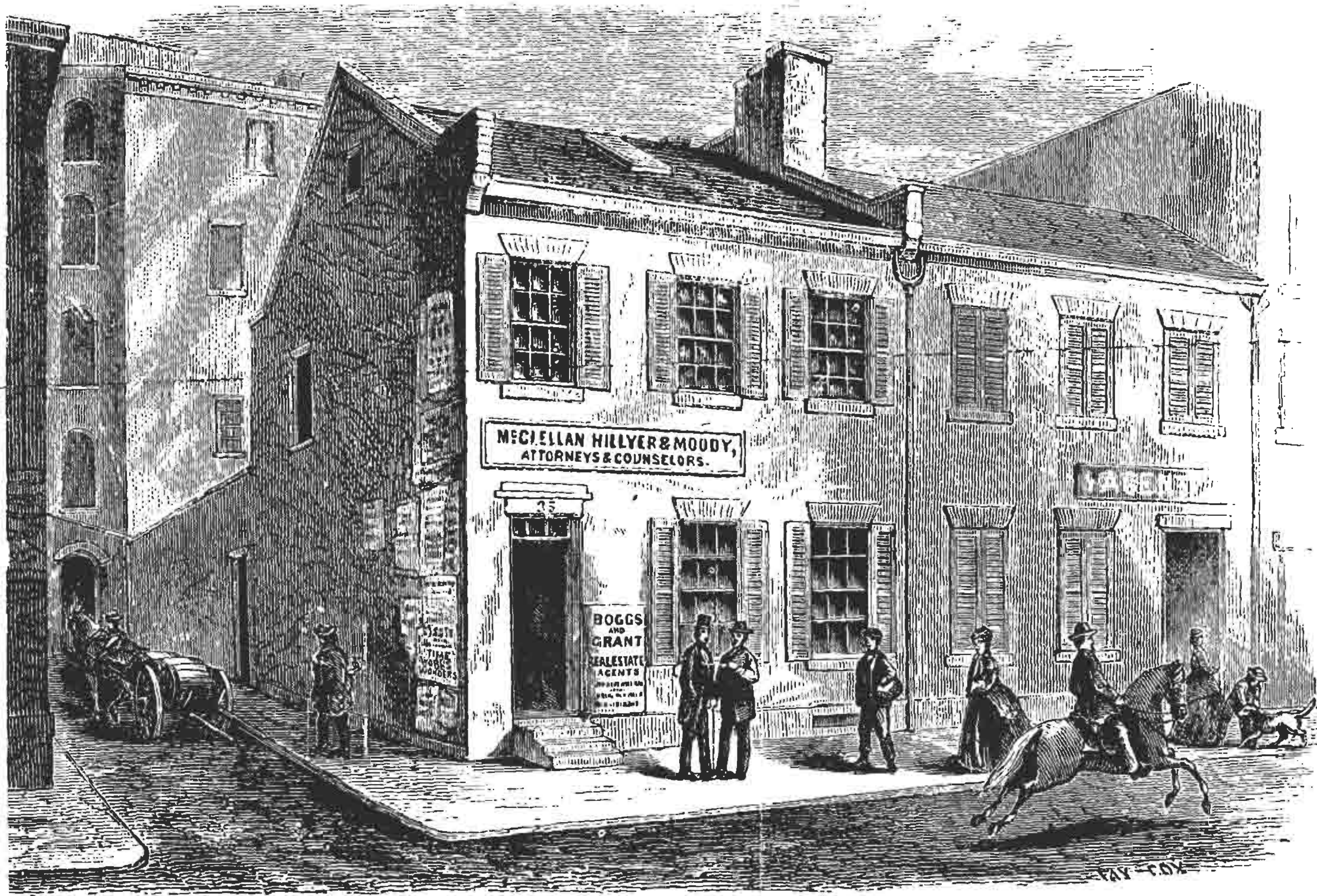
Figure 15. Residences of Ulysses S. Grant in St. Louis. From *Albert D. Richardson, A Personal History of Ulysses S. Grant. Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1969.*



HARDSCRABBLE, BUILT BY CAPT. GRANT.

Figure 16. Hardscrabble: The Cabin that Grant Built on the White Haven estate.

From *Albert D. Richardson, A Personal History of Ulysses S. Grant. Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1969.*



BOGGS AND GRANT, ST. LOUIS, 1859.

Figure 17. The Real Estate Firm of Boggs and Grant at 35 Pine Street, St. Louis.
From Albert D. Richardson. A Personal History of Ulysses S. Grant. Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1969.



Figure 18. Ulysses S. Grant, 1849.
Courtesy Ohio Historical Society



Figure 19. Ellen (Nellie) Grant, 1860.
Courtesy St. Louis Mercantile Library

a statement from Prof. J. J. Reynolds, who was a class mate of mine at West Point, as to qualifications.

Should your honorable body be proper to give me the appointment I pledge myself to give the office my entire attention and shall hope to give general satisfaction.

Very Respectfully
Yours Obedt. Servt.
U. S. Grant

St. Louis Aug. 15th 1862
Hon. County Commissioners
St. Louis County
Mo.

Gentlemen:

I beg leave to submit myself as an applicant for the office of County Engineer should the office be rendered vacant, and at the same time to submit the names of a few citizens who have been kind enough to recommend me for the office. I have made an effort to get a large number of names but the names of persons with whom I am not personally acquainted I did not

Figure 20. Ulysses S. Grant's Letter of Application for St. Louis County Engineer.
Courtesy Missouri Historical Society

1877
 Application of
 Captain W. S. Grant
 to be appointed
 County Engineer
 of
 County of ...
 Let appointed
 by the
 Board of
 Supervisors
 of
 the
 County of ...
 in
 the
 year
 1865
 The
 name
 of
 the
 person
 so
 appointed
 is
 ...
 Note -
 The
 name
 of
 the
 person
 so
 appointed
 is
 ...
 The
 name
 of
 the
 person
 so
 appointed
 is
 ...
 The
 name
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 person
 so
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 The
 name
 of
 the
 person
 so
 appointed
 is
 ...
 The
 name
 of
 the
 person
 so
 appointed
 is
 ...

The undersigned in his capacity
 as recommending Captain ... Grant
 as a suitable person for the position
 of County Engineer of ...
 ...

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Thos. C. Hill | Wm. J. Eaton |
| Jno. H. Hester | Jasper Blom |
| Jr. Curtis | J. Brimley |
| L. A. Serio | James B. Churchill |
| | Yusuf Hughes |
| | A. Mitchell |
| | Samuel P. Parker |
| | Jasper H. Moody |
| Chas. A. Speer | Allen Coste |
| W. S. Halliday | Daman B. B. |
| C. F. Smith | C. W. Light |
| Wm. H. Pepkin | A. S. Robinson |
| N. Brackewell | Geo. W. Moore |
| Amiel M. Frost | R. W. James |
| Robt. M. Kenick | Thomas Marshall |
| Robt. J. Kennedy | |
| G. W. Fishback | John S. Farby |
| R. C. Knight | E. W. White |

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Civil War

While most Americans are aware of the intensity with which Ulysses S. Grant fought the Civil War, they are not familiar with the fact that he simultaneously engaged in a struggle for his family's welfare and his children's education, to maintain a relationship with his father without compromising his position within the army, and to save the White Haven farm from the creditors of his father- and brothers-in-law. Grant's war days were tempered by ribbons and cakes sent to him by his daughter Nellie and romping and teasing with his three sons when they stayed with him in camp. More than once, surprised officers caught Julia and Ulysses tenderly holding hands in secluded corners around headquarters in the quiet evening hours between battles.¹ In contrast, Ulysses' visits from his father were reduced to the most professional and formal of encounters in order to avoid his father's requests for business favors. Ulysses himself made, invested, and saved money. Along with the White Haven farm, he purchased stock and property in Chicago, and he invested in war bonds. He calculated that he might save and invest enough through the war to yield Julia and the children an endowment should he die.

His family was more important to his life than the war, and Grant's mind constantly turned to them. As a major general near Corinth, Mississippi, in 1862, Grant thought of White Haven and described his camp to Julia, "It... looks much [like] that on the Gravois."² As a lieutenant general plotting the fall of Richmond, Ulysses amused Julia with absurd tales of fantastic battles only to be fought in the night air of their tent. Grant's youngest son Jesse, in awe of his father's Mexican War battles from the time he was old enough to understand them, reported that he never could reconcile his kind and gentle father either with the dashing young lieutenant of that earlier war or with "The Butcher" of the Civil War.³ Ulysses was all of the above, however, and, as he had done during the Mexican War, he was a master of words and could in one instance tell Julia how he missed her, in the next graphically describe death, then become businessman, father, politician. His family made him a great general; without them he could have surrendered to a barbarism that would have ended his career but not the war.

1. Horace Porter, *Campaigning with Grant* (New York: Century Co., 1897). Porter was with Grant from Chattanooga to Appomattox, and observed Grant with his wife and children with obvious interest.

2. USG to JDG, May 11, 1862, *Papers*, V, 116.

3. Jesse Root Grant, in collaboration with Henry Francis Granger, *In the Days of My Father, General Grant* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1925), 2.

Grant's Civil War life can be divided into four time periods: from the firing on Fort Sumter in April 1861, to his appointment as major general of volunteers February 19, 1862, after the victories at Forts Henry and Donelson; from Shiloh and his campaign on Vicksburg to his appointment as a major general in the Regular Army on July 7, 1863; from Vicksburg through his supervision of the Chattanooga battles to his congressional confirmation as lieutenant general on March 2, 1864; and from the pursuit of Lee to the final victory and to William T. Sherman and his acceptance of Joseph E. Johnston's surrender on April 26, 1865. It is the personal life of Grant that fascinates the student of White Haven. The accounts of battles and campaigns can be read elsewhere, so they will be dealt with only as they provide the framework for Grant's relationships, business dealings, and developing character during the Civil War years. Likewise, Grant's military leadership ability will be considered only as it relates to assaults on and praise of his character and as it serves to provide a framework for his personal life.

April 1861 to February 19, 1862

At the opening of the Civil War, Ulysses S. Grant lived a quiet life with his wife and four children in Galena, Illinois. Galena was the site of several "Wide-Awake" demonstrations, but there is no indication that Grant participated. What he did do was attend a meeting held on April 16, 1861, and the townspeople selected him to officiate at ~~an April 18 meeting.~~ Since Grant had been in Galena less than a year, it is to his credit and good name in the community that he was selected for this position.

Ulysses was steadfast in his support of the Union from the first shots of the war at Fort Sumter. Contrary to rumors that his enemies circulated years later, Grant never considered a position with the Confederate army. His correspondence with his father and old Colonel Dent reveal the strongest of Union sentiments, albeit coupled with ambiguous feelings about the slaves who might be freed by the war.

When Grant was appointed colonel of the 21st Illinois Volunteers, a fellow cadet from West Point took note of the incident. Alexander Hays was traveling on a train across Pennsylvania, and, after he received the morning paper, he immediately pronounced, "Good! Grant has been made Colonel...." He then stood up and enthusiastically told his fellow travelers, "Gentlemen, mark my words, that is the man who will make his mark in the War."⁴

Grant was visiting his friend Joseph Jones Reynolds in Indiana when he learned of his appointment, and he immediately returned to Galena to arrange for his uniform, horse, and other equipment. The items he needed were expensive, and a nationwide banking crisis

4. Hays did not live to see Grant's final victory, but a friend who accompanied him did. More than twenty years later he wrote to Grant about Hays's compliment. William A. Gardner to USG, March 5, 1885, SIUC-USGA.

had made paper money worthless.⁵ E.A. Collins, Jesse Grant's old partner, signed a note with Grant so that he could get his uniform and equipment on the spot but pay for them in gold after he received his first army pay.⁶ He then went to take command of his regiment, taking with him his son, Fred.

The 21st Illinois had been under the leadership of a political appointee who had more knowledge of foppery than he did of military matters. The regiment had a ghastly reputation for poor behavior and lack of respect, and the men threatened to desert. When Ulysses Grant arrived to take command on June 16, he walked into the regimental headquarters and addressed the adjutant by simply stating he guessed he would take command. At the first review of his troops, a few officers made speeches, and then it was Grant's turn. "Go to your quarters!" he said firmly.⁷ And that was that.

Over the next few weeks, Grant introduced his troops to army discipline and drills. Newspapers on June 17 reported better order in camp.⁸ On June 18, Grant issued a statement to the regiment: "In accepting this command, your Commander will require the co-operation of all the commissioned and non-commissioned Officers in instructing the command, and in maintaining discipline, and hopes to receive the hearty support of every enlisted man."⁹ He struck just the right tone to begin reorganizing the regiment.

The former colonel, Simon S. Goode, provided the troops with a confusing mix of punishment and leniency; he required them to drill for several hours each day when it was the hottest outside, but in the evenings he slipped out to a local tavern with the troops on guard duty. Grant reduced the drill to a few hours each morning and in the late afternoon. On June 25, First Lt. Philip Welshimer wrote to his wife about the improvements. "The guard house was not large enough for the first few nights and days but yesterday there were but two or three in and today none," he commented. Welshimer enjoyed camp life more with

5. Grant's equipment cost \$900. USG to JDG, August 26, 1861, *Papers*, II, 140. The banking crisis in the upper Midwest and around the southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois area was particularly severe for two reasons. First, Midwestern banks invested heavily in Southern states that were one by one withdrawing from the Union. The banks that had invested in these states were collapsing and their notes were worthless. Second, for several years counterfeiting had been on the rise in the United States, so much so that a weekly periodical was published showing thousands of fraudulent and genuine notes. Next to gold, stamps were the most reliable form of currency around Galena at this time.

6. Hamlin Garland, *Ulysses S. Grant* (New York: Doubleday and McClure Co., 1898), 175.

7. Charles King, *The True Ulysses S. Grant* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1914), 145; J.F.C. Fuller, *The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1929), 69.

8. *Chicago Tribune*, June 18, 1861, in *Papers*, II, 51n.

9. USG, Orders No. 7, June 18, 1861, *Papers*, II, 45-46.

Grant in command, saying, "Evry thing goes off much smoother and better since our new Colonel has got command."¹⁰

That night, however, the guards on duty left their posts again to visit the tavern. Grant imprisoned them and published an order listing the full punishment prescribed by military regulation, which in peace time was a \$10 fine plus thirty days at hard labor with ball and chain. "In time of war the punishment of this is death," he said ominously. Now that Grant had the attention of his men, he continued, "The Col Commanding believing that the men of his command... were ignorant of the magnitude of it, is not disposed to visit them with all the rigor of the law... but would admonish them, and the whole command against a repetition of the offence, as it will not be excused again in this Regt."¹¹ Gradually, Grant accustomed the men in his care to how they were expected to behave and how they could expect him to behave.

John Jones, who served under Grant in these first few months, remembered how Grant advocated fair punishment. "One day I was commanded by Capt. Knight to punish a soldier by making him lie around a barrel and tying his hands to his feet so that he encircled the barrel," Jones recalled. Grant saw the man being punished, and he ordered him to be untied and for both the soldier and Captain Knight to report to him. Grant learned that the captain had cursed at the soldier and the soldier at the captain. "Your commission gives you no right to curse any of your men. You can't expect them to submit to it," reasoned Colonel Grant. "Don't let it occur again."¹² And once again, that was that.

On July 3, the 21st began marching toward Quincy, Illinois. Most other regiments on the move were transported by railroad, but Grant believed that the enlisted men would benefit from the experience of carrying their packs and moving in formation. It turned out it was the officers who broke rank, but after Grant issued sharp orders to them to remain in formation, they straightened up.¹³ Grant also noted that a few of his men raided local chicken houses that they passed, and he punished the offenders whenever possible.¹⁴ The men learned quickly how to organize and break camp and were prepared when Grant received orders to move across the Mississippi River into Missouri to protect the railroad

10. Philip Welshimer to his wife, June 25, 1861, *USGA Newsletter*, IV, 1 (Oct., 1966), 3.

11. USG, Orders No. 14, June 26, 1861, *Papers*, II, 48.

12. Isaac Pinchel, "Grant Was Temperate; Beloved by His Men," *Cincinnati Times-Star*, April 26, 1928, SIUC-USGA.

13. USG, Orders, July 6, 1861, *Papers*, II, 58-59.

14. For the most part, Grant kept indiscriminate raiding by soldiers under his command to a minimum during the war. Joel Tyler Headley, *Grant and Sherman; Their Campaigns and Generals* (New York: E.B. Treat and Co., 1865), 47; USG to JDG, July 7, 1861, *Papers*, II, 59-60.

between Hannibal and St. Joseph.¹⁵ He proudly wrote to his father, "The fact is...that I have done as much for the improvement and efficiency of this regiment as was ever done for a command in the same length of time."¹⁶ Grant anticipated a skirmish, so he sent Fred home to his mother in Galena. Remarkably, Julia wanted to send him back so that he could be with his father.¹⁷ Grant was pursuing Brig. Gen. Thomas A. Harris of the Missouri State Guard and his Rebel troops, who were supposed to be encamped at Florida, Missouri. Grant approached the encampment with fear of engaging Harris, and with equal fear of not engaging him. When the troops arrived at Harris' camp, they discovered that he fled a few hours before. That day Colonel Grant learned, as Brig. Gen. J. F. C. Fuller wrote, "He who fears the least holds the initiative, and that he who can make the adversary fear more than he does himself has already defeated him morally." Ulysses looked back on that day as one that was pivotal in his thinking about the enemy: "From that event to the close of the war, I never experienced trepidation upon confronting an enemy.... I never forgot he had as much reason to fear my forces as I had his."¹⁸ The lesson would serve him well in the months and years to come as Ulysses S. Grant took to active campaigning, confident of victory.

Over the next few weeks, Grant and his regiment moved from Hannibal to Macon City to Mexico, all in Missouri. Through the newspapers, Grant learned that his name had been recommended for brigadier generalship. He was promoted on August 5, 1861.¹⁹ Between then and August 7, he moved with his regiment to St. Louis. Julia in the meantime took the children to White Haven to visit her father, and Ulysses hoped that he would have time to visit them. "Bless their hearts I wish I could see them," he commented. Almost as soon as he arrived in the city, he received orders to proceed directly to Ironton, Missouri.²⁰

As a brigadier general, Ulysses Grant was entitled to staff officers, and he selected them from friends and acquaintances in Galena, St. Louis, and from the 21st. John Rawlins, the young lawyer who spoke passionately for the Union at the Galena meeting, was his

15. USG to Jesse Root Grant, Sr., July 13, 1861, *Papers*, II, 66-67. For orders to the 21st to move into Missouri, see *Papers*, II, 64-69, *passim*.

16. USG to Jesse Root Grant, Sr., July 13, 1861, *Papers*, II, 66.

17. USG to JDG, July 13, 1861, *Papers*, II, 70; USG, *Memoirs*, 92.

18. Fuller, *Grant and Lee*, 86; USG, *Memoirs*, 164-165.

19. USG to Jesse Root Grant, Sr., August 3, 1861, *Papers*, II, 80-82n. Grant's commission as brigadier general was back-dated to May 17, 1861, rather than August 7. This commission date placed him eighteenth in seniority among thirty-five brigadiers. AGO General Orders No. 62, August 20, 1861, *Papers*, II, 133n.

20. Julia was at White Haven by August 8. USG to JDG, August 10, 1861, *Papers*, II, 96.

choice for assistant adjutant general.²¹ Rawlins could not come as soon as Grant asked him because his wife was dying of tuberculosis, but once he did arrive he was Grant's chief aide for the duration of the war and remained on his staff until his death in 1869.²² Of Rawlins, Grant wrote in his *Memoirs*:

Rawlins remained with me as long as he lived, and rose to the rank of brigadier-general, and chief-of-staff to the General of the Army--an office created for him--before the war closed. He was an able man, possessed of great firmness, and could say "no" so emphatically to a request which he thought should not be granted that the person he was addressing would understand at once that there was no use of pressing the matter. General Rawlins was a very useful officer in other ways than this. I became very much attached to him.

Rawlins is only mentioned two other times in Grant's *Memoirs*: once in reference to his speech in Galena in April, and once in a note with regard to a battle plan of William Tecumseh Sherman.

A few scholars have questioned the role Rawlins played at Grant's headquarters. Was he an exceptional secretary, assisting Grant with organizing his many notes and plans, ~~keeping the office in order despite the frequent moves and battles?~~ Or did he play a larger role, planning campaigns and writing Grant's reports and orders? James Harrison Wilson, who also served under Grant, believed that their commander did Rawlins an injustice in the *Memoirs* by not crediting him more often. Wilson wrote a biography of Rawlins that maintained that it was Rawlins rather than Grant who won the war.²³ Wilson wrote a biography of Grant previously, and he contradicts himself in the two books. One may assume that Rawlins was a significant player in the Civil War and a vital person on Grant's staff, but Wilson overstated his role in the strategy that led to Union victory.

Brigadier General Grant selected for one of his aides, William Hillyer, a young lawyer who had an office in the same building with Boggs and Grant in St. Louis. Hillyer remained on Grant's staff until the spring of 1863. From the Illinois 21st, Grant took Lt. Clark B.

21. USG to Maj. Gen. John C. Fremont, August 21, 1861, *Papers*, II, 125. Rawlins had the rank of captain, dating from August 20. He was Grant's second choice for adjutant general, having appointed Montague Hasie first. Hasie apparently was not with Grant beyond Ironton, so he changed his appointment of Rawlins as aide-de-camp to adjutant general. *Papers*, II, 126n.

22. Rawlins and Emily Smith of Goshen, New York, married June 5, 1856. She died August 30, 1861, leaving two daughters. Mildred Parker Seese, "Gus Baltimore, Former Coachman to Grant at Stony Ford Stock Farm," Middletown [New York] *Times Herald*, June 29, 1957, 11. James Harrison Wilson, *The Life of John A. Rawlins* (New York: Neal Publishing Co., 1916), 53-54.

23. Quotation from USG, *Memoirs*, 155-256; Wilson, 176.

Lagow, also an aide. Lagow was with Grant until the late fall or winter of 1863.²⁴ Grant selected his brother-in-law, Alexander Sharp, as his brigade surgeon.²⁵

General Grant established his headquarters at Cairo, Illinois, and began systematically to organize, drill, and discipline his new command in preparation for an offensive. After an inauspicious beginning in the Battle of Belmont, Missouri, on November 7, 1861, Grant secured permission to move on Forts Henry and Donelson which guarded the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers respectively. With the aid of naval forces under Flag-Officer Andrew H. Foote, Grant captured Fort Henry on February 6, 1862. For ten days, Grant fought for Fort Donelson. Between midnight and dawn on February 16, the Confederate commander, Brig. Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner dispatched a message to Grant. He wanted to negotiate terms of surrender. Grant replied, "Yours of this date, proposing armistice and appointment of Commissioners to settle terms of capitulation, is just received. No terms except immediate and unconditional surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works." In the tradition of military etiquette, he signed his note as Buckner had, "I am, sir, very respectfully, Your Ob't se'v't."²⁶

Buckner was incensed when he received Grant's reply. In dismay, he wrote back: "The distribution of forces under my command, incident to an unexpected change of commanders, and the overwhelming force under your command, compel me, notwithstanding the brilliant success of the Confederate arms yesterday, to accept the ungenerous and unchivalrous terms you propose."²⁷ White flags appeared around the Confederate lines, and Grant walked into Fort Donelson victorious. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton made his ultimatum, "I propose to move immediately..." famous across the United States by repeating it often.²⁸

Simon Bolivar Buckner knew Brigadier General Grant when he was plain cadet Sam at West Point, and the two "enemies" served together in the Mexican War. The last time they saw each other was in New York City in 1854, when Buckner secured Grant's hotel bill. Grant genuinely liked Buckner, and both men were eager to reminisce. They sat down to breakfast with each other and laughed over old times.

24. USG, *Memoirs*, 168-169; USG to Brig. Gen. Lorenzo Thomas, August 29, 1861, *Papers*, II, 148; USG to Brig. Gen. Lorenzo Thomas, August 31, 1861, *Papers*, II, 156.

25. USG to Brig. Gen. Lorenzo Thomas, August 31, 1861, *Papers*, II, 156-157. Beginning September 11, 1861, Sharp worked as a surgeon under contract rather than receiving an army commission. *Papers*, II, 157n.

26. USG to Simon Bolivar Buckner, February 16, 1862, *Papers*, IV, 218.

27. Simon Bolivar Buckner to USG, February 16, 1862, *Papers*, IV, 218.

28. Headley (1865), 96-97.

Grant's actions at Fort Donelson not only won the first great Union victory of the war, but earned Grant the sobriquet of "Unconditional Surrender," and promotion to major general of volunteers.

Family Matters: A Husband and Father at War

From his commission as a colonel until the victory at Fort Donelson, Ulysses Grant wanted his family to join him. Throughout the Civil War he was torn between concern for the safety of Julia and the children and a longing to spend time with them. In July 1861, he sent Fred back to his mother rather than have him face battle. In August, when he was called to St. Louis, Ulysses thought he could obtain a short leave of absence and "pop down upon [Julia] taking [her] by surprise," at White Haven.²⁹ She went there for a brief visit with her father. Ulysses had no time to ride out, however. In September, he wanted Julia and the two younger children to visit after they returned to Galena, but he was concerned about frequent skirmishes just a few miles from him. Instead, Ulysses' mother, Hannah Grant, visited her daughter-in-law and grandchildren in Galena.

Ulysses tried to stay involved in the lives of his children. He inquired why Buck had gotten a spanking, saying, "I thought he was too good a boy to ever require anything of the kind." Buck had formed a friendship with Susy Felt of Galena, and repeatedly Grant teased him, "Tell Buck to kiss Susy Felt for me." He worried that his youngest son Jesse might not recognize him.³⁰ No doubt he remember when Fred forgot him while he was in California. Ulysses used his army pay to indulge his children a little; he sent them coins to buy treats for themselves. Jesse was to have fifty cents all for himself, even though he was not yet four years old.³¹ The youngest Grant child continued to be the pet of the family. "You will like [Jesse] the best of any of the children, although he is the worst," Grant wrote to his sister about his spirited toddler.³² Ulysses also decided that Fred was old enough after all to join him, and he asked Julia if she could not send him down with his father when Jesse Grant traveled south.³³

29. USG to JDG, August 10, 1861, *Papers*, II, 96.

30. USG to JDG, September 12, 1861, *Papers*, II, 247; USG to JDG, September 20, 1861, *Papers*, II, 290.

31. Grant also specified that "Martha Rebecca" was to have fifty cents for herself. John Y. Simon identified Martha Rebecca as the Grant's daughter Ellen, but he provided no evidence to substantiate the claim. The Grants named her Julia when she was born but changed her name to Ellen in honor of Julia's mother. While she was a little girl, Ulysses called her "Missy." As she grew the family began to call her Nellie, like Julia's sister. Martha Rebecca may have been the child of a Grant relative or friend or may have been a servant in the Grant household. USG to JDG, September 22, 1861, *Papers*, II, 300n.

32. USG to Mary Grant, January 23, 1862, *Papers*, IV, 97.

33. USG to JDG, September 29, 1861, *Papers*, II, 327-328.



Map 6.
Grant and the Civil War,
1861-1862

On November 23, 1861, Julia traveled back to St. Louis, expecting to stay until December 7. Whether she returned to Cairo early and left again on December 9, or whether she remained in St. Louis a few days longer than originally anticipated is unclear. By December 18, she and the children were back in Cairo.³⁴ "It may be the last opportunity she will have of visiting her father," Ulysses wrote regarding Julia and Frederick Dent, whose health and emotional state was suffering under the effects of the war. After the one or two trips to St. Louis, Julia went to Cairo to stay with Ulysses at his headquarters.³⁵ Because Cairo was a secure Union town, he was not concerned for her safety or the safety of the children. Julia began a practice in Cairo that she continued through Grant's White House years; she dropped him little affectionate notes, such as "Dear Dode, Come up & sit with me a while wont you? I am so lonesome Bring up St Louis papers too & be sure & send or bring this back to your Juje[.]"³⁶ One may assume that Julia's little notes caused some snickering about headquarters. In late January or early February 1862, Grant anticipated the movements on Forts Henry and Donelson and sent Julia and the children to Covington, Kentucky, to visit his parents.

Family Matters: Rebels and Gluttons

Ulysses and Julia Grant's relationships with their parents and siblings became strained in the early years of the war. The conflicts were driven by finances and political ideology. ~~Ulysses questioned very early where his~~ Julia's loyalty would lie, telling her, "I hope by this time you feel as loyal to the Union as Aunt Fanny does."³⁷ Julia's politics were in accord with Ulysses' throughout the war, or she never admitted publicly otherwise.

Frederick Dent needed friends in the summer of 1861, and as the war escalated his son-in-law Ulysses became a more promising source of support and pecuniary security. In May, Grant learned that his father-in-law could not keep up his mortgage payments on White Haven. A tenant identified only as "Old Man Rush" lived in the big old house, but

34. The only evidence that Julia was not in St. Louis continuously from November 23 until sometime between December 9 and 18, is in a letter from Ulysses to Julia in which he wrote, "Capt. Lagow goes after you." USG to JDG, December 9, 1861, *Papers*, III, 271. The editors of Grant's *Papers* interpreted this to mean that Lagow ran after Julia to catch her and give her the letter. In Grant's style, however, "Capt. Lagow goes after you" could be interpreted as Lagow going to pick up Julia and the children in St. Louis to bring them back to Cairo. USG to Jesse Root Grant, Sr., November 27, 1861, *Papers*, III, 226-227; USG to Mary Grant, December 18, 1861, *Papers*, III, 307-308.

35. USG to Jesse Root Grant, Sr., November 27, 1861, *Papers*, III, 227.

36. JDG to USG, on reverse of letter USG to JDG, December 9, 1861, *Papers*, III, 271.

37. Aunt Fanny was probably Fanny Wrenshall Fielding, who apparently lived on the Dent estate since the death of her husband, John Fielding, former president of St. Charles College. See Chapter Three. USG to JDG, May 15, 1861, *Papers*, II, 31.

Rush was not making much at farming and could not make his rent payments. Ulysses gave his father-in-law the rent from the Grants' Barton Street house, and when Joseph White made his mortgage and interest payments on Hardscrabble, Dent also received that money. Even with this income, Dent could not pay the interest and principal payments due to David Irvin and Harry Boggs. Ulysses wrote to Julia that Dent "says he is ruined and I fear it is too true." A man identified as Mitchell, trustee of either Boggs or Irvin, demanded that Dent make his June payment on time. At some point between May and August, Julia's father suspended payments on one or both of his mortgages on White Haven. In September, Julia's brother, John Dent, purchased the estate at a forced sale for \$4,226.92, the amount Frederick Dent owed Harry Boggs plus interest and court costs.³⁸

Ulysses Grant did not hesitate to tell his father-in-law his opinions on the war at this point. On April 19, 1861, Ulysses wrote Mr. Dent, "Now is the time...for men to prove their love of country... All party distinctions should be lost sight of and evry true patriot be for maintaining the integrity of the glorious old *Stars & Stripes*, the Constitution, and the Union." He told Dent that the South obviously had been the aggressor and that the North would be justified in refusing to support slavery if the South continued to rebel. Grant envisioned the downfall of the entire Southern economy, including its base of production, cotton, and its labor supply, slaves, in an on-going insurrection.³⁹

In early May 1861, Grant told Julia, "Your father says he is for the Union but is opposed to having an army to sustain it. He would have a secession force march where they please uninterrupted and is really what I would call a secessionist."⁴⁰ As the war continued into the fall, old Frederick Dent demonstrated that he was not of such a solidly Southern mind as Grant first supposed. He was "elated" that Grant had become a brigadier general.⁴¹ Dent wanted to visit Grant in camp, but he was afraid of signing an oath of loyalty to the Union in St. Louis. Signing such an oath in the Gravois neighborhood in that day was akin to "signing his death warrant," he believed.⁴² Dent's initial hesitation to support the federal government may have come from fear of his neighbors' reactions and

38. Dent did not pay any interest to Irvin in a year or more. William H. Morrison & Co., to David Irvin, June 4, 1860, AF Collection (Irvin, David), MHS; USG to JDG, May 10, 1861, *Papers*, to Henry Boggs's trustee (J. G. McClellan), Deed of Trust, June 26, 1858, Book 205, page 151, St. Louis City Recorder of Deeds; Frederick Dent by trustee to John C. Dent, Foreclosure of a Deed of Trust, September 10, 1861, Book 264, page 57, St. Louis City Recorder of Deeds.

39. According to Frank Burr, Frederick Dent, Sr., took Grant's letter to William Barnard and they discussed it "at length," although Burr did not record Dent's reaction. Burr (1885), 132; USG to Frederick Dent, Sr., April 19, 1861, *Papers*, II 3-4.

40. USG to JDG, May 10, 1861, *Papers*, II, 26.

41. USG to JDG, September 12, 1861, *Papers*, II, 247. William Taussig claimed to have heard Dent berating Grant after his victories at Forts Henry and Donelson. Taussig in Post (1904), 93-94.

42. USG to JDG, October 20, 1861, *Papers*, III, 64.

possible retaliation on his farm and property. Early in the war, a Southern regiment was raised on a nearby farm, although many of his neighbors supported the North. (The Knights of the Golden Circle, a local group of "hotheads," almost succeeded in capturing Grant in January 1862, when he visited St. Louis, but his old Gravois neighbors dissuaded the kidnapers.⁴³)

Ulysses was relieved to learn that he and his former roommate Frederick Dent, Jr., would fight on the same side in the war. Grant wrote to the elder Mr. Dent after receiving a letter from his brother-in-law, "He is for the old flag as long as there is a Union of two states fighting under its banner and when they dissolve he will go it alone."⁴⁴

Grant counted his brothers-in-law Alexander Sharp, Nellie's husband, and Jim Casey, Emma's husband since February, as two Union men. Early in the war, Grant succeeded in getting Sharp a contract as brigade surgeon. Jim Casey fed information to Grant about Confederate formations around Paducah and Caseyville, Kentucky. Emma, Julia's youngest sister, became a Southern sympathizer two or three decades after the war in the era of the "Cult of the Lost Cause," but during the war she supported the Union with most of her family.⁴⁵

Grant's old real estate partner Harry Boggs espoused allegiance to the Confederacy at the beginning of the war. Grant described a meeting between them in August to Julia:

He cursed and went on like a Madman. Told me that I would never be welcom in his hous; that the people of Illinois were a poor miserable set of Black Republicans, Abolition paupers that had to invade their state to get something to eat.... Harry is such a pitiful insignificant fellow that I could not get mad at him and told him so whereupon he set the Army of Flanders far in the shade with his profanity.⁴⁶

43. General Grant was almost captured in October or November, 1861, because he was on such friendly terms with his former neighbors that he carelessly let old Gravois friends roam his headquarters after the Battle of Belmont. USG, *Memoirs*, 176; Garland, 1875; Hyde and Conard, IV.

44. USG to Frederick Dent, Sr., April 19, 1861, *Papers*, II, 4.

45. The Cult of the Lost Cause is a term applied to the recreation of the "old South" in the four or five decades before and after 1900. The Supreme Court decision *Plessy vs. Ferguson* and the mythical world of Scarlett O'Hara's "Tara" are both inventions with roots in the Cult of the Lost Cause. USG to JDG, August 29, 1861, *Papers*, II, 149; USG to JDG, September 20, 1861, *Papers*, II, 289; USG to Brig. Gen. Charles F. Smith, October 25, 1861, *Papers*, III, 71-72.

46. USG to JDG, August 10, 1861, *Papers*, II, 97.

Grant was rarely cruel, and he rarely used sarcasm with the intention to hurt an individual. That day he did, though, when he told Harry Boggs he was insignificant. Harry and Louisa Boggs eventually shifted their loyalty to the Union side.

The other Dent family member to support the Confederacy was Julia's oldest brother John. John considered an appointment in the Confederate army, but Grant counseled him against it. "He had better keep cool and claim to have always been for the Union," he told Julia.⁴⁷ John moved to the home of Bill Barnard, who was the brother-in-law of John's wife Amanda Shurlds, to get away from the other Dents in the summer of 1861.⁴⁸

In 1861 and 1862, Ulysses and Julia confronted the political ambitions and financial ties of Ulysses' parents and siblings. As with Frederick Dent, Sr., Ulysses wrote a strongly worded letter to his own father explaining that he would support the Union. Ulysses made it clear to his father that it could be dangerous for him to remain in Covington, Kentucky, despite any financial losses he might sustain in abandoning his business there. "Costs cannot now be counted," Ulysses told his father. "My advice would be to leave where you are if you are not safe with the views you entertain. I would never stultify my opinions for the sake of a little security."⁴⁹

Ulysses predicted to his father that any move he made to the North from Covington would be brief. "My own opinion is that this War will be but of short duration," Grant forecast. He believed that a few battles on Southerners home territory would break up the Confederate army and that the Confederate officials would run to other countries. He feared then that the slaves of the South would notice the weak position of their masters and revolt.⁵⁰

Grant demonstrated in his correspondence with his father and father-in-law that his own politics lay somewhere between the two of them. He was a Democrat and opposed Lincoln's Republican Party as did Frederick Dent, but he was willing to support the legitimately elected government regardless of its past politics. To Jesse Grant he wrote, "I assure you my heart is in the cause I have espoused, and however I may have disliked party Republicanism there has never been a day that I would not have taken up arms for a Constitutional Administration."⁵¹ Grant's belief in the Constitution extended to an uncomfortable support of slavery as a right guaranteed by that document. He believed that staunch abolitionists were as much traitors to the United States as were Southern

47. USG to JDG, May 15, 1861, *Papers*, II, 31-32.

48. USG to JDG, May 10, 1861, *Papers*, II, 26.

49. USG to Jesse Root Grant, Sr., April 21, 1861, *Papers*, II, 7.

50. USG to Jesse Root Grant, Sr., May 6, 1861, *Papers*, II, 21-22.

51. USG to Jesse Root Grant, Sr., July 13, 1861, *Papers*, II, 67.

secessionists; both groups were incendiary. Grant eventually would support the downfall of slavery but only in the natural course of bringing about a speedy end to the violence of the rebellion.⁵²

Jesse Grant had become an opportunistic man in his old age, and he attempted to use his son as a way to curry favors from friends and acquaintances and to gain attention. His first move was to ask his brigadier general son if there were staff positions available for sons of Jesse's friends.⁵³ Grant filled his positions with Rawlins, Hillyer, and Lagow, so he replied that he had no positions to give. Jesse apparently persisted, so that Ulysses finally wrote irritably, "I do not want to be importuned for places. I have none to give and want to be placed under no obligation to anyone." He would not assist his father by pushing his subordinates to accept Jesse's cronies either.⁵⁴

Jesse changed tactics then and asked if Grant could not arrange for the army to purchase his leather stock. Grant replied as before, "I cannot take an active part in securing contracts.... Situated as I am it is necessary both to my efficiency for the public good and my own reputation that I should keep clear of government contracts."⁵⁵ Grant also was distressed that Jesse printed private letters containing details of war activities in the Cincinnati area papers. In particular, Jesse printed a letter written by Grant about the Battle of Belmont.⁵⁶ Under the circumstances, Ulysses wished he did not feel a duty to correspond with his father.

Even had Jesse Grant not sought to gain from his son's rising station, the Ulysses Grant family and the Jesse Grant family may not have gotten along. Ulysses and Julia both noted in their memoirs that the Jesse Grant family was parsimonious when it came to others but extravagant with themselves, and their economy and greed almost broke up the family. In June 1861, Ulysses wrote to Julia about how inexpensive fruits and vegetables were in Covington. He wanted especially to tell her about a huge bowl of peas that his sister Clara had served at two meals. Clara announced that all of the peas had cost only two cents. "I don't know that any other member of the family would have been thoughtful enough to remind me of the fact," Ulysses sarcastically wrote Julia.⁵⁷

52. USG to Jesse Root Grant, Sr., November 27, 1861, *Papers*, III, 227.

53. USG to JDG, August 26, 1861, *Papers*, II, 140-141; USG to Jesse Root Grant, Sr., August 27, 1861, *Papers*, II, 145.

54. USG to Mary Grant, October 25, 1861, *Papers*, III, 76.

55. USG to Jesse Root Grant, Sr., November 27, 1861, *Papers*, III, 226-227.

56. USG to Jesse Root Grant, Sr., November 8, 1861, *Papers*, III, 136-138n.

57. USG to JDG, June 11, 1861, *Papers*, II, 40-41.

Ulysses and Julia considered her and the children moving to Covington for the duration of the war after Grant received notice that he would be made a brigadier. He specified to Julia that she would have to pay board for herself and the children while they were there.⁵⁸ Less than a week later, Ulysses wrote back to Julia not to go to Covington, and he made it clear to his family that it was because they and the city of Covington might not welcome his wife and children with open arms.⁵⁹ On September 13, Ulysses' brother Simpson died, and the family apparently became engaged almost immediately in a struggle for his belongings. At the end of the month, Ulysses wrote to Julia with his opinion on her moving to his parents' house:

It would be very pleasant living in Covington, but your prejudice against Clara, and her incorrigible persiverance in practicing her rigid economy upon evrybody but herself would make it insupportable. I could not live there in peace and you probably would be further from it than me.⁶⁰

Julia visited Covington periodically throughout the war, such as before the battles of Forts Henry and Donelson, but she and the children never moved there because the Grants were so difficult.⁶¹

From April 1861 to March 1862, Ulysses S. Grant was a man on the rise. He rapidly ascended through the ranks of the volunteer army and charged on to the first great Union victory of the war. When he demanded "Unconditional Surrender" from his old friend Simon Bolivar Buckner, he won not only Fort Donelson but also the support of the North. He would fight to maintain that support throughout the war, but he was on his way to fame.

Julia, Fred, Buck, Nellie, and Jesse went through a period of adjustment in the first year of the war. They were uncertain how long it would last, and they did not feel like Galena was home without their husband and father. With Ulysses and Julia's parents, they had come to an understanding about where they stood on support of the Union. The Grants came down strongly in favor of the Union, particularly if they could make money off their familial relationship with General Grant. The Dents were split. Julia's father was proud of Ulysses' appointment, but he would have preferred that the Confederacy be allowed quietly to secede.

58. USG to JDG, August 4, 1861, *Papers*, II, 85.

59. USG to JDG, August 10, 1861, *Papers*, II, 97; USG to Mary Grant, August 12, 1861, *Papers*, II, 106.

60. USG to JDG, September 29, 1861, *Papers*, II, 328.

61. Jesse Root Grant, Sr., tried to smooth things over with Julia in November by sending her a shawl. USG to Jesse Root Grant, Sr., November 27, 1861, *Papers*, III, 226.

Ulysses S. Grant was willing to support the Union army to the death, but in the coming months he learned that jealousy and rumors could bring an early end to his career. For him, Julia was his greatest ally as he entered some of the darkest days of the war.

February 1862 to July 7, 1863

In the second period of his Civil War life, from early March 1862, to July 1863, Ulysses Grant fought both Confederates and rumors. In the wake of his victories at Forts Henry and Donelson, stories surfaced that he was an alcoholic who had no capacity for command, and he was relieved temporarily. Exonerated and restored to leadership, he was surprised and almost defeated on the first day of battle at Shiloh, but the following day he rebounded and led the Union forces to victory. Rumors of intemperance resurfaced briefly after the first day's losses at Shiloh and, because of negative press, several governors complained about his military leadership. Major General Henry W. Halleck superseded Grant again in May for the drive on Corinth, Mississippi, and in frustration he contemplated resigning but determined to wait a while. His old friend William T. Sherman wrote Grant, "I... am rejoiced at your conclusion to remain. For yourself, you could not be quiet at home for a week, when armies are moving, and rest could not relieve your mind of the gnawing sensation that injustice has been done you."⁶² In June he regained his command and retained it from that point onward.

During the summer of 1862, Grant pushed his army toward Vicksburg and Union control of the Mississippi River.⁶³ After a series of ill-fated bayou expeditions, Grant launched a brilliant campaign in the spring of 1863. Grant demonstrated before Vicksburg the determination and creativity in problem-solving he demonstrated as a boy hauling logs in Ohio and as a quartermaster crossing the Isthmus of Panama. William Woodward recalled some of Grant's early life when he analyzed the Vicksburg campaigns, and he wrote, "If Destiny ever brought the man and the hour together it was when Grant stood before Vicksburg."⁶⁴ Illinois Representative Elihu Washburne joined Grant for part of the campaign. He described to Congress later how Grant's tenacity manifested itself:

62. Sherman blamed the press and jealous men for the slanders against Grant. William T. Sherman to USG, June 6, 1862, *Papers*, V, 141n. Sherman would have banned all journalists during the war if he could have. When he learned that three journalists were killed accidentally a few months later, he said wryly: "Good! Now we'll have news from hell before breakfast." Grant banned one reporter from his command when the reporter slandered Sherman, making "insinuations against his sanity." William E. Woodward, *Meet General Grant* (New York: Horace Liveright, 1928), 260. USG to Thomas W. Knox, April 6, 1863, *Papers*, VIII, 30-32n.

63. If the Union gained control of the Mississippi River, it could split the Confederacy in half.

64. William E. Woodward, 288.

He took with him neither a horse, nor an orderly, nor a servant, a camp-chest, an overcoat, nor a blanket, nor even a clean shirt. His entire baggage for six days... was a tooth-brush. He fared like the commonest soldier in his command, partaking of his rations, and sleeping on the ground with no covering except the canopy of heaven. How could such a soldier fail to inspire confidence in an army, and how could he fail to lead it to victory and glory?⁶⁵

Having directed his army with consummate skill and ability in numerous skirmishes and battles and extensive siege operations, Grant received the surrender of the Confederate fortress on July 4. In conquering Vicksburg, he also conquered America. According to William McFeely, after Vicksburg "Grant never lost the hold on the people's imagination..."⁶⁶ The victory secured Grant's place in history, and it earned him promotion to major general in the regular army.

The "Peculiar Institution" and the Military

Grant was determined to disrupt trade with the South that could aid the Confederacy, and toward that end he gloated when contraband slaves drifted into his camp. Speaking of slave-holders and their slaves, he wrote, "Their institution [slaves] are beginning to have ideas of their own and every time an expedition goes out more or less of them follow in the wake of the army and come into camp."⁶⁷ The more slaves that left the Mississippi plantations, the less the South could produce the supplies it needed to continue the war. During his second year in the war, Grant charged Chaplain John Eaton with the task of caring for and putting to work all contrabands who entered camp. Eaton believed that Grant had the welfare of the slaves in mind as much as the war effort when he instructed him to stop returning runaways to their masters.⁶⁸

65. Elihu B. Washburne, speech before Congress, in Burr, 347-348.

66. William S. McFeely, *Grant: A Biography* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981), 138.

67. Slavery commonly was called the "peculiar institution." USG to Mary Grant, August 19, 1862, *Papers*, V, 311.

68. John Eaton, *Grant, Lincoln, and the Freedmen: Reminiscences of the Civil War, with Special Reference to the Work for the Contrabands and Freedmen of the Mississippi Valley* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1907; New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), throughout, but particularly 114. Louis S. Gerteis, *From Contraband to Freedman: Federal Policy Toward Southern Blacks, 1861-1865*, Contributions in American History Number 29 (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1973), discusses how Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of September 1862, led Grant to appoint Eaton in November of that same year. Gerteis demonstrates that Grant's approach toward the contrabands was new and a military necessity, but he criticized the paternalistic course that Eaton followed. Gerteis, 120, *passim*.

Family Interests

Throughout the period from Grant's victory at Fort Donelson to the conclusion of the siege of Vicksburg, Julia and the children visited him periodically in camp. Grant saw many of his comrades fall in battle, and he focused much of his personal energy on accumulating a nest egg for his family should anything happen to him. Grant's interactions with the Dents were quiet throughout this period, but his own family caused him more trouble than they helped. He was forced to mediate between Julia and his sisters and to brush off continuous attempts by his father to make money from his official position.

A Wife and Children at War

When Corinth, Mississippi, fell on May 30, 1862, Grant wrote for Julia to board Fred, Buck, and Nellie near school and to visit him with Jesse. "Tell Jess I have a five-shooter pistol for him," Grant wrote about his four-year-old.⁶⁹ He also told Julia to tell little Jesse he could join him as aide-de-camp, "It wont do for him to be a soldier though if he ever cries. He must try and go without showing such youthful weakness for a week before he starts," Ulysses teased.⁷⁰

Julia and all of the children joined Ulysses for the summer at Memphis. Generally they were well-received around camp, and Ulysses said everyone missed them when they left in August for the Gravois farm. "Without Jess to stauk through the office it seems as if something is missing." Ulysses wished he could have gone with them to St. Louis or "any place els where I could be quiet and free from annoyance for a few weeks."⁷¹ Grant slipped away for a few days of business and pleasure in St. Louis at the end of September. He saw Julia and the children, who were staying at Wish-ton-wish because White Haven was rented. He suggested to Julia that the older children should be in school, but he did not push the issue. When the children did attend, he urged Julia to make sure that they learned German, which had been added to West Point's curriculum recently to aid officers in speaking to their immigrant enlisted men.⁷²

In late November, Julia and Jesse returned to Grant's headquarters, then at Holly Springs, Mississippi. Just as Jesse was welcomed in camp for his antics, Julia was welcomed for the avenue she provided officers to her husband. Grenville M. Dodge remembered that if an officer had a complaint he could not bring before the general for some reason, he could bring it to the general's wife. If she thought Grant would be receptive, she would

69. USG to JDG, April 30, 1862, *Papers*, V, 103.

70. USG to JDG, May 20, 1862, *Papers*, V, 127-128.

71. USG to JDG, August 18, 1862, *Papers*, V, 308-309.

72. USG to JDG, October 3, 1862, *Papers*, VI, 110; USG to JDG, April 30, 1862, *Papers*, VIII, 101.

bring the issue to his attention. The officers were protective of Julia and the children, and once they assisted her and Jesse to escape from Confederates who attacked Holly Springs.⁷³

In the spring of 1863, Fred Grant, then twelve years old, joined his father. William McFeely contended that both Sherman and Grant took their sons into battle with them because they had not had fathers themselves who had paid attention to them.⁷⁴ Actually, many officers brought their families with them. Almost immediately, Fred saw action, and Grant wrote his mother proudly, "He has heard balls whistle and is not moved in the slightest by it. He was very anxious to run the blockade of Grand Gulf" with Rear Adm. David Porter.⁷⁵ After falling sick with dysentery and a receiving a grazing bullet wound, Fred still "[wanted] to see the end of Vicksburg" with his father.⁷⁶ In anticipation of victory and the rest of the family joining them, Ulysses asked Julia to get Jesse a little colonel's uniform while he got a pony he named "Little Rebel" for Nellie and Jesse to ride.⁷⁷

Business as Usual

When Grant became major general of volunteers in February 1862, his pay jumped to around \$6,000 annually. He had significant expenses for his own food and feed for his horses, clothing, and housekeeping, but he sent Julia and the children at least \$400 monthly for their own use and to save. When he could, Grant invested in their future.⁷⁸

Grant had Julia loan money to the store in Galena and to his father regularly. She got promissory notes in return.⁷⁹ In February 1863, Ulysses asked her to write to his brother about cashing the notes. He initiated a substantial real estate purchase in Chicago, authorizing his agent to purchase between eight and twelve thousand dollars worth of property. He would pay for it using one thousand dollars from his next pay, fifteen hundred Julia had on hand, and a significant sum owed to them by the store in Galena. The remainder he could borrow easily, he told Julia. He did not want his family to know about

73. USG to Brig. Gen. Charles S. Hamilton, November 28, 1862, *Papers*, VI, 359; Dodge (1914), 122; Jesse R. Grant, *In the Days*, 14-15; *Papers*, VII, xxi.

74. McFeely, *Grant*, 113.

75. USG to JDG, March 30, 1863, *Papers*, VII, 490; USG to JDG, May 3, 1863, *Papers*, VIII, 155.

76. USG to JDG, June 15, 1863, *Papers*, VIII, 376-377.

77. Had young Ulysses Grant been severely wounded by jokes in Ohio about his first army uniform as some scholars have suggested, one doubts if he would have insisted on his youngest son wearing one as a costume. USG to JDG, March 6, 1863, *Papers*, VII, 397; USG to JDG, May 9, 1863, *Papers*, VIII, 189.

78. USG to JDG, March 1, 1862, *Papers*, IV, 305-306.

79. USG to JDG, March 24, 1862, *Papers*, IV, 418; USG to JDG, May 4, 1862; USG to JDG, May 20, 1862, *Papers*, V, 111, 127.

his savings, however, and did not trust anyone at the store in Galena to keep his account except for Melancthon Burke.⁸⁰

Joseph White, who purchased Hardscrabble, continued to cause Ulysses and Julia problems in 1862 and 1863. Naively, Julia lent White money in 1861 or 1862. White did not pay her back, nor did he make his payments due on the Gravois land and the Barton Street house. Grant realized he might be forced to foreclose on him and told Julia so, yet in 1863 she rented the farm to him again against her husband's directions. Julia's independent streak outweighed her judgment at that point.⁸¹

In the spring of 1863, the Dents could not make the tax payments owed on White Haven and the rest of the farm, and Ulysses authorized Julia to pay it for them. He requested that Julia get a deed for what she paid, although she apparently did not comply. Two months later, Ulysses learned that John Dent wanted out of Missouri. He offered to purchase the Hardscrabble farm and Wish-ton-wish outright to give John enough money to go west. He insisted again that Julia get a deed for any land, saying that if he had more money himself, "I would not hesitate to furnish him all the necessary money without any other guarantee than the consciousness that I had done him a favor." By June, the Grants owned Wish-ton-wish, having purchased it from John and Lewis, and they had the means to take Hardscrabble from Joseph White.⁸²

Ulysses Grant and his brother-in-law John Dent viewed each other suspiciously in the period from Fort Donelson to Vicksburg. John Dent did not join the Confederate army, but he would not support the Union. "Poor John! I pity him," Ulysses told Julia about her brother's attitude.⁸³ Except for John's asking the Grants for financial favors, he had little else to do with them.

Lewis Dent leased an abandoned plantation from the federal government in 1863, and no doubt Grant helped him prove his loyalty. Jim Casey remained a strong supporter of the Union, although he and Emma accepted bills of sale from her father for "her" slaves. Grant recommended that Julia ask her father to do the same for them. He had no desire to own slaves, but he was afraid they might be auctioned off at a sheriff's sale to pay old Mr. Dent's debts.⁸⁴ Alexander Sharp gave Grant the most support of any of the Dent clan. He named his son born in 1863, Grant, and sent his brother-in-law letters of encouragement.

80. USG to JDG, February 13, 1863, *Papers*, VII, 331; USG to JDG, April 20, 1863, *Papers*, VIII, 100-101.

81. USG to JDG, April 25, 1862; USG to JDG, August 18, 1862, *Papers*, V, 72, 308; USG to JDG, June 23, 1863, *Papers*, VIII, 445.

82. USG to JDG, February 13, 1863, *Papers*, VII, 322; USG to JDG, April 20, 1863; USG to JDG, June 15, 1863, *Papers*, VIII, 100-101.

83. USG to JDG, May 16, 1862, *Papers*, V, 124.

84. USG to JDG, May 16, 1862, *Papers*, V, 124.

"Of one thing you may be certain," he wrote, "I have not ceased to watch your upward & onward march from one high to still another... and... I often feel my heart... to swell with proud satisfaction & delight when I... see your quick & rapid strides to highest honors."⁸⁵

While Julia and Ulysses improved their relationship with the Dents, theirs with the Grants sank to new lows. Ulysses had a great deal of resentment over the disposition of personal items in his brother Simpson's estate but considered his financial losses from that to be small. The fact that the Covington Grants continued to ask for cash for room and board for the children when they visited was much more difficult for him. "It is mortifying for me to hear of my sisters complaining about the amount paid for the board of their brothers children. If I should name the subject of board for one of them I could not raise my head again," Ulysses cried. In March 1862, he told Julia to leave Covington and tell his family why she was going. No doubt Julia really *told* them.⁸⁶

In August, Ulysses tried to smooth over hurt feelings by telling his family Julia thought Covington would be a good place for the children, "But there are so many of them that she sometimes feels as if they were not wanted."⁸⁷ Old Jesse Grant wrote Ulysses that if he would let his namesake grandson live with them in Covington he would buy the little boy a house. Ulysses recognized the hollow offer, but Julia and the children nonetheless headed back to Covington for a visit. Again, sparks flew.

When Julia left Fred, Buck, and Nellie with their Grant grandparents and traveled to visit her husband, Ulysses' father wrote "condescendingly of every thing Julia says, writes, or thinks." Again in the spring Julia arranged for the Grants to keep the children so that she could spend time with Ulysses in camp, but his family demanded more and more money for their upkeep. Ulysses sent Julia and his family letters informing them how disappointed and upset he was by their constant bickering. Finally, when he had not received notice of how Simpson's estate was settled, he asked Julia to check to on it. "Inform [Orvil] I should never have mentioned it in the world but some of them are setting so much higher merit upon money than any other earthly consideration that I feel it a duty to protect myself."⁸⁸

Jesse Grant almost undermined his son's credibility when he attempted to use Ulysses to connect him with the illegal Southern cotton trade. On December 15, 1862, Grant

85. Alexander Sharp to USG, June 4, 1863, *Papers*, VIII, 378n.

86. USG to JDG, April 3, 1862, *Papers*, V, 8; USG to JDG, March 5, 1862; USG to JDG, March 23, 1862, *Papers*, IV, 326-327, 412-413.

87. USG to Mary Grant, August 19, 1862, *Papers*, V, 310.

88. USG to JDG, August 22, 1862, *Papers*, V, 328; USG to Jesse Root Grant, Sr., November 23, 1862, in USG, *Memoirs*, 1015-1016; USG to JDG, February 13, 1863, *Papers*, VII, 321; USG to JDG, February 14, 1863, *Papers*, VII, 324-325; USG to JDG, March 6, 1863, *Papers*, VII, 396-397; USG to JDG, April 20, 1863, *Papers*, VIII, 100-101.

learned that his father went into partnership with two Jewish cotton traders from Cincinnati. Jesse Grant's role was simple; he would arrange for the traders and their goods to pass through the Union lines, and he would reap part of their profits. His plan depended on his son the general cooperating, and Ulysses decided he would not. First, he made plans to leave camp almost as soon as his father arrived.⁸⁹ Next, he requested that officer Dickie run interference while both he and Jesse Grant were in camp. Dickie's job was to see that Ulysses and his father were never left alone together so that his father could not ask the favor of Grant directly.⁹⁰

Grant was not sure if he would succeed, so he attempted to have the two Cincinnati traders removed from the area. John Rawlins wrote an order for him that has now become infamous for its unfortunate wording, wording that reveals the almost universal anti-Semitism of the Union army around Memphis. It read, "The Jews, as a class, violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department, and also Department orders, are hereby expelled from the Department." They were given twenty-four hours to leave, without exception. As one could expect, Jews protested the orders, and on January 4, 1863, the order was revoked by Washington, with the personal comment by Halleck and other officials that it would have passed if the order had referred specifically to Jewish peddlers.⁹¹ The publication of General Order Number Eleven stands as one of Grant's worst decisions during the war.⁹² To recognize, however, that the orders were directed at his own father puts them in a new light. The case of Jesse Grant and the Cincinnati cotton traders re-appeared during Ulysses' second campaign for the presidency.

Thus, while General Grant battled the Confederates at Shiloh and Vicksburg, newspaper reporters, politicians, and jealous fellow officers, Ulysses the husband, father, son,

89. USG to Mary Grant, December 15, 1862, *Papers*, VII, 43.

90. "Grant's Sense of Honor," [January? July?] 30, 1899, unidentified clipping, SIUC-USGA.

91. Grant's *Papers* give a few details of Jesse Grant's business with Mack & Brothers, the Cincinnati company. Maj. John Rawlins, General Order No. 12, December 17, 1862, *Papers*, VII, 50-57, *passim*.

92. For a later order that accomplished the same goal in less offensive terms, see USG to William S. Hillyer, February 27, 1863, *Papers*, VII, 368. Grant (or Rawlins, as the order was in his hand and under his signature) was not the first official or civilian around Memphis to complain specifically about Jewish traders in the area. A study of correspondence by John Y. Simon indicated that several generals complained about Jewish traders and that journalists and Grant himself in other correspondence frequently targeted cotton traders but most specifically those who were Jewish. See USG, *Papers*, VII, 50-57, *passim*. One Grant biographer who attempted to whitewash Grant's role in the orders complained in 1865 that it was the fault of the "tricky, unscrupulous Jews" who broke the rules. See Headley (1865), 67. While modern readers are outraged by the semantics and anti-Semitism of General Orders No. 11, in 1862 they reflected common thought in the United States. Interpreting from the orders that Grant himself was an anti-Semite throughout his life is inaccurate and unfair to the man, who counted railroad magnate Joseph Seligman among his closest friends in the 1870s and 1880s, and who as president blazed new paths for human rights worldwide. One need not excuse Grant for his role in the orders, but one should balance them with his entire record before condemning him. To focus on General Order No. 11 is counterproductive to the study of Grant's entire life.

and brother battled the discord within his own family. He loved his wife and honored his father, mother, sisters, and brother but did not trust them. He believed that his father was interested in personal gain and that his sisters were generally unpleasant and difficult. He and Julia got along with his mother the easiest during this period, but she did not have a strong voice in the family.

If one labeled Grant's worst year of the Civil War, no doubt it would be the second. He often felt as if he had no friends other than Julia and the children. Each time he cleared one obstacle, another reared up in his path to trip him again. Until Vicksburg fell, the Confederacy seemed to be gaining strength rather than faltering, and every bit of strength it gained would prolong the war. In the year to follow, it became Grant's war, and the Union would begin to see the light of final victory.

July 1863 to March 2, 1864

The third period of the Civil War was a dramatic time for Ulysses S. Grant. Following his victory at Vicksburg, he moved to Chattanooga and rescued a Union army from siege. His success in Tennessee earned him the rank of lieutenant general, previously conferred only on George Washington. He traveled with his son Fred to Washington and received his commission in person from Abraham Lincoln, who gave Grant overall command of the Union armies. He had the skill and the men to bring the war to a close, and by the end of the spring, Grant turned toward the Confederate capital, Richmond.

Politics and Images

Grant's appointment as a major general in the regular army to date from the fall of Vicksburg was a natural progression, and just a little over a week later John M. Douglas, a Chicago businessman with whom Grant corresponded, wrote him and suggested that perhaps his aspirations should be higher. "The best thing except Donelson and Vicksburg is that you have written no political letters and made no speeches," Douglas coached.⁹³ In August, Douglas encouraged Grant again, writing,

93. John M. Douglas to USG, July 15, 1863, *Papers*, VII, 331n. On August 25 and again on September 2 at events celebrating Union victories, Grant declined to make speeches. Bruce Catton, *Grant Takes Command, 1863-1865* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1968, 1969), 20, 22. One wonders if he would have yielded had Douglas not complimented Grant's closed mouth.



Map 7.
Grant and the Civil War,
1862-1864

I believe, and I wish you to believe, that you are to be as useful to your country in restoring our government to the affection of our whole people as you have been in the conduct of this war-- If we study the liberal spirit of those who made this government we shall be qualified when this war is over to restore it.⁹⁴

One cannot know when the seeds of presidential ambition were planted in Ulysses S. Grant, but Douglas' letter revealed that at least one man envisioned Grant leading the country after he won the war.

Grant followed the administration's policy toward slaves and free blacks since the beginning of the war, and only in personal correspondence did he address blacks as people.⁹⁵ In August 1863, to Elihu Washburne, he wrote that slavery would have to end if the North and South desired lasting peace. "I never was an Abolitionist, not even what could be called antislavery," Grant wrote to his congressional benefactor.⁹⁶ He understood the concepts behind the terms, having freed his own slave, but the words themselves were inappropriate to express why he supported the downfall of slavery. A few days later, Grant made a report to Maj. Gen Henry Halleck that revealed his opinions of the people who were an "institution." He gloated and noted that former slaves were beginning to rebel against their old masters, particularly around Snyder's and Haynes' bluffs. "It seems," he said, "that some of the citizens in that country have attempted to intimidate the negroes by whipping and in a few instances by shooting them. This [the uprising] was probably but a case of retaliation."⁹⁷ Even if Grant did not speak publicly about his political opinions, he was developing them.

In October 1863, Grant moved to Chattanooga, where in November he rescued a Union army from siege. During the period when Grant was around Chattanooga, several officers, politicians, and journalists observed him and later wrote their reminiscences.

The arrival of Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant in Chattanooga had its own kind of fanfare, according to Horace Porter, who recently graduated from West Point and was assigned to Grant's command. Grant rode into town, dirty from hours in the saddle and stiff from the muscles and bones that had not fully healed from a fall in New Orleans. Young Porter

94. John M. Douglas to USG, August 19, 1863, *Papers*, VII, 331-332.

95. On January 1, 1863, Abraham Lincoln proclaimed that all slaves in states in rebellion were free. As an army official in Confederate states, Grant had the opportunity to enforce Lincoln's proclamation where possible.

96. USG to Elihu B. Washburne, August 30, 1863, USG, *Memoirs*, 103-104.

97. USG to Maj. Gen. Henry W. Halleck, August 31, 1863, *Papers*, IX, 220.

walked into his headquarters shortly thereafter and presented himself to the officers there. He described the scene:

In an arm-chair facing the fireplace was seated a general officer, slight in figure and of medium stature, whose face bore an expression of weariness. He was carelessly dressed, and his uniform coat was unbuttoned and thrown back from his chest. He held a lighted cigar in his mouth, and sat in a stooping posture, with his head bent slightly forward. His clothes were wet, and his trousers and top-boot were spattered with mud. General Thomas approached this officer, and, turning to me and mentioning me by name, said, "I want to present you to General Grant." Thereupon the officer seated in the chair, glanced up, extended his arm to its full length, shook hands, and said in a low voice, and speaking slowly, "How do you do?"⁹⁸

At first, Porter stood in awe of the great General Grant. Then he realized Grant was human--a great man, but human.

Porter noticed the intensity with which Grant planned, and he described with a hagiographical devotion an oft-repeated scene:

He wrote nearly all his documents with his own hand.... His thoughts flowed as freely from his mind as the ink from his pen; he was never at a loss for an expression, and seldom interlined a word or made a material correction. He sat with his head bent low over the table, and when he had occasion to step to another table..., he would glide rapidly across the room without straightening himself, and return to his seat with his body still bent over at about the same angle at which he had been sitting when he left his chair.

Sometimes when he wrote, Grant pushed each finished sheet of paper off the end of the desk, and after he wrote all of his dispatches, he put them in the right order and neatly stacked them.⁹⁹ It was the same as he gathered and organized the armies around Chattanooga.

98. Horace Porter, (1897), 1-2. J.K. Larke and J. Harris Patton, *General U.S. Grant: His Early Life and Military Career with an Account of His Presidential Administration and Tour Around the World* (Deposit, New York: Phillips and Burrows, 1885), 77, suggested that it was Grant's appearance that gave rise to stories about alcoholism.

99. Porter (1897), 7.

Grenville Dodge, a young officer who joined Grant's command the year before, had a similar experience. Dodge rode in and was travel-weary when he met Rawlins, who pulled him toward Grant. He protested that he was not dressed to meet the commander, but Rawlins quickly put off his protests, "Oh we know all about you, don't mind that." He met Grant, who made a point of complimenting him, and as Dodge remembered, "I then saw that he was no better dressed than I was...."¹⁰⁰

Grant's dress on both occasions was by necessity, but he had a talent for setting his soldiers at ease regardless of when he met them. By the time of the Chattanooga Campaign, he gained mythic qualities in the eyes of most who served under him. According to Hamlin Garland, one of those men was the Bethel stableboy who teased young Ulysses when he was newly commissioned in 1843. One day in the fall of 1863, Grant was riding along the lines as officers called roll. "Harrison Scott," one sang out. Grant pulled up his reigns, recognizing the name. He said quietly, "Harrison Scott, of Bethel, Ohio...? Report to me at headquarters tomorrow morning." Grant rode on, and Scott slunk back into line. A few other soldiers knew of the joke, and they predicted the worst for him. Scott did not see any choice but to comply, and he met Grant nervously at the appointed hour. Grant began questioning him extensively about old friends in Ohio, and the next thing he knew the general and he were laughing about his joke from twenty years before.¹⁰¹ In the recollections of Porter, Dodge, and Harrison Scott one begins to see Grant and why he succeeded; throughout his life. He learned that true respect was earned, not a matter of outward appearances, that he could earn respect by working hard and by respecting those with whom he worked.

During this period, Grant reviewed the pickets regularly, and one day as he approached Chattanooga Creek, he asked that those accompanying him stay back, thinking that he could proceed anonymously because of his casual dress. A Union soldier recognized him, however, and called out to his comrades to come to attention, "Commanding general!" The Confederate pickets were within shouting distance and easily could have shot Grant, but instead they stood up and presented arms also, mimicking their enemy. The two sides had long since allowed each other to get drinks from the creek unmolested. One surprised aide noted wryly of the soldiers informal truce and "respect" for the enemy general, "We knew that we were engaged in a civil war, but such civility largely exceeded our expectations."¹⁰² Ulysses Grant no doubt enjoyed the show, as it fit his dry wit.

Grant did not want to expose his troops to fire needlessly, but he often placed himself in the line of fire. Grant's aide, Ely Parker, described the scene he heard about as Grant

100. Grenville M. Dodge, *Personal Recollections of Presidents Abraham Lincoln, General Ulysses S. Grant, and General William T. Sherman* (Council Bluffs, Iowa: Monarch Printing Co., 1914), 45.

101. Hamlin Garland collected this story, and it appeared first in the *Washington Post*. Reprinted in "Grant and the Stableman," *Bethel Journal*, Grant Memorial Edition, April 25, 1930, 4-5.

102. Porter (1897), 10-11.

rode through a "storm of hissing bullets and screaming shells flying around him... under an incessant fire of cannon and musketry." Parker believed that he made his way along the front lines out of a deep sense of responsibility for the action and a desire to improve strategy. He respected the general's stamina, his ability to stay on the field for hours without eating or sleeping.¹⁰³ Worshipful and ready to believe in Grant's immortality after Chattanooga, another officer said of him, "He has no fear, because he is an honest man."¹⁰⁴

After Grant's death, Thomas Stollier of New London, Connecticut, was inspired to share his verse about the battle:

Bright and keen the flashing swords
Whose red harvest is the Lords;
Sharp and swift the leader sting,
Where the whistling bullets sing;
Yet the tempest touched him not
In that hurricane of shot.¹⁰⁵

William McFeely believed that Chattanooga proved to the Union that Grant had a great military mind.¹⁰⁶ The memories of Grant's officers reveal that Chattanooga was the battle in which he achieved virtual immortality in their images of him.

Highest Rank in the Army

In the months of December 1863, and January and February 1864, Grant split his attention between Nashville, Chattanooga, and Knoxville, Tennessee. He diffused much of the Confederate power west of the coastal states and wanted to secure the area against future losses. In early March, Grant received news that he had been nominated for the rank of lieutenant general. The rank had not been held except by brevet in the United States since George Washington achieved it during the Revolutionary War. On March 2, the Senate confirmed the appointment, and Lincoln requested that Grant travel to Washington to receive it in person. William McFeely reduced his visit to Washington as following:

103. Headley (1865), 94-95. Edward Willet, *The Life of Ulysses Sidney Grant, General U.S. Army* (New York: Beadle and Co., 1865), 96. Parker noted that Grant rarely used roads, and "will swim his horse through almost any stream that obstructs his way." One is reminded of Grant's determination to cross the Gravois Creek in May 1844.

104. Willet, 95-96.

105. Thomas Stollier, "Following the Chief," in a letter to Frederick Dent Grant, March 8, 1888, SIUC-USGA.

106. McFeely, (1981), 139.

It was done exactly right. He simply stopped by the White House, paid his call and left everyone thinking it would be perfectly natural for him to move right in. He achieved the immediate goal of confirming his military authority, but as he did so he established a public personality that was unforgettable.¹⁰⁷

Grant and his son Fred, then fourteen, entered the city quietly. There was little different in this trip to Washington than the trip Grant had made there in the early 1850s to be relieved of the obligation of replacing the quartermaster funds stolen from him after the Mexican War, except this time the politicians wanted to meet Grant rather than him wanting to meet them.

Ulysses and Fred arrived at Willard's Hotel alone, and at first the desk clerk displayed little disposition to assist the weary travelers. He offered them a room on the top floor and pushed the register toward the guests. Grant signed his first two initials and the last name, followed by "& son, Galena, Illinois." The clerk prepared to write a room number next to the name when the realization of who had signed the register came over him. The hotel prepared a suite for Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, and the clerk promptly scooped up the general's bags and escorted him to the suite personally. U.S. Grant and son refreshed themselves from their journey and then headed for the Willard's dining room for dinner. They sat down quietly, but soon another guest recognized Grant. Quickly the dining room became abuzz with the news: General Grant was at that table! According to Bruce Catton:

Some officious citizen stood up, hammered on a table with his knife until he had everyone's attention, and called out that he had the honor to announce that Lieutenant General Grant was present in the dining room. People scrambled to their feet, there was a rhythmic shout of 'Grant! Grant! Grant!' and someone called for three cheers, which were promptly given. Grant stood up, fumbled with his napkin, bowed impersonally to all points of the compass, and then sat down and tried to go on with his dinner.¹⁰⁸

The cacophony continued, so U.S. Grant and son hurriedly finished their meal and disappeared upstairs. A short time later, a Washington official arrived to escort them to the evening reception with President Lincoln at the White House. Somewhere along the way staff officers Rawlins and Cyrus Comstock joined them.

107. McFeely, 152.

108. Porter (1897), 21-22; Catton (1968, 1969), 124-125.

The scene at the White House was similar to the welcome Grant was beginning to get everywhere. At first, the crowd stepped aside when they saw him, and he walked through unmolested to Abraham Lincoln. The president remarked, almost as if he were surprised, "Why, here is General Grant! Well, this is a pleasure I assure you."¹⁰⁹ The two men shook hands and stood awkwardly but auspiciously next to each other, perhaps Lincoln feeling uncomfortable with his six-feet-four-inches and Grant with his five-foot-eight. Secretary of State William Seward introduced Grant to Mary Todd Lincoln, and then the reception shifted to the East Room. There the crowd pressed in until an official pointed to a sofa for Grant to stand on so that people waiting to meet him could see and so that he could be a little removed from the pushing. For more than an hour Grant stood on the sofa until finally Seward rescued him. Grant and the president had important business to discuss.

The following day, Lincoln formally commissioned Grant. He gave Grant a copy of his speech and suggested how the general might respond. On the way to the hotel from the reception, Ulysses Grant wrote out what he would say to the president of the United States, and then he let Fred read it. About fifteen hours later U.S. Grant and son returned to the White House. Face to face with General Grant, President Lincoln bestowed the rank of lieutenant general on Ulysses S. Grant. He thanked Grant for his past service and spoke of the job yet to be done. He spoke of the nation's trust and of his "personal concurrence." General Grant replied:

Mr. President, I accept the commission with gratitude for the high honor conferred. With the aid of the noble armies that have fought in so many fields for our common country, it will be my earnest endeavor not to disappoint your expectations. I feel the full weight of the responsibilities now devolving on me; and I know that if they are met, it will be due to those armies, and above all, to the favor of that Providence which leads both nations and men.¹¹⁰

Grant dined that evening with Secretary of State Seward.

On March 10, the next day, Grant traveled to Brandy Station where he met with Maj. Gen. George G. Meade, who commanded the Army of the Potomac in the east. Meade graciously offered to step aside for a leader of Grant's choice, but his new commander said, no, he had confidence in him. As William McFeely pointed out, Grant "killed [Meade] with kindness" in the coming year. Grant controlled the army, while Meade retained a limited

109. Grant's staff member Horace Porter was present and remembered the scene vividly. Porter (1897), 18-19.

110. Speech, March 9, 1864, USG, *Papers*, X, 195.

command and was credited with all the failings of the Army of the Potomac. The two generals agreed that they would pursue Lee until they defeated him.¹¹¹

Julia and the Children

From the surrender of Vicksburg to his appointment as lieutenant general, Grant tried to be a father to his four children who had been separated from him. Julia and Jesse, who had been with Grant in April at the beginning of the campaign for Vicksburg, returned by steamer to be with him in September. Jesse, then nearly five years old, was frightened when he realized that they were under fire from the shore. Years later Jesse asked his father why he had told them he had control of the river. His father laughed and replied that while he had the river, he had not managed to capture every Rebel gun hidden on plantations on the shore. Of course, Julia and Jesse made it through to see him, and when they arrived Jesse "[met] what was to me the great event of the war." There was Jesse's pony, a Shetland facetiously named "Little Rebel." Jesse had no thoughts of the great victory his father had won. He said, "Life holds but one thrill such as was mine as I sat in that saddle upon 'Rebbie' in the first pride of possession. For years thereafter 'Rebbie' was my most constant companion; he lived until 1883."¹¹²

For the little boy who stalked freely about Grant's headquarters during the summer of 1863, the fall held disappointment. When Grant was called to Kentucky and Ohio to meet with Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, the citizens of Columbus held a dinner in his honor. Jesse attended, but he threw a temper tantrum when he was relegated to the children's table. His father first spoke harshly toward him, but then tenderly told his little boy that he understood his feelings were hurt and would not punish him for his outburst. Years later, Jesse was similarly disappointed by Queen Victoria; he won that argument, too, as will be discussed later.¹¹³

Fred, Buck, and Nellie lived in St. Louis that fall with Louisa Boggs, who with her husband Harry had gotten over their Confederate sentiments sufficiently to care for Julia's and Ulysses' children. Fred was thirteen, Buck eleven, and Nellie eight, so they all attended school when they were not with their father in camp. In trying to place his children in a good boarding school or with friends, Ulysses wrote Charles Ford, "This breaking up of families is hard. But such is War."¹¹⁴ Charles Ford and he first met in Sackett's Harbor,

111. McFeely, 158-159; Catton (1968, 1969), 128-129.

112. Jesse Root Grant, "Recollections of My Father, General Grant as Told by Jesse R. Grant," partially identified clipping, 1924, 1A, Missouri Historical Society.

113. Jesse Root Grant (1925), 2.

114. USG to Charles Ford, July 28, 1863; USG to Frederick T. Dent (Jr.), August 23, 1863; USG, Pass for W.W. Smith, October 4, 1863, notation, *Papers*, IX, 130, 200-201, 397.

and when Ford moved to St. Louis, he handled Grant's business affairs often when Ulysses could not.

In January 1864, Grant received a telegram from the Boggs. They wrote that Fred was seriously ill and were afraid he would die. Grant hurried to St. Louis and was relieved to learn that Fred was recovering. He spent a few days in the city. When Isaac Sturgeon and other residents learned that General Grant was among them, they invited him to dinner. He replied that he only came to town to see his son, but since Fred was recovering would be pleased to dine and "to meet 'old acquaintances and make new ones."¹¹⁵

When Grant lived in St. Louis, he was a solid member of the middle class. When he returned in 1864, he was a man quickly ascending in wealth and status. Beginning in the summer of 1863, Grant made significant investments in bonds and stocks. His first investment was five thousand dollars in United States bonds, the purchase of which John Douglas in Chicago arranged for him.¹¹⁶ John Russel Jones, also a Chicago businessman, shortly thereafter, assisted Grant with the purchase of several thousand dollars worth of Chicago City Railway Company stock. Grant paid for the stock by calling in a loan from his family's store in Galena.¹¹⁷ Julia's cousin William Smith visited Grant at Chattanooga and received an earful about his investments. He learned about Grant's stocks and bonds and that he had purchased the "beautiful English Villa [Wish-ton-wish or White Haven] in which he lived when I was with him 5 years ago in Missouri..."¹¹⁸ When the war ended, perhaps ~~Grant could go back there and farm.~~

In the third year of war, now Ulysses S. Grant's war against the Confederacy, he solidified his power. The battle of Chattanooga proved his ability to coordinate armies in conflict, and it proved to the nation and especially the power brokers in Washington that Grant was the man to finish the war. They made him the highest ranking Union commander, and he vowed to pursue the Rebel armies to their defeat.

March 1864 to April 26, 1865

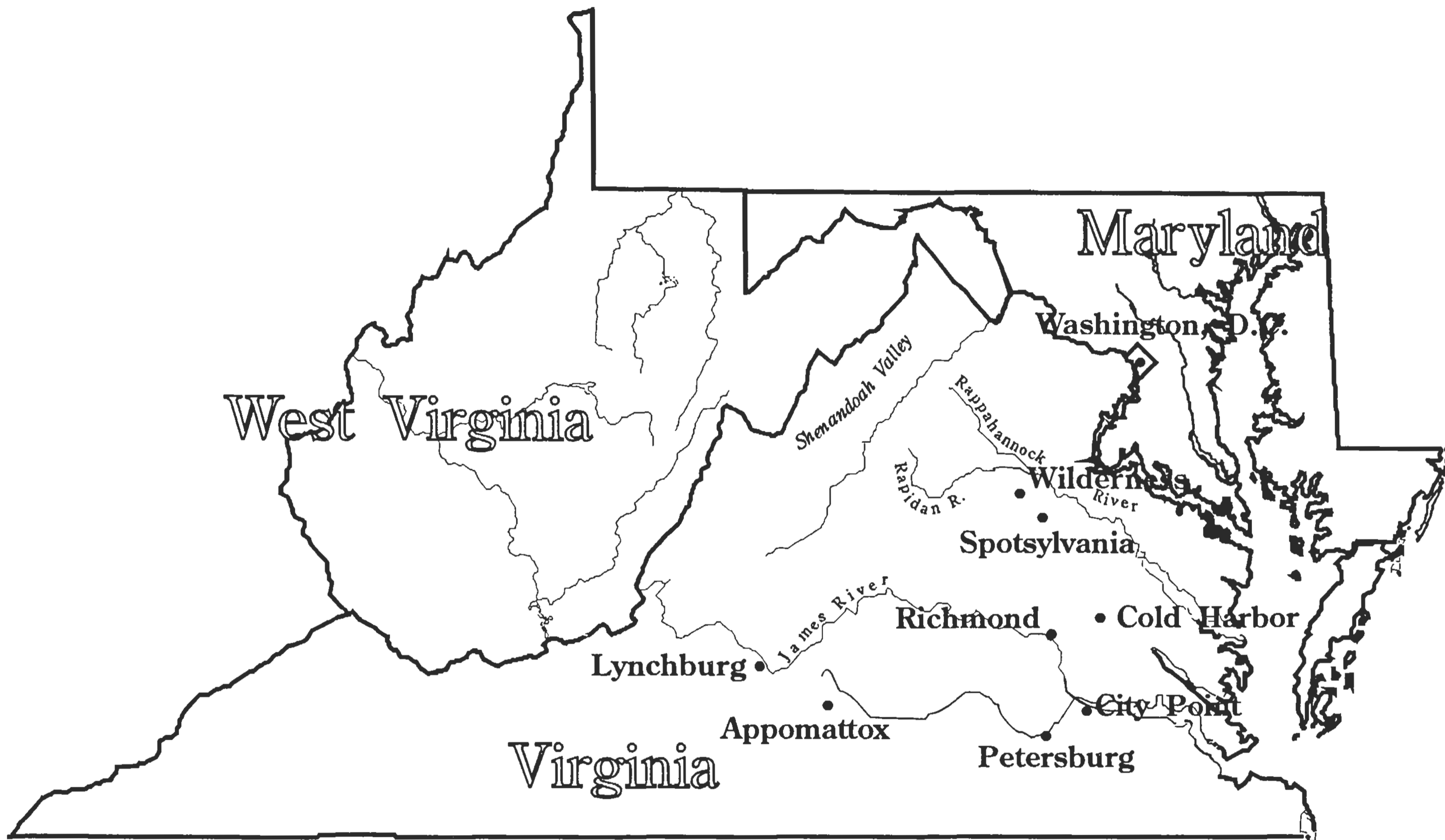
After Grant's appointment as lieutenant general, he answered only to President Lincoln and Secretary of War Stanton. Henry Halleck, who was Grant's superior throughout

115. USG to John O'Fallon, J. How, and citizens of St. Louis, January 27, 1864, Ulysses S. Grant Papers, Missouri Historical Society; Headley (1865), 96.

116. John M. Douglas to USG, July 15, 1863, *Papers*, VII, 331.

117. USG to J. Russel Jones, November 17, 1863, *Papers*, IX, 406.

118. William W. Smith, diary, November 13, 1863, *Papers*, IX, 398n.



Map 8.
Grant and the Civil War,
1864-1865

the war, became the army chief of staff, a position created for him.¹¹⁹ Grant directed his old friend William T. Sherman to push forward his 100,000-man "Army Group" organized into three armies from Chattanooga to Atlanta. Atlanta fell to Sherman in September after which the famous "March to the Sea" led to Savannah. Sherman then continued his campaign of total war through the Carolinas toward Virginia in 1865.

In Virginia, Grant concerned himself with the defeat of Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia and capture of the Confederate capital. On May 4, the Army of the Potomac with which Grant now traveled, crossed the Rapidan River on the long road to Richmond. His forces battled Lee in the bloody engagements of The Wilderness, Spotsylvania, North Anna River, and at Cold Harbor. In a month of incessant fighting, during which time he hammered his way to the gates of Richmond and Petersburg, Grant lost 65,000 men and was dubbed "The Butcher" by his critics.

Confederate John S. Wise made Grant's acquaintance in late 1864 or early 1865, and he remembered years later the legends he heard around the Confederate campfires. "When I was a boy I knew Grant," Wise told the Philadelphia Union League in 1892.

I first heard his drums beat in the early morning as his... army lay in the mists that hung about the beleaguered lines of Petersburg. We believed him to be a mere military butcher, so recklessly bent on carnage that we even hoped his own troops would turn his against him for their remorseless slaughter.¹²⁰

Sixty-five thousand troops in five weeks, Wise no doubt had heard, but Grant was edging closer and closer to Richmond. Thousands more soldiers would be lost, but the North believed that Ulysses S. Grant would win.

After the terrible losses in late spring 1864, Grant wept in his tent.¹²¹ He tried to joke with Julia, writing, "War will get to be so common with me if this thing continues much longer that I will not be able to sleep after a while unless there is an occasional gun shot near me during the night."¹²²

Horace Porter's description of Grant's eating habits in the face of battle give incredible insights into the man and offer similarly stark contrast with "The Butcher." Porter

119. Maurice Matloff, ed. *American Military History*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1969, 1973), 264.

120. John S. Wise, Speech, Union League Banquet, April 27, 1892, in Commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the Birthday of Ulysses S. Grant, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1892.

121. William E. Woodward, 309.

122. USG to JDG, June 7, 1864, *Papers*, XI, 30.

explained later, in justifying pausing with General Burnside to partake of a rare meal from a picnic basket, that soldiers had to take their meals when they presented themselves. They called it "eating for the future." Porter noticed that Grant did not work this way. Instead, the morning the Battle of the Wilderness began, Grant took a single cucumber, split it, and splashed vinegar on it. Then he ate it, and he had nothing more all day except coffee and twelve fresh cigars. The blood of the war so disturbed Grant that he rarely ate meat, as Porter and others observed. This worked to his advantage, for Grant did not hesitate to cut what he called his "cracker line"; he could survive on meager rations, and he knew he could move his army more quickly toward a victory dinner if his troops would survive on meager rations, too.¹²³

After terrible battles on June 15 through 18, Grant began the ten-month-long siege of Petersburg. During this period, he continued to involve himself in matters that were as much political as military. In August 1864, Grant confirmed the policy set in Washington of not exchanging prisoners. Grant believed that each exchange of prisoners prolonged the war. The South's agricultural resources his two greatest generals could destroy. He preferred to see the human resources of the North and South reduced through capture, desertion, and imprisonment than death in protracted conflict.¹²⁴ To Elihu Washburne he explained, "The rebels have now in their ranks their last man.... A Man lost by them can not be replaced. They have robbed the cradle and the grave equally to get their present force.... The end is visible if we will but be true to ourselves."¹²⁵ Grant reiterated his view in a letter to Secretary of State William H. Seward August 19, 1864. He wrote, "We ought not to make a single exchange nor release a prisoner on any pretext whatever until the war

123. Porter, (1897), 56, 61. Porter took note of Grant's favorite foods: oysters, fruit, corn, pork and beans, buckwheat cakes, and cucumbers. He abhorred fowl, and he refused red meat unless it had been cooked beyond recognition. He ate lamb only when there was absolutely no alternative. He said he disliked eating out because he could not appreciate the many courses of food that delayed his enjoyment of his favorite: the fruit garnish that he relished for dessert. Porter (1897), 213-215. Julia confirmed his appreciation of oysters. See JDG, *Memoirs*, 156.

124. Remarkably, Grant's understanding of the significance of the superior North population led J.F.C. Fuller to characterize him as "a leaden man of no great spirit, of no imagination and of little thought. A force which rolled forward, which crushed by weight of numbers...." Fuller did not acknowledge that Grant used the "weight of numbers" at his disposal in an extremely effective manner. J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957), 57-58.

Alternatively, John Simon described Grant and his policy for not exchanging prisoners and the destruction wrought by Sheridan and Sherman as "[reflecting] the logic of war, something Grant understood better than most.... From the start, Grant never found any romance in war; his only goal was to end it quickly, at the least cost." *Papers*, XII, xiv.

125. USG to Elihu Washburne, August 16, 1864, *Papers*, XII, 16-17; *Papers*, XII, xiv.

closes. We have got to fight until the Military power of the South is exhausted and if we release on exchange prisoners captured it simply becomes a war of extermination."¹²⁶

Grant was thinking ahead to the presidential election in November. He did not want to lose military ground because of political decisions, and he knew that the South hoped that Lincoln would be defeated and that they could "hold out" until then. Grant told Washburne that the South was like Wilkins MiCauber in Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*, a character who "[hoped for] *something* to turn up."¹²⁷ Grant did not want to give the South any chance; he wanted solid congressional support for his military policies and equally strong support for Lincoln in the upcoming presidential election. The Union did hold together for two more months, and on November 8, 1864, Abraham Lincoln was re-elected. The South could no longer hope for a moderate president to end the war.

Throughout the war, Grant's understanding of slaves and free blacks evolved. Grant grew up in an Ohio River town that served as a depot on the Underground Railroad, he worked alongside slaves on the Gravois farm, and he encountered the streams of Black Belt refugees that flowed into his camps in Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, and Georgia. In late March 1865, Grant complained to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton that the black troops had not been paid, although the white troops had. He was concerned that the black troops were demoralized and told Stanton, "If paymasters could be ordered here immediately to commence paying them it would have a fine affect."¹²⁸ Grant came to respect the black soldiers of the Union army, and he believed that they deserved fair (if not yet equal) treatment.

In late January 1865, three Confederate commissioners asked permission to enter the Union lines at Petersburg to negotiate terms of peace. Grant was tired of war, and he admitted the three men: Vice President Alexander H. Stephens, Assistant Secretary of War John A. Campbell, and Senator R.M.T. Hunter, and telegraphed Washington, D.C., for instructions. Secretary of War Stanton and President Lincoln sent Maj. Thomas Eckert, who was an unwilling negotiator. Only through cautious intervention did Grant prolong the discussion beyond the stalemate issue of Union recognition of the Confederate government,

126. USG to W. H. Seward, August 19, 1864, *Papers*, XII, 37-38. A.W. Alexander, aforementioned critic of Grant's leadership, wrote venomously about the authorized destruction of private property and Grant's refusal to exchange prisoners as the war wore on. "Humanity wept at his cruelty," Alexander wrote, not comprehending in Grant's action that he wanted to save lives and additional damage to the American countryside. See Augustus W. Alexander, *Grant as a Soldier* (St. Louis: A.W. Alexander, 1887), 24.

127. The emphasis is Grant's. His casual reference to a literary character demonstrates that Grant did read literature with pleasure and remembered what he read. Charles Dickens's *The Personal History of David Copperfield* first appeared as a serialized novel from May 1849 to November 1850, and was published in its entirety in November 1850. USG to Elihu Washburne, August 16, 1864, *Papers*, XII, 17. See *The Dictionary of National Biography*, V (London: Oxford University Press, rep., 1921-22 from plates furnished by Spotterswood & Company, and again 1937-38), 925-937.

128. USG to Henry M. Stanton, March 21, 1865, *Papers*, XIV, 190.

and when Eckert became obstinate, Grant telegraphed Lincoln to meet with the commissioners personally. At Hampton Roads, Virginia, in February 1865, the men who could end the war without further bloodshed met. Lincoln proposed generous terms, but he refused sovereignty for the Confederate states. The conference failed, and the war continued.

Grant's involvement did not go unnoticed, however. As Brooks Simpson explained, Grant named himself a simple soldier in his correspondence, but "[Secretary of State William H.] Seward, who had been at Hampton Roads, knew better." Grant wrote to the White House in a guarded manner, like Zachary Taylor, his Mexican War hero who rose to the White House. "Perhaps Grant had learned more from 'Old Rough and Ready' than merely a casual approach to the wearing of the uniform," Simpson suggested.¹²⁹ He tipped his hand, and he knew that Seward knew there was more to him than military art. Alexander Stephens appreciated Grant's laconic, forthright style at Hampton Roads, and he recorded, "I saw before being with him long, that he was exceedingly quick in perception, and direct in purpose, with a vast deal more of brains than tongue, as ready as that was at his command."

For the next eight weeks, one could hear echoes of Grant's complaint, "Aint you geting tired of hearing of war, war, war?" from Mexico in 1846.¹³⁰ Confederate Lt. Gen. James Longstreet was tired, and he suggested to Union Maj. Gen. Edward O.C. Ord on February 25 that Grant and Lee should cut through the red tape and politics and begin their own negotiations. Knowing that Longstreet's wife and Julia Grant had been acquaintances for years, Ord conceived that Julia pay Louise Longstreet a visit. As Simpson stated, "Julia Grant could enter Richmond long before her husband did--and to return a social call!"¹³¹

Julia wanted to go to Richmond, but Ulysses insisted that she wait. Instead Ord and Longstreet met again February 28, and on March 2, Lee wrote Grant asking for a meeting. Grant forwarded the letter to Washington, D.C., where Stanton convinced Lincoln to reply to Grant that he could only be involved in "purely military" negotiations. Grant responded to both Lee and Stanton that he knew his limits, but then at Julia's suggestion he invited the Lincolns to City Point.¹³² Sherman arrived a few days after him, and the three men met to discuss their own visions of peace. Lincoln instructed Grant, "Give them the most liberal and honorable terms." But make Lee surrender.¹³³

129. Brooks D. Simpson, *Let Us Have Peace: Ulysses S. Grant and the Politics of War and Reconstruction, 1861-1868* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 74-75.

130. USG to JDG, September 6, 1846, *Papers*, I, 108-109.

131. Simpson, 75.

132. USG to Gen. Robert E. Lee, March 4, 1865; Lee to USG, March 2, 1865; USG to Edwin M. Stanton, March 4, 1865, *Papers*, XIV, 98-100.

133. David Porter, *Incidents and Anecdotes of the Civil War* (New York: 1885), quoted in Simpson, 78.

The Surrender

By the beginning of 1865, the end of the war was in sight. Petersburg fell on April 2, and Union troops entered Richmond the following day. Grant vigorously pursued the retreating Confederates west across the Virginia as Lee headed for North Carolina. Intercepting the Confederate retreat near Appomattox Court House, Grant sent word to Lee that he would discuss terms of surrender.

The next forty-eight hours were some of the worst and best of Ulysses S. Grant's life. He had an excruciating headache, the kind of migraine from which relief might not come for days. On the morning of April 8, Grant received Lee's reply and told him that all he required was surrender and peace from Lee. The Confederate leader reiterated later in the day that he was not ready to surrender, but he did want to meet. He suggested that they talk face to face "on the old stage road to Richmond between the picket lines of the two armies" at 10:00 a.m.¹³⁴ Grant replied again on April 9 that he could only accept Lee's surrender, to "save thousands of human lives and hundreds of Millions of property not yet destroyed," and Lee agreed.¹³⁵ At ten minutes before noon, Grant received Lee's request to meet to arrange surrender, and his splitting headache instantaneously ceased.¹³⁶

Lee arrived at Wilmer McLean's house at the village of Appomattox Court House before Grant did. Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant rode in around 1:00 p.m., and he and Lee stood face to face at 1:15. No one failed to notice the striking difference in the appearances of the two men. Grant was wearing the uniform of a private soldier, with only shoulder straps to show his rank. His boots and pants were mud-spattered, and he had almost no ornamentation. He was a soldier who had been at work. Lee wore a new, clean Confederate uniform and carried a jewel-studded sword. His boots were almost new, and they were embroidered with red silk and had spurs. He looked like a man of power, prestige, and refinement. He was an elegant Rebel.¹³⁷

The men came to the peace table with different mindsets. Grant struck up a conversation about their service in Mexico. No doubt every minute Grant reminisced about the earlier war was agonizing for Lee; uncomfortably, Lee turned the discussion back to April 1865. Grant offered to write terms of surrender, and after he and Lee made a few

134. USG to Gen. Robert E. Lee, April 9, 1865; Lee to USG, April 9, 1865, *Papers*, XIV, 371.134. USG to Gen. Robert E. Lee, April 8, 1865; Robert E. Lee to USG, April 8, 1865, *Papers*, XIV, 367.

135. USG to Gen. Robert E. Lee, April 9, 1865; Lee to USG, April 9, 1865, *Papers*, XIV, 371.

136. USG, *Memoirs*; Horace Green, *General Grant's Last Stand* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 211-214.

137. Porter (1897), 474-475.

additions and corrections, an officer copied them, and Lee wrote a formal capitulation. The terms were as follows:

Rolls of all the officers and men to be made in duplicate One copy to be given to an officer designated by me, the other to be retained by such officer or officers as you designate. The officers to give their individual paroles not to take up arms against the government of the United States until properly exchanged and each company or regimental commander sign a like parole for the men of their commands.

The arms, Artillery and public property to be parked and stacked and turned over to the officer appointed by me to receive them. This will not embrace the side Arms of the officers nor their private horses or baggage.--This done each officer and man will be allowed to return to their homes not to be disturbed by United States Authority so long as they observe their parole and the laws in force where they may reside.¹³⁸

The mention of the sidearms may have been an afterthought. Lee's elaborate sword drew Grant's attention repeatedly throughout their meeting. He decided he would dispense with the humiliating ceremony of General Lee handing over this beautiful weapon of honor. One remembers again Grant's words in Mexico from almost twenty years before: "I do wish this would close. If we have to fight I would like to do it all at once and then make friends."¹³⁹ Grant saw no need to take the prize and make a personal enemy at Appomattox.

When Grant and Lee discussed Union prisoners within the Confederate lines, Grant learned that his enemies had not had enough food for their own men, much less their prisoners. Grant asked Lee how many men he had, and he provided adequate rations from his own troops supplies.

After Lee mounted his horse to return to his troops, Grant saluted him respectfully, and the other Union officers followed suit. Lee returned the courtesy. As word spread down the Union lines of the Confederate surrender, the troops began firing salutes of celebration. Grant silenced them, however. "The war is over; the rebels are our countrymen again; and the best sign of rejoicing after the victory will be to abstain from all demonstrations in the field."¹⁴⁰ Once again, Grant wanted to embrace his former enemies.

138. USG to Gen. Robert E. Lee, April 9, 1865, *Papers*, XIV, 373-374.

139. USG to JDG, September 1846, *Papers*, I.

140. Quoted in Porter (1897), 486. Porter's description of April 9 is in Porter (1897), 469-484.

At 4:30 p.m. Lieutenant General Grant telegraphed Secretary of War Stanton with the news of Lee's surrender.

On the Confederate lines, word of the surrender spread quickly, too. John Wise, thinking of the battle drums he heard in the morning mists around Petersburg, shrank at the news. They were to be surrendered to the "Butcher," the man who pursued Lee and victory seemingly without mercy for four terrible years. Yet Grant did nothing of what Wise believed he would. "He is my old and honored friend," Wise was able to write of Grant, his "dearest foe. It was not until we surrendered to him that we realized how much of a noble magnanimity and generosity was mingled with the stern, bloody pluck which crowned him victor. It was a genuine surprise to his old foemen, when... he seemed more anxious to feed his prisoners from the rations of his own men than he was to secure his captives."¹⁴¹ Wise was a grateful recipient of Union benevolence.

Wise's commentary was typical of Southern views of General Ulysses S. Grant, the Enemy they could not defeat, the victor they could not understand. Varina Davis, the wife of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, wrote, "Lee and his generals saw that mortal men could do no more, and that surrender, though worse than death, had become a necessity, then General Grant's humanity and manly sympathy manifested themselves.... He surrendered his animosities, and the South felt to the core of its great aching heart the care he exhibited for her desolate, impoverished people."¹⁴²

In 1884, Illinois resident Emma Bassett Hennessey wrote worshipfully of Grant's conduct in the war and after Appomattox:

Thou didst, when needful, teach us war;
 Then taught us war should cease;
 Calm to our hearts the message bore
 In Christlike words: "Let us have peace."¹⁴³

Other former Confederates had more human stories to relate. Austin Allen, who served in the Confederacy and was present at Appomattox, had no saddle on which to ride home after the surrender. His brother found a horse for him, but he knew "It would be worse than walking to ride a bony Confederate Army horse for a hundred miles."

141. Wise, Speech.

142. Varina Davis was grateful to Grant in part because of his personal kindness toward her and her husband. Advance excerpts from Grant's *Memoirs* suggested that Davis escaped from Richmond wearing women's clothes. Varina was embarrassed for such stories to circulate about her husband and requested that Grant not include it. He complied with her wishes. Mrs. Jefferson [Varina] Davis, "Humanity of Grant," *New York World*, 1901. Typescript of article in SIUC-USGA. William Green to USG, June 15, 1885, USGA-SIUC.

143. Excerpt from Emma Bassett Hennessey, "O Wounded Hero, Grant," Hennessey to JDG, March 26, 1888, SIUC-USGA.

Consequently, he slipped into a Union camp and tried unsuccessfully to steal a Union saddle while the weary soldiers slept. He thought he was unobserved until he realized that a Union officer sat on a horse just a short distance away. He looked more closely. It was General Grant. Then he noticed that Grant was making no move to stop him. Why, the general "sorter grinned"! Allen slipped away in wonderment.¹⁴⁴

Pete Longstreet had cause to wonder in the first hours after the surrender of his army. Union officers rode to the Confederate lines the next day and brought out Cadmus Wilcox and Longstreet, among others. Wilcox and Longstreet were high-ranking Rebels, but they were also old friends. Wilcox knew Grant from West Point and in the Mexican War and stood with Grant as one of his groomsmen at his wedding. Longstreet, of course, was an old West Point classmate, friend, and very distant relative by marriage. The last time they met was in St. Louis ten years earlier, when Longstreet lured Grant the farmer into a game of brag. Now, in 1865, Grant warmly suggested, "Pete, let's have another game of brag to recall the old days." In an interview following Grant's death, Longstreet had difficulty describing his feelings about his old friend at that instance in Virginia. He asked rhetorically, "Why do men fight who were born to be brothers!"¹⁴⁵

The Assassination

In the early afternoon of April 14, Ulysses joined Julia and Jesse at their table in a Washington, D.C., restaurant. He told Julia that they were invited by the Lincolns to join them in their box at Ford's Theater for the play that evening. Julia did not want to go, citing first her desire to return to Nellie, Buck, and Fred in New Jersey.¹⁴⁶ An evening with the difficult Mary Todd Lincoln made Julia shudder, but of course the Grants could not tell the president so. Julia thought that Jesse might be getting sick; he barely touched his lunch. The Lincolns might have believed that excuse, but then a lady at a neighboring table overheard Julia's concerned comments and informed them that Jesse consumed two orders of eggs and ice cream before his parents got to the table. She eased Julia's mind about her youngest son, but nothing would force Julia to go to the theater that night. The Grants declined the invitation respectfully, and Julia and Jesse prepared to return to New Jersey. Ulysses would follow as soon as possible. During their meal at the restaurant, two men at a nearby table seemed more intent on the Grant's conversation than they were on their meal. The general's family was growing accustomed to such attention by then, and they scarcely gave it a second thought.

144. Associate Professor, Randolph Macon College, "Veteran Admires Grant," April 11, 1937 [dateline Lynchburg, Virginia], partially identified clipping, SIUC-USGA. The article lists Austin Allen as having been a member of Company F, Twelfth North Carolina.

145. Interview with Longstreet published in the *New York Times*, July 25, 1885, quoted in Catton (1968, 1969), 472. See also Porter (1897), 491-492.

146. The three older Grant children were in Burlington, New Jersey, as will be discussed in more detail below.

Riding to the train station, Julia and Jesse were startled by a man on horseback who dashed close to their carriage and tried to look in. Then he quickly turned away. Julia and Jesse settled themselves in their railroad car but were surprised when Ulysses hopped in right before the train pulled away. He sat away from the door and out of immediate sight so that he could work; he was tired of people watching him constantly. At one point, the train stopped and a man peered in the window of the Grants' car. He only saw Julia and Jesse because Ulysses was out of his line of sight. Shortly thereafter the train stopped again. Some men boarded the train with news for General Grant: The president was dying. The tired general returned to Washington.

The Grants thought through the events of that April day over and over again. They remembered the two men in the restaurant. They remembered the man who chased their carriage. They learned of the man on the train platform. They knew that all of Washington knew that they were invited to the theater with the Lincolns. And they knew General Grant and the other officials, such as Secretary of State William Seward, were targets of assassins also.¹⁴⁷ Years later, Julia received a letter from a man who claimed to have tried to kill the general on the train that night. He looked for him in the carriage on the way to the train station and looked again for him on the train. Ulysses Grant remained in his Washington office, he had concluded. According to Jesse, the would-be assassin wrote Julia to tell her how relieved he was to have failed in his mission.¹⁴⁸

Fearing that the plotters would not rest until they had their marks, Grant changed his habits in the days following the president's murder. He wrote reassuringly to Julia, who was with the children in Burlington, New Jersey, that he kept close to his guarded office or his hotel.¹⁴⁹

John Wilkes Booth shot Abraham Lincoln as part of an intricate plot to destroy the Union government. Ulysses Grant could have been targeted by the conspirators, as Julia and Jesse believed he was. He was not the only member of his family to have a connection to the assassination, however. Coincidentally, it was through the former Dent family fields of colonial Maryland that John Wilkes Booth fled after he killed the president.

147. Seward was attacked in his home where he was recuperating from an illness.

148. Jesse Root Grant, *In the Days of My Father* (1925), 36-39. Julia tells a slightly different version in her *Memoirs*. She remembered a rude man posing as a messenger from Mrs. Lincoln extending the invitation to the theater, four men observing her with Jesse and the wife of John Rawlins at lunch, and one of the same men seeing her with Jesse and Ulysses in the carriage on the way to the train station. She placed the date of the letter from the would-be assassin of Grant as the day after Lincoln's death. Scholars have placed John Wilkes Booth in position to have observed the Grants several times the day of the assassination, and they have confirmed other aspects of Julia and Jesse's stories. See JDG, *Memoirs*, 155-157, 167n.

149. USG to JDG, April 16, 1865, *Papers*, XIV, 396.

A Home for the General's Family

Grant's promotion to lieutenant general was a mixed blessing, he believed. Once the appointment was confirmed, he knew that any chance of his being able quietly to settle away from Washington was gone. From March 1864 to May 1865, Ulysses made arrangements to move his family east and to improve his children's theretofore spotty education. He continued to bring Julia and the boys to camp, however, making it difficult for them to learn their academic subjects uninterrupted. Grant's contact with his parents and siblings was minimal and nonconfrontational during this period; his sister Clara died of tuberculosis, and his notice of her passing was brief. Grant's contact with the Dents continued much as before, although in an ironic twist the Confederates captured John Dent and held him prisoner. Grant took the opportunity to wrest Fred Dent, Jr., Emma Casey, and Nellie Sharp's land adjoining Hardscrabble from their Rebel brother's control.

Throughout the spring of 1864, Grant's children remained with Harry and Louisa Boggs, and any sores in the two family's relationship had healed. Julia even told Ulysses she had picked Louisa for his second wife, should anything happen to her. Ulysses reminded her that Louisa already had a husband. When Julia was not with Ulysses, she stayed with the Boggs and her children or with her father at White Haven or Wish-ton-wish. Ulysses relied on other family members in the area, such as the elder Fred Dent and Julia's aunt Fanny Fielding, and old friends such as Charles Ford and Sebastian Sappington to assist Julia and Louisa with the care of his children.¹⁵⁰

In May 1864, Nellie Grant played the role of the "Old Woman that Lived in a Shoe" at the Mississippi Valley Sanitary Fair in St. Louis. Masquerading as the fairy tale character, she sold dolls and *carte de visites* of herself in costume to benefit Civil War health and hospital efforts. "She looks right cunning dressed as an old woman," her father commented about her picture from the fair. In the version preserved for posterity, one might say she looks overwhelmed.¹⁵¹

Later in the summer of 1864, Ulysses advised Julia that she could bring the children to the east coast so that they could all be closer to each other. Based on what he learned from other officers, Grant reasoned that Princeton, New Jersey, or some nearby town would be a safe, affordable place where the children could get a good education. He liked the idea of being near the oceanside resort town of Long Branch and the important cities of New York, Philadelphia, and Washington. Unfortunately, the Grants were unable to find suitable

150. Summary of letter from USG to Louisa Boggs, April 24, 1864, in Louisa Boggs to H.M. Whelpley, February 11, 1914, Ulysses S. Grant Papers, Missouri Historical Society; USG to Nellie Grant, June 4, 1864, *Papers*, XI, 16; USG to JDG, June 6, 1864, *Papers*, XI, 25-26.

151. USG to JDG, June 1, 1864; USG to Nellie Grant, June 4, 1864; USG to JDG, June 6, 1864, *Papers*, XI, 5, 16, 25; J. Thomas Scharf, *History of St. Louis City and County* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everets Co., 1883), I. The photograph is reproduced in JDG, *Memoirs*, following 186.

housing in Princeton, and settled temporarily in Burlington, New Jersey, about twenty miles northeast of Philadelphia on the Delaware River, by the second week of September 1864. Ulysses assisted Julia by sending Horace Porter first then her brother, Fred, to help them find permanent housing in Burlington or Philadelphia.¹⁵² The railroad company assisted the Grants in visiting each other by providing special cars for them.¹⁵³

On their way from St. Louis to the Philadelphia area, Julia and the four children detoured south to visit Ulysses at City Point. They stayed for about a week, and during that time Ulysses asked Jesse if he would like to stay with him during the winter campaign. Jesse eagerly agreed, and with his father said goodbye to Julia and the other children, who boarded a civilian boat going in the opposite direction. After a few minutes, the little boy, not yet seven years old, found his father in conference with a group of high-ranking officers. "I capitulated unreservedly," Jesse remembered, and, although Ulysses was disappointed that his youngest son would not stay with him, he understood. The army boat fired a shot across the bow of the receding civilian boat to stop it, and Ulysses sent Jesse back to his mother aboard a tugboat. Jesse did not need to fear his older brothers' taunts as he climbed aboard to them; Julia had ordered them to keep quiet and let their brother return to her as courageously as he initially had stayed with his father.¹⁵⁴

Ulysses Grant, on the other hand, offered a few good-natured cracks in his next letters to the family. "Was Jess glad to get back to his Ma? Tell him I believe he likes his Ma better than he does me and Jeff Davis [his horse] put together," the father wrote. And then, a bit stronger in a letter to Fred and Buck, "Is Jess sorry he run off and left his pa the way he did? I thought he was going to be a brave boy and ride Jeff Davis [once again, the horse]. Ask Jess if Jeff aint a bully horse." And to Julia, "Tell Jess I shall not forget his failing to stop with me. Fred or Buck would have staid I know," he said teasingly. Julia apparently censored these letters from Ulysses, because Jesse seemed unaware of his father's joking sentiments.¹⁵⁵

As is demonstrated in these letters, Ulysses used the lure of horses to bridge the gap between him and his children. He got Little Rebel for Jesse to ride and to pull Nellie and Jesse around Vicksburg and White Haven. In the east, Ulysses kept the horse Jefferson Davis for his sons and other visitors to ride. As with Little Rebel, the name of the horse Jeff Davis indicates Grant's dry wit and dark humor. To name a horse belonging to the

152. USG to JDG, July 24, 1864; USG to JDG, August 1, 1864; USG to JDG, August 5, 1864, *Papers*, XI, 308, 371, 379. USG to Frederick Dent, Sr., August 17, 1864; USG to JDG, August 23, 1864; USG to Jesse Root Grant, Sr., September 5, 1864; USG to JDG, September 7, 1864; USG to JDG, September 11, 1864; USG to JDG, September 14, 1864, *Papers*, XII, 24, 76-77, 130, 136, 150, 166.

153. USG to JDG, September 20, 1864, *Papers*, XII, 179-180.

154. Jesse Root Grant (1925), 28-29.

155. USG to JDG, September 1, 1864; USG to JDG, September 3, 1864; USG to Fred and Buck Grant, September 13, 1864, *Papers*, XII, 120, 124, 162.

ranking Union general after the president of the Confederacy in 1864 took a blithe soul in the face of the carnage of the war; no doubt Jeff Davis the horse made as many people smile around Grant's camp as Jeff Davis the Confederate darkened their days.

Ulysses' two other horses which he rode frequently during the Civil War were Cincinnati and Egypt, the former named for the city of Grant's early association and the latter so named because of its jet-black color.¹⁵⁶

Grant's semi-permanent camp at City Point allowed politicians and friends to join him there in relative safety, and the camp assumed an easy-going and homelike attitude in defiance of the alternatives. Harrison Strong, one of Grant's servants, recalled, "There was a streak of mischief in him. I never saw anyone who enjoyed a funny story so much," when an appropriate opportunity arose. Grant privately made fun of the foppiness of some of his immediate subordinates, such as Benjamin Butler. Strong remembered, "Butler invariably wore a long clanking saber and when he would start up the stairs to Grant's headquarters which were then on a table-land some 200 feet above the James River, we could hear his saber clank every step, which represented about 10 minutes of steady clanking." Grant could not resist the comment, "Strong, don't these gentlemen enjoy making music with their swords, though? Sounds as if they figured on doing the business all by themselves."¹⁵⁷

Abraham Lincoln was a frequent visitor at City Point. He and Grant honored each other in their own ways, despite their opposing personalities and world views. For all of his love of a good joke, Grant would only listen and tell "clean" jokes. Lincoln, well-known for his off-color stories, was discreet around Grant. W. E. Woodward described the president watching the general, "He would sit sprawled in a chair at Grant's table and listen by the hour to whatever was going on, hardly ever saying a word.... He seemed to respect the general's almost maidenly modesty, and reserved his [obscene] stories for other occasions."¹⁵⁸ At City Point, Lincoln and Grant learned that they wanted the same thing: for the war to end in victory for the Union.

Grant concerned himself with his children's education. He encouraged Julia to leave them with Louisa Boggs frequently up until the summer of 1864 so that Julia could visit him in camp while they continued with their formal schooling.¹⁵⁹ He stressed the children learning languages: Fred, French, Buck, Nellie, and Jesse, German. Ulysses even suggested that they send Buck to study in Europe and threatened to board Jesse with a German family until he learned to speak the language. Remembering his own struggles with French at the

156. USG to JDG, September 11, 1864, *Papers*, XII, 150.

157. M. Harrison Strong in "Grant No Drinker, Says Commander's Whilson Secretary," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 2, 1929, 14.

158. William E. Woodward, 345.

159. USG to JDG, July [?], 1864, *Papers*, XI, 150; USG to JDG, *Memoirs*, July 7, 1864, 1059.

United States Military Academy, he directed Nellie to tell her mother to begin Fred's study of languages as soon as possible. "It will be a great help to him when he goes to West Point," Ulysses counseled.¹⁶⁰

Ulysses and Julia remained concerned that their children's educations were constantly interrupted by moving and visiting Grant in camp, but they did not stop the interruptions. The Grants rejected boarding schools in general because the children would not be able to visit Ulysses often or travel with Julia.¹⁶¹ Fred, for example, escorted Julia from Philadelphia to St. Louis in late October 1864 so that she could visit her father. While Ulysses praised the maturity of his oldest son, writing, "You will find that Fred. knows just as much about traveling as most grown people." He also lamented, "Poor Fred, I am afraid he will never get an uninterrupted quarters schooling."¹⁶² The Grants relied on a E. Morris of Burlington and the Hillyer family to assist them when they were away so that the children had more opportunity to attend school.¹⁶³

In September 1864, when Jesse was five months shy of seven years of age, the boy refused to attend school. "You will have to show him that you are boss," Ulysses wrote his wife. Ulysses suggested that she tell Jesse that he could not become his father's aide or write letters to him unless he got an education. "He will go I know," Ulysses concluded, expecting that his orders would be followed. "He was only joking when he said he would not."¹⁶⁴ Jesse did finally give in and go to school, but his progress was slow. Ambivalent, his father sometimes discouraged his attendance by inviting him to City Point.¹⁶⁵

During the later winter and early spring of 1865, Jesse left school again for two or three months to stay with his parents at City Point. He was joined by Gratiot Washburne,

160. USG to JDG, July [?], 1864, *Papers*, XI, 151; USG to Nellie Grant, June 4, 1864, *Papers*, XI, 16; USG to JDG, July 12, 1864, *Papers*, XI, 226; USG to JDG, September 25, 1864; USG to JDG, October 4, 1864; USG to JDG, October 12, 1864, *Papers*, XII, 207, 277-278, 299.

161. USG to JDG, September 29, 1864; USG to JDG, September 30, 1864; USG to JDG, October 2, 1864, *Papers*, XII, 241, 250, 262.

162. USG to JDG, October 28, 1864; USG to JDG, October 30, 1864, *Papers*, XII, 362-363, 368.

163. E. Morris has been identified tentatively by John Y. Simon as Edmund Morris, an anti-slavery and agriculture journalist born in Burlington in 1804. See *Papers*, XII, 390n.

164. USG to JDG, September 14, 1864, *Papers*, XII, 166.

165. USG to JDG, September 20, 1864; USG to JDG, September 25, 1864; USG to JDG, November 9, 1864, *Papers*, XII, 179-180, 207, 398.

the oldest son of Elihu Washburne, and Julia enjoyed the company of her old acquaintance, Elihu's wife, Adele.¹⁶⁶

Nellie avoided school on the pretense of visiting with the Hillyer family in New York City almost immediately after moving east.¹⁶⁷ Unlike her brothers, she did not visit Ulysses often in camp, and she was always treated like a delicate little lady by her father. In her, he encouraged a sweet disposition rather than mischief. She returned his affection by writing him and by sending him ribbons.¹⁶⁸

In truth, Ulysses Grant was a permissive parent. He required little of his children and preferred to spend his time teasing and toying with them than chastising them for their shortcomings. Grant told Julia on the occasion when she traveled to St. Louis, "I will write Buck as present head of the family.... Next time I will write Missy [Nellie] and Jess in answer to the letter Jess did not write."¹⁶⁹ In two sentences, Grant demonstrated that he treated his children like adults when they deserved it, as Buck did in this instance, but that he could cut them down when necessary, as he believed Jess deserved for not writing him. Horace Porter described the attention Ulysses gave to their education when the children visited him in camp: "Sometimes the general would tease them good-naturedly by examining them about their studies, putting to them all sorts of puzzling mathematical questions, and asking them to spell tongue-splitting words of half a dozen syllables."¹⁷⁰ One can hear the giggles reverberating through headquarters as he queried them. Grant wanted his children to learn, and he wanted them to have fun in the process.

With Julia, Ulysses maintained a strong relationship. Now that Grant was the nation's ranking general, he was more bold about having Julia in camp. Horace Porter, ever the apt observer of his hero, described the couple as a "perfect Darby and Joan. They would seek a quiet corner of his quarters of an evening, and sit with her hand in his, manifesting the most ardent devotion; and if a staff-officer came accidentally upon them, they would look as bashful as two young lovers spied upon in the scenes of their courtship."¹⁷¹ As the war continued, they became less timid about demonstrating their devotion to each other. When Grant left camp at the end of March 1865, for his final pursuit of Lee, he took his time

166. USG to Helen Lynde Dent, December 18, 1864, *Papers*, XIII, 135; USG to Henry S. Hewitt, February 24, 1865; USG to Elihu Washburne, February 28, 1865; USG to Charles W. Ford, March 1, 1865, *Papers*, XIV, 42, 76, 79.

167. USG to JDG, October 10, 1864; USG to JDG, October 14, 1864; USG to Frederick Dent Grant, October 19, 1864, *Papers*, XII, 284, 314, 322.

168. USG to JDG, September 25, 1864, *Papers*, XII, 206.

169. USG to JDG, October 28, 1864, *Papers*, 362.

170. Porter (1897), 284-285.

171. Porter (1897), 284.

saying his farewells to Julia, "kissing her repeatedly as she stood at the front door of his quarters."¹⁷² They had been married for a little over seventeen years. For more than one-third of that time they had been kept apart by Grant's army duty, first on the Pacific coast and then at various stations in the Civil War. They hoped for the end of the war so that the killing could end. They also desired peace within their marriage and the opportunity to be husband and wife to each other, mother and father to their children.

Julia traveled frequently from March 1864 to April 1865. During the spring of 1864, she stayed on the White Haven estate, at the home of her cousins the Boggs with her children, and with Ulysses at his headquarters, wherever that happened to be. As aforementioned, in the early fall she and the children moved to the Philadelphia area. Almost immediately, Julia learned that her father was ill. With Fred Grant, she traveled back to Missouri to visit him. Ulysses suggested that she ask her father to live with her in New Jersey, but Dent did not agree at the time. Ulysses also chastised Julia for not writing more often while she traveled. "If I should be so neglectful I would get a regular c[ussin']," he teased. "I shall go to Burlington however and see the childre[n] if you are not there," he impudently commented about not knowing her whereabouts.¹⁷³ For the remainder of the war, Julia stayed with Fred, Buck, and Nellie in Burlington or with her youngest, Jesse, and Ulysses at his City Point quarters.¹⁷⁴

On April 9, Julia was on board the headquarters boat with the wives of John Rawlins and another general. Throughout the day, a telegraph operator surreptitiously passed the three women copies of the transmissions between Grant and Stanton. They were overjoyed: the war was ending! The next day they received notice that their warrior husbands would be able to join them for dinner. Julia ordered the best that the boat could offer, and the ladies waited for the return of their soldiers. They waited and waited. About 4:00 a.m. on April 11, they fell asleep. Julia awoke in the bright sunshine of morning to discover Ulysses standing over her. He had brought about fifty other officers to join them for breakfast.¹⁷⁵

The War in Review

On April 27, 1865, Ulysses S. Grant celebrated his forty-third birthday. The previous four years had been a whirlwind of rising power, spiraling through trouble and fortune with each turn. Now he was flying high on the currents of public sentiment, soaring above Carr White, Elijah Camp, Harry Boggs, and the other people of his past. He accomplished much

172. Porter (1897), 425.

173. USG to JDG, November 14, 1864, *Papers*, XII, 418.

174. USG to JDG, October 4, 1864; USG to JDG, October 20, 1864; USG to JDG, October 28, 1864; USG to JDG, October 30, 1864; USG to JDG, November 1, 1864, *Papers*, XII, 277, 332, 362, 368, 372.

175. JDG, *Memoirs*, 150-153; Porter (1897), 492-493.

in his life. He was a father and husband who cared intensely for his family. He was a great captain, having fought in two wars in which he exhibited courage, compassion, and strategic acumen. He had risen at the right time, and had won battles and the war at the right moment.

Historian William Woodward suggested that Grant's promotion to lieutenant general could not have taken place prior to 1864, because before then "the people of the North could not have endured the long and grim roll of casualties that measured his progress through Virginia."¹⁷⁶ As it happened, Ulysses Grant gained control of the Union armies at a point when Northerners and Southerners wanted to end the war. Grant knew how, and even decades later historian Walter Allen proclaimed, "Whoever has occasion to name the three most distinguished representatives of our national greatness is apt to name Washington, Lincoln, and Grant. General Grant is now our national military hero."¹⁷⁷

From April 1861 to April 1865, Ulysses S. Grant felt as if his life was not his own. He longed for the day when he could end the campaigns and be a husband and father again. He despised war. His young assistant Horace Porter often heard him say, "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."¹⁷⁸ With the surrender of Lee at Appomattox, he believed that he was close to his dream, but the death of Abraham Lincoln changed the course of the nation and Grant. In the months that followed he came to understand that his destiny was in service to the United States, and Grant would continue to rise in rank to hold the highest office in the land.

176. William E. Woodward, 309.

177. Walter Allen, *Ulysses S. Grant* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, and Co.,; Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1901), 1.

178. Porter (1897), 167.



Figure 21. Ulysses S. Grant. Field portrait by Matthew Brady.
Courtesy St. Louis Mercantile Library



Figure 22. Ulysses, Julia, and Jesse Grant at City Point, Virginia.
Courtesy St. Louis Mercantile Library



Figure 23. Ulysses S. Grant.
Courtesy St. Louis Mercantile Library



Figure 24. Julia Dent Grant.
Courtesy St. Louis Mercantile Library



Figure 25. Grant Family Portrait.
Courtesy St. Louis Mercantile Library



Figure 26. Nellie Grant as the Little Old Woman Who Lived in A Shoe, St. Louis Sanitary Fair, 1866. *Courtesy Missouri Historical Society*

CHAPTER NINE

The Power of Washington: The Peacetime Offices of War

"I have a horror of living in Washington and never intend to do it."--Ulysses S. Grant to Julia Dent Grant, August 25, 1864.

In the three and a half years from Appomattox to Grant's election as president of the United States, one can identify three important developments in his public life. The first was his shift in political thought, particularly in his understanding of the circumstances facing the newly freed Southern blacks. Second, this development led to Grant's break from President Andrew Johnson, who counted on Grant's support to sustain his version of Reconstruction. Third, Grant's shift away from Johnson was a shift toward the White House for himself. Because of the political scene and Grant's own careful machinations, no one could fill the highest office in the land more appropriately than he could, or so many Americans believed by November 3, 1868.

Grant's private life from May 1865 to November 1868, focused around his on-going goal of financial security and the relocation of his family and social interests to the east coast. In 1865, Ulysses turned 43, Julia 39, and Fred, Buck, Nellie, and Jesse, 15, 13, 10, and 7, respectively. Until the year before, none of the children had had regular schooling, and Fred was almost old enough for college. In the process of being a famous family man from 1865 to 1868, Grant was given houses in Philadelphia, Galena, and Washington. In addition, he built a summer cottage and a rental cottage in Long Branch, New Jersey, and he acquired the deeds for White Haven, Wish-ton-wish, Hardscrabble, and an unknown number of tenant and slave houses on the Gravois farm.

The General of Peace

In the summer and fall of 1865, Ulysses S. Grant, his wife Julia, and his children took a much-needed vacation from the east coast and his official duties. They traveled to their old homes around the Ohio and Mississippi river valleys, and consequently Grant did not participate in any important Reconstruction decisions from the middle of July until the middle of October. Of the new president, he was tactful and guarded. He wrote to his cousin Silas Hudson, "Your views about our new President are just mine. It is impossible that an ordinary man should have risen to the position which Pres. Johnson has and have sustained himself throughout.... It is unpatriotic at this time for professed lovers of their

country to express doubts of the capacity and integrity of our Chief Magistrate."¹ Grant wanted to believe that Johnson would follow a reasonable program for healing the war-torn country, but he was not sure he would. Grant undertook his western tour for the purpose of rest from his official duties, but he may also have desired to remove himself from Washington until the new president settled in and showed his political colors.

One of Grant's first jobs on returning to his duties was to create a plan to reduce the army from its wartime numbers of half a million. His first proposal that its size be set at 80,000 was refused by Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, so Grant pared the number down to 53,000. Congress voted in July 1866 to keep it at 54,000, but in 1869, it reduced the authorized number of regular troops to 45,000.²

Next, Grant set out across the old Southern states of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee from November 27 to December 11, to examine for himself and for President Johnson the condition of the former Confederacy. Grant visited with whites and blacks on his tour, and most notably he visited one of the Sea Island freedmen colonies, Hilton Head, where former slaves were living and working independently as part of a federal experiment. A week after Grant's return, President Johnson released to Congress Grant's report of conditions he discovered during his tour.³

Grant's report brought out several issues for Reconstruction. First, he believed that "thinking men" of the South had been reformed by their defeat. But he did not believe most Southerners fell into this class, and he stated that an on-going military presence was necessary to squelch the remaining rebel spirit. To aid the former slaves, he recommended that the Freedmen's Bureau be retained "in some form" so that blacks could be protected from their former masters. Finally, Grant believed that a "commingling" of Northerners and Southerners, particularly lawmakers, was vital to full recovery. While Grant received a surprisingly friendly welcome throughout the South, he mistakenly concluded that white

1. USG to Silas Hudson, April 25, 1865, *Papers*, XIV, 429-430.

2. Congressional reductions applied to the regular army, not the volunteer forces that swelled the ranks during the Civil War. Grant's recommendation of 80,000 for a standing army would have brought about an *increase* in the number of regular army personnel. Maurice Matloff, ed. *American Military History*, 2nd ed. (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1969, 1973), 282.

3. As Brooks Simpson noted, Grant did visit the Sea Islands. William McFeely stated in his biography *Grant* that the general had not visited there, and he suggested that Grant's failure to make the side trip was both symptomatic of his apathy toward blacks and contributed to on-going apathy and mistrust of the abilities of the former Southern slaves. Simpson demonstrated that Grant's report was intentionally ambiguous because he believed he could do more good inside the Johnson administration than as a private citizen. Grant raised warning flags in his report, but he left the waving of them to agitators. See Brooks Simpson, *Let Us Have Peace: Ulysses S. Grant and the Politics of War and Reconstruction, 1861-1868* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 120, 286n; William S. McFeely, *Grant: A Biography* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981), 238-239.

Southerners were friendly to him because they were friendly to the Union, and on their way to Reconstruction from their racist ways. He was wrong, as he soon learned.⁴

President Johnson conceived of Grant's trip as a way to counter the extremely critical report of the progress of Reconstruction made by Carl Schurz, who traveled through the South in July, but whose report was released simultaneously with Grant's, and by Oliver O. Howard, the head of the Freedmen's Bureau. Neither men's reports were as "confident" of the progress of Reconstruction in the South as Grant's, and President Johnson knew it would be so. He capitalized on Grant's good nature, the part of him that wanted the conflict to end and for both sides to reconcile. He read Grant's report before Congress in an attempt to counter the Radical Republican's harsh Reconstruction proposals. As far as Johnson was concerned, Grant's report supported his viewpoints and contradicted those of the Radical Republicans. But what Johnson and probably most of the nation did not realize at the time was that Grant was shaping his own ideas.⁵

Grant read Carl Schurz's report closely. He was disturbed by the cases of violence against blacks and white loyalists. On December 25, 1865, he ordered field officers to send him lists of racially motivated "outrages" committed within their territories. He knew Congress should see these reports, and he requested that they be forwarded to him promptly so that Congress would have them when it reconvened.⁶ Grant subsequently confessed to Carl Schurz that he wished he had not submitted his report, based as it was on Grant's brief trip to a select group of states.⁷ Grant's candor with Schurz was characteristic of his personal confidence; his ability to recognize his own mistakes was a trait that continued to guide him throughout his political career, but it confounded other politicians who did not know what to expect from him.⁸

On January 12, 1866, the day after he read through reports confirming Southern atrocities, Grant issued General Order No. 3, which required army officials to protect agents of the Freedmen's Bureau, blacks, and former Unionists from unreconstructed Southerners. The explicitly stated purpose of the orders was "To protect loyal persons against improper civil suits and penalties in late rebellious States." The orders protected loyalists who

4. Simpson, 116, 119-125. As aforementioned, William McFeely's interpretation of Grant's report varies greatly from Simpson's. See McFeely, 238-240.

5. Simpson, 126.

6. USG to Maj. Gens. Thomas, Thomas H. Rutger, Alfred H. Terry, and Daniel E. Sickles, December 25, 1865, *Papers*, XVI, 69-70.

7. Carl Schurz to his wife, quoted in Simpson, 128.

8. Historian William B. Hesseltine identified Grant's "capacity for growth" and spoke in general terms about its relationship to his career in a letter to Ulysses S. Grant III, who was undertaking scholarly speaking and writing projects about his famous grandfather. William B. Hesseltine to USG III, August 7, 1932, SIUC-USGA.

remained in the South and Northerners who moved to the South during the war, and who leased government plantations or served in other official capacities. More importantly, it gave army officers the duty of "protecting colored persons from prosecutions... charged with offenses for which white persons are not prosecuted or punished in the same manner and degree." The impact of the orders varied from command to command. Some officers believed it simply required them to cooperate with civil authority, while others used it to fight recently enacted Black Codes that restricted the movements of blacks in Southern society.⁹

In February and March 1866, Grant took another step away from Johnson by closing the offices of the Richmond *Examiner*, a newspaper that printed articles and commentaries opposing cooperation with the Northern states. Through February and March, Grant, Johnson, and newspaper publisher H. Rives Pollard corresponded on the controversy. Pollard was clever; he always supported Andrew Johnson and his administration. He had not, however, supported Grant, the army officials in the area, or the Radical Republicans in Congress. Immediately after Grant closed the *Examiner* offices in mid-February, Pollard met with Johnson. Consequently, the president ordered Grant to allow the newspaper to resume publication. Through his assistant, Theodore Bowers, Grant sent word to Pollard that he could resume, on the condition that he refrain from printing seditious material that worked against the policy of any branch of the government, not just the president. Pollard discontinued overt political statements, but he printed a slanderous story that implied that the two commanding generals in the area were guilty of bigamy. On March 23, the generals wrote to Grant, again requesting relief. He requested a copy of the newspaper and recommended that they prepare charges against Pollard. Pollard printed a retraction, as he had little choice but to do so or face arrest. Grant forwarded all of the related correspondence to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, who never replied. Bit by bit, Grant learned that Johnson would pursue a very different form of Reconstruction from that of Congress and the army. While Grant initially wanted to "make friends" with his former enemies, he was learning that they might not be willing to embrace his friendship.¹⁰

Over President Johnson's veto, on April 9, Congress passed the first Civil Rights Act which extended to blacks United States citizenship. (Johnson, in the meantime, rapidly pursued his own version of Reconstruction by liberally issuing pardons and encouraging the re-establishment of civil governments.) The Civil Rights Act of 1866 was worded in such a way that lawmakers feared it would be ruled unconstitutional, and in June Congress passed as additional security, the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which defined

9. USG, General Orders No. 3, January 12, 1866, *Papers*, XVI, 7-8; Simpson, 128.

10. The correspondence is printed in *Papers*, XVI, 70-74, and includes correspondence regarding other newspapers. See especially Theodore Bowers to Maj. Gen. Alfred H. Terry, February 13, 1866; USG, Endorsement, February 17, 1866; Theodore Bowers to Maj. Gen. Alfred H. Terry, February 19, 1866; and Terry to John Rawlins, March 23, 1866; Terry to Rawlins, March 27, 1866. For comment, see Simpson, 130-131.

United States citizenship to include blacks. Congress required former Confederate states to ratify the amendment before they could be re-admitted to the Union, and after some foot-dragging the requisite number of states ratified the amendment. It became part of the U.S. Constitution on July 28, 1868.¹¹

Grant took advantage of the flurry of civil rights legislation, and on July 6 he issued general orders requiring military enforcement of civil rights where state and local authorities failed to enforce them. He specifically directed Major General George H. Thomas to arrest perpetrators of the Memphis riot of May 1, 1866, in which forty-six blacks were murdered, eighty wounded, five raped, and numerous black institutions destroyed.¹² The next day, the secretary of war ordered that the army refrain from intervening in civil cases. In light of the April legislation, the Johnson administration wanted these matters left to the federal courts. Grant realized that ineffective federal court intervention was an empty promise, but when Thomas provided him with a list of Memphis rioters, he referred them to Johnson for authority to proceed. No record of Johnson's reply is available.¹³

There was little question now that Grant and Johnson did not agree, and members of Congress knew it. Throughout the spring Johnson tried to win back Grant's favor with favors. He appointed Ulysses and Julia's oldest son, Fred, to West Point, and he made old Jesse Grant postmaster of Covington, Kentucky, which no doubt delighted Jesse but irritated the son whom Johnson was trying to please. On July 25, the president and Congress raised Grant to the rank of full general, a rank previously conferred in the United States only on George Washington.¹⁴ President Johnson undertook the course as a desperate attempt to keep in the good graces of his popular general. Distrustful of Johnson, members of Congress supported the measure to guarantee that Grant, now their man, would remain in control of the army.¹⁵

From August 28 through September 17, President Johnson and General Grant toured the North, their stated purpose being the dedication of a memorial to Stephen Douglass. Johnson dragged Grant along like a child pulls a dog that does not want to be walked. Grant stood silently by while Johnson campaigned for candidates of the newly created National Union Party, a conglomeration of former Democrats, moderate Republicans, and other supporters of Johnson and his policies. When they stopped in towns, cheers rang out for "Grant! Grant! Grant!" so often that finally Johnson screeched, "We are not here in the

11. The Civil Rights Act passed in June 1866 was ruled unconstitutional in 1883.

12. Simpson, 136.

13. USG, General Orders No. 44, July 6, 1866, *Papers*, XVI, 228-232.

14. In McFeely, 151-242, he states that Grant out-ranked George Washington with this promotion, but Washington was posthumously promoted to a six-star general during the Revolutionary War Bicentennial Celebration. See USG, *Memoirs*, 1141; Woodward, 369.

15. Simpson, 141-142.

characters of candidates running for office against each other!" Grant would not speak against Johnson, but neither did he willingly stand near him on a podium, connect himself to Democrats or moderate Reconstruction programs, or speak in favor of Johnson or his policies. Johnson came off as foolish at best in press reports. In Buffalo, New York, the president's tour so discombobulated Grant that he withdrew in a migraine-induced stupor for a couple of days. To Julia, he confided that the speeches of Johnson were a "National disgrace."¹⁶

By October, Johnson knew what the other politicians had seen for months: Grant was no longer his man. Now desperate to remove him from Washington, D.C., Johnson ordered Grant to Mexico, where the French undertook an invasion during the Civil War. Deftly, Grant side-stepped Johnson three times. First Johnson verbally asked Grant to go. He declined by letter. Next, Johnson invited Grant to the cabinet meeting in which he detailed the plans for the trip. Grant again declined to go. Finally, Johnson requested that Secretary of War Stanton order Grant to Mexico. Grant replied, as before, that his best performance of the reorganization of the American army and his best opportunity to confer with the president on the Mexican situation would be in Washington, not isolated on the Mexican border.¹⁷

Grant's real message to President Andrew Johnson was much more simple: He would not be pushed out of Washington, even by the president of the United States. His refusal, although couched in polite terms, was openly defiant, blatantly disrespectful of his superior, Andrew Johnson. He revealed how far he had come in political savvy. No more was he the brigadier or major general, begging to be exonerated or relieved from duty. He

16. Quoted in Simpson, 148. When Grant disappeared from the political scene in Buffalo, light rumors circulated that he was drunk. Simpson points to Grant's correspondence from those days as proof that he was not. See also the comments of Admiral David Porter to E.G. Squire in "What Admiral Porter Says of Gen. Grant," unidentified clipping, SIUC-USGA.

Helen Todd in her fictionalized account of Grant's life regaled that Grant met with his mother while he was on tour, but that she was almost entirely unresponsive. "She never seemed dissatisfied, nor unhappy, nor joyous. What she thought about no one knew, but whatever it was it occupied her time satisfactorily and she had no need of anything else. She listened politely to what her son found to say, kissed him good-bye gravely, and went back to her chair." See Helen Todd, *A Man Named Grant* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.; Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1940), 339. Todd's disturbing description of Grant's mother during this meeting fit with descriptions given by reporters who tried in vain to break through Hannah Grant's silence, but Ulysses's general rapport with his mother does not appear to have been characterized by this degree of apathy.

17. Grant grumbled to his staff that the trip was "a scheme to get him out of the way in case of trouble [in Washington] between Congress & the Presdt," while Stanton commented that it was "only the forerunner of the efforts to get Grant out of the way." Quoted in Simpson, 156-157. USG to Secretary of War E.M. Stanton, October 27, 1866, and related correspondence, *Papers*, VXI, 357-359.

knew he had a new kind of power now, and he used it to its fullest. William Tecumseh Sherman went South, and Grant stayed put.¹⁸

On November 1, 1866, Grant and Cyrus Comstock traveled to Baltimore to review an escalating situation of tension there. Two police commissioners had been replaced for political reasons, and in consequence it appeared that vigilante organizations of former Union soldiers would descend on the city and incite a riot on the upcoming election day. Comstock and Grant talked to the old and new commissioners and counseled them to do whatever they could to cooperate. On November 5 and 6, Grant returned to the city, meeting with the leaders of the factions that had set off the conflict. By the time he left, the election was underway, quietly and without any evidence of fraud.¹⁹ Grant demonstrated in this instance his preference for negotiation before conflicts reached the level of violent confrontation. In early 1867, he similarly encouraged the leaders of Arkansas to pass the Fourteenth Amendment as a way to avoid further conflict with the federal government and Congress.²⁰ As president, he would employ the same techniques when negotiating a conflict with Great Britain.

On March 2, 1867, Congress passed the first Reconstruction Act, which established five military districts to oversee the unreconstructed states of Virginia; North and South Carolina; Georgia, Florida and Alabama; Mississippi and Arkansas; and Louisiana and Texas. Johnson vetoed the measure unsuccessfully, issuing "one of the most ridiculous Veto messages that ever emanated from any President," Grant wrote Elihu Washburne, who was in Europe at the time.²¹ The Reconstruction Act required that former Confederate states rewrite their constitutions to include black suffrage and the Fourteenth Amendment. Subsequent acts on March 23 and July 19 authorized the military district commanders to initiate voter registration of non-rebels, elections of delegates to constitutional conventions, and referendums on whether the constitutional conventions would meet.

Also on March 2, 1867, Congress passed the Army Appropriations Act, which firmly established Grant's headquarters in Washington and required orders from the president and secretary of war to go through Grant. Now the general had job security, and Johnson had legal barriers to any attempts to remove the increasingly political commander from the Washington scene. In addition, Congress passed the Tenure of Office Act, which made it

18. Grant was so determined to stay in Washington that he declined the invitation to attend his aide Orville Babcock's wedding in Galena at the last minute. Grant sent his regards through a charming note to Babcock's fiancée, reassuring her that she was marrying a good man. USG to Anna Campbell, November 2, 1866, *Papers*, XVI, 365-366. William McFeely noted that by sending Sherman instead of going himself, Grant had done the same thing with him that Johnson had desired to do with Grant. McFeely, 257.

19. *Papers*, XVI, 362-365.

20. Simpson, 164-165.

21. USG to Elihu Washburne, March 4, 1867, *Papers*, XVI, 76-77.

illegal for the president to remove without Senate consent appointed officials in whose appointments the Senate had been involved. Johnson unsuccessfully vetoed the Tenure of Office Act, too. The primary goal of the legislation was to prevent Johnson from removing Republican cabinet members.²²

To Secretary of War Grant, From General Grant

On August 5, Johnson tested the legislation by asking Secretary of War Edwin Stanton to resign. Stanton refused, but a week later, with Grant's tacit complicity, Johnson appointed Grant secretary of war *ad interim*. Grant explained to Julia that he accepted the position because he was afraid if he did not accept it, Johnson would appoint someone who would damage Congressional Reconstruction.²³ Upon cursory examination of Grant and Johnson's relationship, one might be confused why Johnson would appoint someone who so clearly opposed him in recent months. The answer lay in the year ahead, however, in the upcoming presidential election. Johnson knew he could not win Grant's favor, but he thought he could destroy him politically.

Ulysses Grant protected himself. As secretary of war, Grant addressed correspondence and orders to General Grant. As general, he wrote to the secretary of war. He kept two offices, and he continued to avoid outright political expressions.²⁴ Until January 11, 1868, he kept up the dual positions, when he informed Johnson that he learned that Congress considered his appointment to the cabinet to be in violation of the Tenure of Office Act. When the Senate voted on January 14 that Stanton could not be removed, Grant vacated the secretary's office so that one hour later Edwin Stanton could regain it.

Johnson was livid. He believed that Grant would not leave the office, and he claimed that Grant had assured him that he would remain. On February 21, Johnson attempted to remove Stanton again by appointing Lorenzo Thomas as secretary of war *ad interim*. Stanton refused to vacate his office, and on February 24, Congress impeached Johnson. In March, the proceedings began. The Senate charged the president with violating the Tenure of Office Act and the Army Appropriations Act, among other things. On May 16 and 26, the Senate acquitted Johnson of the most serious charges, but it ruined Johnson politically. Now it was Grant's turn.

On May 21, 1868, the Republican convention met to nominate candidates for president and vice president. On the first ballot, the party chose Ulysses S. Grant, the Civil War hero and negotiator of political mazes. They selected for his running mate Schuyler

22. Simpson, 172-173.

23. JDG, *Memoirs*, 165.

24. Hamlin Garland, *Ulysses S. Grant: His Life and Character* (New York: Doubleday and McClure Co., 1898), 368; McFeely, 264.

Colfax of Indiana. On May 29, Grant formally accepted the nomination, but he stated for the record that he could not set down a program that he would promise to follow for the four years of his administration if elected. "In times like the present it is impossible....," he wrote. He pledged to "execute the will of the people," and he appealed to universal longings for lower taxes, "Peace, and universal prosperity, its sequence, with economy of administration, will lighten the burden of taxation, with it constantly reduces the National debt." Finally, he concluded in words that became the hallmark of his campaign and that echoed his sentiments to Julia during the Mexican War and to Pete Longstreet at Appomattox. Grant proclaimed, "Let us have peace."²⁵

Grant, the Emerging Politician

The Grant family, Republican power brokers, and even some scholars have said that Ulysses S. Grant had no political ambition. The ambiguity presented by his voting record, his questionable allegiance to the Republican Party, and his non-military rhetoric directed toward the defeated Confederacy all assisted him in his nomination and election. Grant was known as "the silent man," a phrase coined for him because he refused to make speeches of any kind. Reporters and politicians commented that Grant must have been an awkward speaker, and he said nothing to dissuade them from their beliefs. Grant's activities in his school debating societies and reports of his long speeches in Europe suggest otherwise. Grant was "the silent man" because it was politically expedient. In the confused years following the war, Grant "the silent man" could be everyman, every voter.

Ulysses S. Grant was reported often as saying that he had only voted in one presidential election before his own, and that was for Democrat Buchanan in 1856. Grant's admission only tells part of the story, however. The first election in which Grant was eligible to vote was 1844. Grant was stationed in a rough army camp, and whether he was able to vote at all there is unclear. In 1848, Grant was proceeding on his long journey from Detroit to Sackett's Harbor. He could not have voted then. In 1852, Grant was enroute from Benicia to Fort Vancouver. He could not have voted then either.²⁶ Grant used his sparse voting record to indicate that he had a gentleman's disinterest in politics. In fact, he had gotten lucky; by not voting, he never committed himself securely to any party or set of beliefs, and he lent credence to the idea that he had no political ambition.

Almost everyone who voted in 1860 had been something other than a Republican prior to that election. Formed in the mid-1850s, the Republican Party was too new to have lifelong devotees. Note, for instance, that Abraham Lincoln spoke at a Democratic rally

25. USG to Joseph R. Hawley, May 29, 1868, *Papers*, XVIII, 263-264. Grant addressed Hawley as president of the National Union Republican Convention. In his draft acceptance letter, Grant also expressed an interest in quickly restoring former rebels to the status of citizens.

26. USG, *Memoirs*, 142-144.

with veterans of "Bloody Kansas" in the years when the Republican Party was evolving from old alliances. Lincoln's views on slavery were not abolitionist, as he was willing to keep slavery where it already existed. His Democratic opponent, Stephen Douglass, wanted to eradicate slavery by giving voters in every individual state--North and South--the option to abolish it. The first evidence of Grant's opinions on slavery came in his grammar school in Maysville. His exposure to slavery through the Underground Railroad around his hometown in Ohio and through his father taught him one thing about human bondage. His life on the Missouri farm with his Dent in-laws, where he witnessed one of the mildest forms of slavery in the United States, taught him something else. Grant had opinions on slavery, American race relations, Reconstruction, the western Indian wars, territorial expansion, and most of the other issues he encountered as president. His views were fluid, however, and they did not fit traditional party lines or the new alliances. He eschewed stating his opinions or being tied too closely to a particular party platform because it could have hurt his election.²⁷

Who was Grant the politician, and what made him qualified to serve as president of the United States? He did not come up through the ranks by local, state, or national government, but he demonstrated the ability to run the military, which *was* the government in a significant portion of the country in 1868. He had both Northern and Southern roots. He had compassion for the defeated white Southerners and their black counterparts, as he revealed when he simply stated, "Let us have peace." In the minds of many Americans who suffered through the long war years, that was enough. They would vote for him in November 1868.²⁸

A few events of the summer and fall of 1868 merit special mention. In July, the Democratic convention met and selected as their candidates Horatio Seymour and Frank Blair. The Democratic platform supported President Johnson's administration and its Reconstruction policy.

On March 11, Congress enacted an additional Reconstruction act, this one designed to force the former Confederate states into forming state constitutional conventions. The first Reconstruction act required that the state conventions include passage of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. Left with no choice but to comply, enough former Confederate states passed it by July 28, 1868, to complete ratification. That day, black men gained citizenship in the United States.

Grant continued to maintain from May to November 1868, that he was apolitical, but he supported Congressional Reconstruction, bolted from President Johnson, and accepted the presidential nomination. The only thing he had left to do to win the highest office in the land was to *not* campaign, and he did that by making a tour of Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming,

27. See Chapters Three, Four, and Five.

28. Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 338.

and Colorado with Generals Sherman and Sheridan. He claimed that the tour was to examine the condition of Plains settlements, but to reach the western states he traveled across the country, making appearances in a whistle-stop tour that obviously was a campaign, despite its name.²⁹

In the fall, Ulysses, Julia, Fred, Buck, Nellie, and Jesse returned to Galena, where they moved into a house given to them by the citizens of the town. There they waited until November 3. On the evening of November 3, Ulysses kissed Julia and crossed town to the home of Elihu Washburne, where a telegraph machine conveniently sat. Throughout the night, returns came in, and by morning he knew he would be the next president. At 7:00 a.m., he walked back to Julia and gave her the news in now-famous words: "I am afraid I am elected."³⁰

Houses and Homes

From the spring of 1865 to Grant's election and inauguration, his personal life was wrapped up in the typical concerns of a father and in the less typical concerns of rescuing his father-in-law from creditors. Grant acquired no fewer than eight substantial houses during these three and a half years, of which his in-laws' old Missouri farm was one. Where he and his family would live was the subject of regular speculation by residents of Philadelphia, Galena, Washington, Long Branch, New Jersey, and St. Louis.

Galena

In January 1865, residents of Philadelphia gave the Grant family a substantial house, filled with all of the amenities they could have desired. In August, when Grant made his Midwestern tour, he arrived in Galena to a tumultuous welcome and the gift of yet another house. Built in 1859, the house was brick, and although not the finest residence in town, it was among the best. As the Philadelphia donors had done, Galenans furnished the house before the Grants moved in, but the furnishings were of middling quality.³¹

How long the Grants stayed has been the subject of many erroneous stories, most of them emanating from Galenans who proudly claimed Grant as their own. To its credit, Galena welcomed and lauded Grant as no other city did, and the house has always been

29. Kansas achieved statehood in 1861 and Nebraska achieved the same in 1867. Simpson, 249.

30. Simpson, 251.

31. Garland, 337. William McFeely believed the Galenans furnished the house modestly because they did not expect the Grants to remain. McFeely related the following from Joe Bascom, to whom the Grants "lent" the house: "Bascom looked around at the furniture and commented, 'When I say it is not very rich I do not mean it is poor'; it did seem to him not as fine 'as some I have seen in Galena.'" Joe Bascom to Henry Bascom, September 21, 1865, Galena Public Library, quoted in McFeely, 236.

maintained as a shrine to the town's most famous citizen. Not only did the city stand to gain from puffing up the Grants' connection with it, but it also could justify that claim based on its embrace of the Grants and of their return of the affection.

A newspaper tourism article published in 1963 related the following account of the time the Grants spent in the Galena house, demonstrating the ambiguity Galenans have used to extend the Grants' sojourn in the city:

The Grant family lived a quiet life in the fine home until 1867, when the General acted as Secretary of War for a short time and became the leader in the Reconstruction Program. This, combined with nationwide adulation, made him the natural choice for the Republican presidential nomination and election as president for two terms.

The Grants left Galena in 1881 for New York state where he died at Mt. McGregor near Saratoga in 1885.³²

The newspaper article implies that the Galena house was the residence of the Grant family from 1865 to 1881, while it allows room for Grant's professional ventures.

The Galena house contains some original Grant belongings, such as a pair of Julia's shoes, china from the White House, and miscellaneous souvenirs and trophies. A tourism article in 1970 stated, "Most of the furniture in the house was owned by the Grants in 1865," although the article is unclear whether the furnishings were owned by the Grants prior to the house having been given to them. The state of Illinois, which operates the house as a historic site, added Victorian furniture to the house during a 1955 renovation and restoration project.³³

In a 1985 tourism article, the author asked, "Who lived in Grant's house?" Wryly, the reporter answered himself, "The Italian-style brick mansion known as the Grant house... is more of a tribute to housekeeping than a national figure." Housekeeper Shirley Winters, whom the reporter interviewed, said she often was asked jokingly by visitors if Grant was home. "I have to tell them he never really was," she explained to the reporter, noting that even during Grant's lifetime visitors saw more of the building than the Grant family did.³⁴

32. "Grant Home Is Galena's Big Lure," March 30, 1963, St. Louis *Globe-Democrat* Morgue, St. Louis Mercantile Library.

33. "More Tourists Swarming to Grant Home," St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*, June 2, 1970, Morgue, St. Louis Mercantile Library.

34. "Grant House a Tribute to Good Housekeeping," St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*, February 18, 1985, Morgue, St. Louis Mercantile Library.

While presentation of the Galena house as Ulysses Grant's residence for the twenty years from Appomattox to his death is misleading, one should not undervalue the significance of the property to Grant's career. In May 1865, Grant faced a difficult decision. He was given the house in Philadelphia, but he made no promises to its donors that he would call it home. To Galenan Elihu Washburne, however, he stated firmly, "It has never been my intention to give up [Illinois] as my home." Grant played down the Philadelphia house, and told Washburne, "At present I am keeping house in Georgetown [Washington, D.C.] and have my family with me. Neither they nor I will be in Philadelphia again, unless it be for a few days, before Fall." Grant reassured Washburne, "It would look egotistical to make a parade in the papers about where I intend to claim as my home, but I will endeavor to be in Galena at the next election, and vote there, and declare my intention of claiming that as my home, and intention of never casting a vote elsewhere without first giving notice." Grant knew that Washburne was one of his greatest political allies, and he selected Washburne's hometown as his own. Grant kept his promise to vote in Galena until a few years before his death.³⁵

The Grants visited Galena briefly in August 1865, when they received the gift house. They returned three years later, on August 7, 1868, during the presidential campaign, and stayed until November 5, the day after they received the election returns. Although one source recorded that the Grants sold the Galena house immediately, another stated that Grant retained it until his death, his son, Fred Grant, deeding it the City of Galena for a memorial.³⁶

On one of his trips to Galena, Grant displayed his characteristic wit while waiting on the train platform with a local resident. He pointed to an enormous stack of trunks waiting to be loaded on the train and commented, "Do you see that pile of baggage? Well, that is the Grant baggage. Do you see that little black valise away on top? That's mine."³⁷ Grant made it clear where the balance of power tipped in his family.

35. Washburne had written Grant a long letter expressing his hurt with Grant's acceptance of the Philadelphia house. Grant's letter was a direct response, and its contents insured that Galenans could feel comfortable honoring Grant with their own gift of a residence. USG to Elihu Washburne, May 21, 1865, *Papers*, XV, 85-86.

36. McFeely, 284, stated that the Grants sold the Philadelphia and Galena house after the election, his reference either being a November 4, 1868, letter to J. Russel Jones, or contemporary articles from the *New York Times*.

Stephen Repp, *Ulysses S. Grant: The Galena Years* (n.p.: Stephen Repp, 1990), 93, presumably relied on a Galena newspaper for his information about the Grant heirs retaining the house until 1904. Due to administrative constraints, the author has been unable to obtain title information on the Grant's Galena gift house.

37. Garland, 338.

I Street, Washington, D.C.

The muddled politics of post-war Washington in 1865 made it clear to Ulysses Grant that he would not be able to avoid his horror of living there. In May, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton in effect ordered Henry Halleck to offer his Georgetown home to the Grants until they could get settled. Halleck obliged Stanton and Grant graciously, but the situation would only do until he and his family returned to the District.³⁸ On October 25, Grant wrote his old friend Charles Ford in St. Louis that he had purchased a Washington residence for \$30,000, predicting it "will keep me in debt for ten years, just the credit I get on the place. I suppose a man out of debt would be unhappy. I never tried the experiment myself however."³⁹ The Grants did not have to keep the mortgage on their new home, though, because a group of citizens from the state of New York honored them the following February by paying off the mortgage on the house and giving them an additional \$19,000 in cash and \$54,000 in government bonds. Grant accepted the gift with a gracious note of thanks.⁴⁰ He exhibited no discomfort in receiving it, showed no signs of knowing that the "gift" could be interpreted as a bribe. When Grant entered military duty in the Civil War, he wrote that he believed he owed his service to the United States because he had been educated at government expense. By the end of the war, he was ready to believe that America owed him something.

Grant's family moved into the house on I Street, including Julia, Buck, Nellie, Jesse, and when not at West Point, Fred. Added to the immediate family were Julia's "unreconstructed" father, Frederick Dent, other relatives who visited periodically, such as Ulysses' sister Jennie, and members of Grant's staff, who "messed" so regularly with the Grants for them to consider the I Street house theirs, too. Young Jesse remembered the presence of "Colonel [Theodore] Bowers and Colonel [Orville] Babcock, who had won acceptance as regular members of the family," and of his cousin Baine, the son of Julia's brother Lewis.⁴¹

The Grant house on I Street became a gravitation point for Washington society, where politics and pleasure rubbed elbows over the best fare Julia Grant could present. Julia was the quintessential politician's wife, and she knew how to use social events to gather information, solidify political alliances, and make important contacts with members of the business world. One of Julia's friends from 1865 was Julia Fish, the "well-bred" wife of

38. Edwin Stanton to Henry Halleck, May 17, 1865; Halleck to USG, May 18, 1865; USG to Halleck, May 18, 1865, *Papers*, XV, 52-53n.

39. USG to Charles Ford, October 28, 1865, *Papers*, XV, 372.

40. Daniel Butterfield, who led the drive for donations, lobbied Elihu Washburne to delay Grant's promotion to full general because he believed donations would decrease with publication of Grant's consequent increase in salary. Butterfield to Elihu Washburne, December 8, 1865; USG to Daniel Butterfield, February 17, 1866; and related correspondence, *Papers*, XVI, 74-75. JDG, *Memoirs*, 167n.

41. Jesse Root Grant, *In the Days of My Father, General Grant* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1925), 50.

Hamilton Fish. Although Mrs. Fish noted Julia's "country manners," she delighted in her company, as did other east coast women.⁴²

They and their husbands could point to Julia's upbringing when she committed seemingly innocent but atrocious social foibles, such as inviting both President Johnson and members of Congress to a reception on the evening of April 6, 1866, immediately following the Senate's override of Johnson's veto of the first Reconstruction Act. In addition to the odd mix of current politicians at the party, mingling among them was Alexander Stephens, former vice-president of the Confederacy. Historian Brooks Simpson explained, "Guests murmured that someone, perhaps Mrs. Grant, had erred...."⁴³ Julia had not erred, however. The event forced pleasantries between the warring factions, and Grant won the day by confusing both sides. Julia established herself firmly among Washington's female elite, for the reception was the social event of the season.⁴⁴

The Grant home on I Street served as the social center of opposition to Johnson as the relationship between the president and the general soured. Ulysses and Julia's son, Jesse, remembered well the first meeting of his father with representatives from China. Jesse noticed most the "flowing pigtailed, the yellow robes and silk embroidered dragons of the Oriental state costumes," but Washington adults noticed particularly that the Grants met the Chinese ministers in their home on I Street. Shortly after President Johnson and his daughters received the Chinese representatives at the White House, Julia Grant held court with them at an I-Street "private reception," meaning that friends, not all public officials, were invited. From the day of Grant's nomination to the presidency, he and Johnson did not meet if they could avoid it. Fred, Buck, Nellie, and Jesse, who for the most part were allowed to break whatever customs they desired, did not attend the White House Christmas party that year. Within a few months they would have the run of the president's house regardless.⁴⁵

Long Branch, New Jersey

The Grants discovered the summer pleasures of the seashore in the years after the war. In 1867, the Grants rented a cottage at Long Branch, New Jersey. The resort community was within a day's travel of New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, and Grant immediately conceived of the town as an ideal retreat. Shortly thereafter, they purchased two lots there and built a summer cottage for themselves and another to rent or loan to friends. Ulysses became acquainted with the winding country roads around Long Branch as he drove his horses almost every day. The Grants occasionally attended church in the

42. McFeely, 296-297.

43. Simpson, 133.

44. McFeely, 245.

45. Jesse Root Grant (1925), 49-50; McFeely, 277, 284.

neighborhood at one of the local Methodist or Episcopal churches. The nearest neighbor was George W. Childs, a newspaper editor from Philadelphia, and the Childs and Grants became fond friends.⁴⁶

George Childs wrote his recollections of Grant in 1890, and they provide some of the most personal descriptions of Grant during his mature civilian life. Childs believed that "justice, kindness, and firmness" were the three qualities most easily noticed about him. Having heard Grant described as taciturn, his neighbor was surprised to find Grant genial with close associates. "General Grant would sit in my library with four or five others chatting freely, and doing perhaps two-thirds of the talking. Let a stranger enter... and he would say nothing more while the stranger remained." Childs, like Horace Porter, noticed that Grant particularly enjoyed good jokes but would cut short any that were in poor taste. He also recorded Grant's peculiar ability to remember people he had only met once or twice.⁴⁷

The Gravois Farm

From 1865 to 1868 Grant also worked to gain clear title to the Gravois farm outside St. Louis. Grant purchased various parts of the farm at least twice, obtained tax deeds, paid off mortgages made by the Dents, and fought and won a court suit over a portion of the property. The repeated attempts Grant made to gain clear title demonstrate the affection that he and Julia felt for the scene of her childhood, their courtship, and their early years of marriage, because his initial investment in the property did not justify the additional funds that he eventually had to apply to guarantee his ownership. From 1865 and for the next eight years, Grant paid a minimum of almost \$59,000 for various parts of the White Haven farm, not including court costs, some of the mortgages of Julia's family that Grant forgave, and other miscellaneous expenses.⁴⁸

The purchases Julia and Ulysses Grant made from Julia's father, brothers, and sisters and her family's creditors related to the Gravois farm took place primarily between 1865 and 1873, and they are summarized here.

46. Garland, 398; G.W. Childs, *Recollections of General Grant, with an Account of the Presentation of the Portraits of Generals Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan at the United States Military Academy, West Point* (Philadelphia: Collins, 1890), 22-23.

47. Childs, 5, 24-25, 40-41. M. Harrison Strong, Grant's servant during the war, also took note of Grant's memory for people. "Grant No Drinker," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 2, 1929, SIUC-USGA.

48. The author added costs for all deeds, including quit claims, for the Grants's land listed in the title abstract of American Title Company, labeled A in the ULSG archives, plus \$9000 paid in cash to one Dent creditor to release an 1843 mortgage on White Haven that had accrued to at least \$13,000. The total of \$58,708 does not reflect all of the Grants's expenses associated with securing clear title to the land and in particular may not include all quit claim fees.

The Gravois: Wish-ton-wish

During the Civil War, Julia and Ulysses paid the taxes on part of White Haven for John Dent, Julia's father having lost it to him to pay the mortgage he owed to Harry Boggs in September 1861.⁴⁹ They also purchased the southwestern forty acres of the Dents' land from Julia's brother, Lewis, including his house called Wish-ton-wish. They could not get clear title from Lewis because his father never legally deeded the land to him. On May 8, 1863, Julia paid her brother, John, and his wife Anna Amanda, \$1 in consideration for the warranty deed to the forty acres. In September of the same year, Julia paid her father \$500 for the deed to the same place.⁵⁰

Between these forty acres and the Gravois Creek were an additional 85 acres. In early 1866, Grant learned that St. Louis financier Louis Benoist held a deed of trust on the land. Knowing that his brother-in-law Lewis Dent was in serious financial straits, he agreed to pay off Benoist, pay Lewis the balance of what he believed the land to be worth, and take title with the agreement that Lewis could buy it back within a year.

Lewis and Ulysses negotiated their agreement through Grant's St. Louis friend Charles Ford, and in February and March Ulysses paid Lewis \$2500 in advance for the land. Unfortunately, John Dent, not Lewis, held title to the land, and it was April before he and his wife Anna Amanda deeded it to Grant. To make matters worse, Louis Benoist held a mortgage on the land in John's name.

John mortgaged the same 85 acres in September 1865, to Benoist, and this may or may not have been the mortgage Grant believed was in Lewis' name. Grant may have paid off the mortgage because it was released June 9, 1866. John Dent mortgaged the identical land for \$1,500 to Benoist in May 1866, after he sold it to Grant. Once again it appears that Grant, not John, paid the mortgage, and the date of the procedure by which John was released from his debt to Grant indicates that he never actually repaid him.⁵¹

49. Ulysses Grant assisted Frederick Dent with mortgaging White Haven and selling Hardscrabble in 1859. See Chapter 4 .

50. Ulysses wrote Julia on April 20, 1863, to "go to St. Louis and stay there" until she got deeds from John and Lewis and had them recorded for the Hardscrabble property and for the Wish-ton-wish property. USG to JDG, April 20, 1863, *Papers*, VIII, 100-101. John and A. Amanda Dent to Julia B. Grant, Warranty Deed, May 8, 1863, Book 278, p. 405. Frederick Dent to Julia B. Grant, Warranty Deed, September 1, 1863, Book 304, p. 445.

51. John C. and Anna A. Dent to Louis H. Benoist's trustee, Deed of Trust, September 1, 1865, Book 306, p. 326; John C. and Anna A. to Louis H. Benoist's trustee (Luther Babcock), Deed of Trust, May 10, 1866, Book 314, p. 520; John C. and Anna A. Dent to U. S. Grant, Warranty Deed, April 23, 1866, Book 318, p. 74; Ulysses S. Grant, assignee of Louis A. Benoist, to John C. Dent, Deed of Release, June 2, 1885, Book 28, p. 141.

(continued...)

The messy transactions among the Dents and the Grants for Wish-ton-wish and its surrounding land were typical of their business dealings, particularly when Julia's brother, John, was involved. Regardless, Grant now had clear title to a substantial portion of the former Dent land southwest of the Gravois Creek.⁵²

The Gravois: The Dent Children's Land

During the Civil War, Ulysses told Julia he would try to force John Dent's hand to sign over the land that Frederick and Ellen Dent promised to their children, contained on the north side of the Gravois farm and of which Hardscrabble was a part. In late spring 1865, John dutifully began signing it over, in some cases for minimal costs and in others for the customary \$1. Under the deeds, Nellie and Alexander Sharp received approximately 80 acres, 15 of which she later transferred to Grant. Nellie's land was the western half of the southwest quarter of section 9, township 44 range 6, which now encompasses the convergence of Pardee, Rock Hill, and Watson Roads.

The southeastern quarter of section 9, less about two acres which were cut off by Laclede Station Road, went to Julia's brothers Wrenshall and Fred. Both sold their portions to Ulysses in time. South of the rest of the children's land, Emily's land was spread out in portions. She, too, received deeds from John and eventually sold most of it to Ulysses and Julia.⁵³

The Gravois: White Haven

On December 13, 1866, Grant took title on an additional 287 acres of the Gravois farm, the White Haven core that was comprised primarily of the land Frederick Dent purchased from Theodore Hunt. He paid John Dent \$23,220 for it, or about \$80 an acre.⁵⁴

51. (...continued)

Related correspondence is in USG to Ford, January 11, 1866; USG to Ford, January 28, 1866; USG to Ford, February 14, 1866; USG to Ford, March 19, 1866; USG to Ford, March 22, 1866; Lewis Dent to USG, March 22, 1866; USG to Ford, March 28, 1866; *Papers*, XVI, 6-7, 36, 62, 123-124, 128, 141.

52. In modern times, this land can be circled by beginning at the intersection of Gravois Creek and Gravois Road, traveling southwest on Gravois Road to Eddie and Park Road, turning northwest on Eddie and Park Road until it intersects with Pardee Road, and following Pardee northeast to the Gravois Creek and the creek back to Gravois Road.

53. Records of land transactions from Julia's brothers and sisters to the Grants can be found in the following St. Louis City documents: Nellie and Alex Sharp, Book 404, Page 190; G.W. (or Wrenshall) Dent, Book 337, Page 234; Frederick T. Dent, Book 335, Page 221; Emma and Jim Casey, Book 341, Page 99; and elsewhere, all listed in the abstract prepared by American Title Company.

54. John C. and Anna Amanda Dent to Ulysses S. Grant, Warranty Deed, December 13, 1866, Book 328, p. 273.



Map 9.
 Grant and Dent Holdings on the Gravois, circa 1866
 with the boundary of
 the original Gravois farm
 (Survey No. 9)

At the same time, he negotiated with the agents of David Irvin, to whom Julia's father mortgaged 862 acres of White Haven in 1843. From 1843 to 1854, Dent made semi-annual interest payments of ten percent on his \$5,000 loan. Irvin moved from St. Louis in 1854, and at that time Mr. Dent stopped making payments of any kind. Dent's debt of \$5,000 in 1843 grew to at least \$13,000, and, depending on the way one reads the schedule for compounding interest, the debt could have been several thousand dollars higher.⁵⁵ (Incidentally, Second Lt. Ulysses S. Grant most likely visited White Haven for the first time within a month of Dent's making his contract with Irvin.)

David Irvin, who was living in Texas in 1866 but was in the vicinity of Pittsburgh Landing early in the war, knew he was in trouble when he realized that Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, not the elder Frederick Dent or even his crafty son, John Dent, claimed title to White Haven. Minimally, Irvin was entitled to the \$5,000 Dent borrowed in 1843, and he had a good chance of recovering most of the interest due from 1854 to 1861. As far as his rights to interest after the rebellion began in 1861, however, Irvin knew the Missouri courts could easily rule against him because he had been a Confederate sympathizer. For months he corresponded with his agents in St. Louis, who in turn worked with Grant.

In October 1866, Grant sent Charles Ford \$11,000 to clear his and Julia's brother Fred's portion of the mortgage. He told Ford that he wrote John Dent and offered to pay all of what Irvin required if the Dents would sign over their rights to the land. Otherwise, they could reimburse him. On December 11, Grant took a train to St. Louis. On December 13, John signed over his rights to the land, and on December 15 and 17, Grant visited William Napton, who was Irvin's attorney. Much to Napton's disgust, Grant made it clear that he, General Grant, would win if their case went to court. Then he offered Irvin \$8,000 in cash to clear the title. Napton considered whether his client should accept the deal and finally counseled him that it was probably the best that he could hope for. R.J. Lackland, a St. Louis associate of Napton, wrote Irvin the next month, "[Napton] was satisfied and is now more fully convinced than ever that you could not obtain justice in our courts as they are at present constituted and the result [of proceeding to court] would have been the entire loss of your claim." Of Grant's behavior, Lackland reported to have been "shocked."⁵⁶ On May 14, 1868, Irvin's trustees released the mortgage on the margin.⁵⁷

55. Frederick and Ellen Dent to David Irvin's trustee, September 13, 1843, Deed of Trust, Book D³, page 167.

56. R.J. Lackland to David Irvin, January 23, 1867, James C. Lackland Papers, Missouri Historical Society. Napton continued to be critical of Grant as a leader in his personal diary, perhaps still smarting from Grant's personal victory over the rebel Irvin. Diary, William B. Napton Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri.

57. See previous note for the book and page number of the deed. See also William B. Napton Diary, December 15, 17, and 20, 1866, William B. Napton Papers, Missouri Historical Society. USG to J.G. Garrett, December 9, 1866, *Papers*, XVI, 408-409.

Grant also regained title to the 80 acres of farm land around his own Hardscrabble log house. In 1859, he assisted his father-in-law in trading it to Joseph White for the house on Barton Street and \$3,000. White agreed to make mortgage payments to the Dents and Grants on the Hardscrabble farm and to his former creditors on the Barton Street house. He did neither. On February 12, 1863, Julia Grant repurchased the Hardscrabble farm from White for \$1,000 at a courthouse sale. Shortly thereafter she leased it to him for \$100 per month. Grant was dumbfounded, but he comforted Julia about the money they lost in the bargain.

Grant might have left it at that, but later in the war Union authorities arrested Joseph White and his sons, and although it was Julia who petitioned Union officers for their release, they represented around the neighborhood that their arrest was due to the Grants. In addition, they refused to leave Hardscrabble or pay rent. That was that. Grant took them to court with the assistance of Charles Ford and Sebastian Sappington. On June 13, 1866, the trial finally began with Grant in attendance, but White's lawyer got a continuance until October.⁵⁸ White won at the first round, but the court returned the Hardscrabble farm to Grant in 1867. Interestingly enough, Grant's chief argument was that Julia negotiated some of the agreements with White in his absence. He invoked the legal tradition of *femme covert* which prevented a wife from making any kind of contract without her husband's permission.⁵⁹ Had the courts known how often Julia conducted family financial affairs in Ulysses' absence they might not have allowed this argument.⁶⁰

On October 24, 1868, Grant repurchased Frederick Dent's 862 acres plus any additional land Dent owned in Section 16 for \$1,411. Previously the land was offered for sale as part of a March 21, 1862, St. Louis Circuit Court decision against Dent and in favor of Thomas Marshall and C.F. Burns.⁶¹ With the exception of minor purchases from Julia's brothers and sisters and a neighbor, this was the last time that Grant had to fight for, pay

58. *Papers*, XVI, 220n.

59. Married women's contractual rights in the nineteenth century were summarized succinctly by Illinois Supreme Court Justice Bradley in an 1873 case: "A married woman is incapable, without her husband's consent, of making contracts which shall be binding on her or him." Quoted in Herma Hill Kay, *Text, Cases, and Materials on Sex-Based Discrimination*, 2nd. ed. (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Co., 1981), 3. Catherine Clinton, *The Other Civil War: American Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), 7-8, discusses how *femme covert*, the concept that a married woman is "covered" legally by her husband, grew from English common law.

60. Ulysses S. Grant and Julia B. Grant v. Joseph W. White, Circuit Court, Twenty-Second Judicial Circuit of Missouri, St. Louis, Missouri; U.S. Grant file, Museum Planning, Jefferson National Expansion Memorial National Historic Site Archives, St. Louis, Missouri; Joseph White, CVR File, Missouri Historical Society.

61. The author has been unable to learn the cause of the suit. Frederick Dent to U.S. Grant, Sheriff's Deed, October 24, 1868, Book 365, page 402.

for, or defend his title to White Haven for almost two decades. Over a period of five years, he consolidated about 900 acres, and he needed to do something with them. Grant's absentee management of White Haven will be discussed in association with his presidency.

Until Charles Ford's death in 1874, Ford took pleasure in handling the Grants' affairs at White Haven. He enjoyed the pastoral landscape, and rather than feeling Grant owed him something he felt "indebted to [Grant] for an excuse to get away from business and have a nice ride into the Country." Ford shepherded the White case through court, negotiated around the Dents and other neighbors who claimed rights to the Grant land, and provided his old friend Ulysses any other services he could.⁶²

The Grants visited St. Louis periodically between Appomattox and the White House. In September 1865, they returned triumphant to the scene where five years previously Grant had left the real estate business. Ulysses Grant wrote his friend William T. Sherman, who lived in St. Louis, "I shall be in St. Louis on the 13th inst. and shall prefer staying at the same house you do." He told Sherman that Julia and the children would stay at White Haven or Wish-ton-wish.⁶³ As it turned out, the entire family went to the country as soon as they arrived in the city, and Grant attended to business matters around the farm. He turned down what invitations he could but did attend a dinner for railroad investors on September 14 and a reception in Lafayette Park on the fifteenth.⁶⁴ Orville Babcock was irritated that St. Louis had not shown more interest in Grant. To Elihu Washburne he wrote, "We have had a very stupid time here. I think it all comes from Shermans wish *to save the Genl all annoyance*. The City has done nothing...."⁶⁵

Family Matters

The Grant children avoided most of the Washington controversy during the years between Appomattox and the White House. Fred, as discussed earlier, received an at-large appointment to the United States Military Academy, as part of President Johnson's package of favors conferred on Grant relatives. His appointment was not outside the bounds of customary appointments as it was common for army officers who moved frequently and did

62. See various correspondence: e.g. USG to Charles Ford, October 21, 1865; USG to Ford, October 28, 1865; Ford to USG, November 4, 1865, *Papers*, XV, 361, 372-373.

63. USG to William T. Sherman, September 10, 1865, *Papers*, XV, 317-318.

64. William T. Sherman to Richard J. Oglesby, September 19, 1865; USG to John H. Williams, September 17, 1865, *Papers*, XV, 318-319n.

65. Orville Babcock to Elihu Washburne, September 21, 1865, *Papers*, 318n.

not have well-established residences in any particular state to rely on the president's store of at-large appointments for their sons.⁶⁶

In March 1866, after Andrew Johnson appointed Fred to the military academy, Ulysses, his son, and their friend Col. Theodore Bowers took a trip up the Hudson to look at West Point. On the way, Grant boarded a train only to realize that he had left his bag on the platform. Bowers quickly volunteered to retrieve it, and he dashed out of the car. Before he returned, the train started to pull away from the station and then stopped suddenly. Bowers, leaping to catch the train as it was moving, tripped and fell under the wheels. His body was mangled almost beyond recognition. Grant grieved Bowers' death intensely.⁶⁷

One acquaintance who visited Grant's office in Washington shortly after the accident noticed an unframed painting there. The visitor asked who the man in the painting was, and with tears in his eyes Grant told him about the death of his friend, Theodore Bowers. The visitor had no way of knowing that Grant was an artist and did not record who painted Bowers' likeness, but one wonders if Grant picked up his brushes again to record his memories of his friend.⁶⁸

Like many fathers, Grant wanted his son to do well in college. He sent Fred a letter of encouragement and admonishment as part of a letter of introduction for entering Cadet Lovell H. Jerome. "I hope you will be good friends, keep out of mischief, learn your lessons and both stand high in your classes and become distinguished by your good deeds after graduation," the father wrote to the son.⁶⁹ Fred was only sixteen when he entered West Point, however, and his erratic education thus far had not prepared him well for the rigors of the academy. In June 1867, he got sick, obtained leave, missed his exams, and had to repeat his "fourth class" courses the next school year. One suspects that his illness was a fabrication to allow him an extra year to become accustomed to school and catch up with his classmates. Fortunately, he had received only 37 behavior demerits.⁷⁰

66. For example, the list of "fourth class" cadets who entered with Fred Grant included an at-large appointment for Edward J. McClernand, the son of General McClernand. *Official Register of the Officers and Cadets of the United States Military Academy* (West Point: United States Military Academy, June 1867), 16.

67. McFeely, 244-245.

68. Richard M. Johnson in James L. Post, ed. *Reminiscences by Personal Friends of Gen. U.S. Grant and the History of Grant's Log Cabin* (St. Louis: J.L. Post, 1904), 61-62.

69. Grant introduced Lowell Jerome, but the *Official Register of the United States Military Academy* (West Point: United States Military Academy, 1867), gave his name as Lovell Jerome. USG to Frederick Dent Grant, May 7, 1866, facsimile in SIUC-USGA.

70. *Official Register of the Officers and Cadets of the U.S. Military Academy* (West Point: United States Military Academy, June 1867), 16.

In his second year at West Point, Fred repeated his fourth class courses with at least two other cadets who had tested "deficient" the previous year and the new group of cadets. In June 1868, Fred ranked twenty-seventh overall in his class of forty-nine. He was ranked twenty-first in mathematics and last in French, his father's worst subject as well. He received 175 demerits for the year, just twenty-five short of being removed from the academy. In addition, a few officers' wives at West Point gossiped that Fred and his father were responsible for the removal of Fred's French teacher, who was an assistant professor. Apparently Grant was responsible indirectly, but the professor was removed for not following army etiquette rather than for his treatment of Fred.⁷¹

Jesse remained troublesome about attending school. After the family moved from New Jersey to Georgetown, in Washington, D.C., before they purchased the I Street house, he attended school with his sister Nellie, primarily as a visitor. His first memory was of misspelling "moon" in a spelling bee. With little experience in school, Jesse did not know why he was asked to sit down when he confidently called out "m-u-n-e," and he told his father so later. "You are a Democrat, my son," Grant replied. "Your spelling proves it." Jesse said that he was "comforted," but with this as the only explanation from his father, he still did not know why he had to sit down.

Once the Grants moved to I Street, Jesse had to attend school regularly. There would be few opportunities to avoid it. First, he went to school with Nellie. She attended a girls' school, and shortly after his arrival there Jesse tried to rescue two of his classmates whose game of jump rope had been disturbed by two older black girls. The two older girls turned their attention to Jesse and "administered a thorough drubbing." When Jesse's father heard of the incident, he immediately transferred Jesse to Buck's school.⁷²

Throughout the children's formative years observers could easily see that Ulysses was the lenient parent, although both Julia and Ulysses were permissive. Jesse appealed to Ulysses in 1867 and 1868 for reprieves from school as he had in previous years. After a few months of attending Buck's school dutifully, Jesse begged his mother to be allowed to stay home because he had a headache. She saw through his ploy and insisted that if he stayed, he could not play with his friends during recess or after school. Jesse learned his mother could not be moved, and he went to school. The next time he wanted a holiday, he tried his father. Ulysses invited him to go to the office with him, and thereafter Jesse enjoyed a day at Army Headquarters when "disinclined" to attend school.⁷³ The Grant children made

71. *Official Register of the Officers and Cadets of the United States Military Academy* (West Point: United States Military Academy, June 1868), 16. Dennis Mahan to Elihu Washburne, June 28, 1868; Mahan to Washburne, July 2, 1868, *Papers*, XVIII, 596-597.

72. Jesse did not make it clear if Nellie attended an interracial school or if the two black girls were just in the neighborhood. Jesse Root Grant (1925), 44-46.

73. Jesse Root Grant (1925), 46-47.

up in charm what they lacked in discipline, and no member of Grant's staff is on record as opposing Jesse's presence.

With Frederick Dent living with Ulysses and Julia, old Jesse Grant did not feel particularly welcome in his son's house. The relationship between Ulysses and his parents continued to be strained. When Ulysses wheeled through Covington in the fall of 1865, his father exhibited pride, but his mother received him with "unchanged manner. Nothing seemed to surprise her.... She went about the house with the calm, unhurried step which had never varied from year to year." Hamlin Garland reported that deep inside she was proud, but outwardly she gave no sign.⁷⁴ As Jesse Grant's reward for raising his son, Andrew Johnson made him postmaster of Covington. Grant pleaded with his father to stay out of politics, but at the Soldiers and Sailors Convention in Chicago the day before the Republican convention in 1868, Jesse delivered a speech which was reported politely in a Grant campaign piece as "eloquent and appropriate."⁷⁵ Ulysses, however, did not think so.

In contrast to his relations with his father, Ulysses gladly recommended his new brother-in-law Michael Cramer for an army chaplaincy. He confessed to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, "He is a brother-in-law of mine though I do not urge the appointment on that account." Grant believed Cramer would do well because he served in army hospitals during the war and was well-educated, with knowledge of six or seven languages.⁷⁶

On to the White House

From May 1865 to November 1868, Ulysses S. Grant gained a political persona distinct from that of the army and other politicians, thereby winning the Republican nomination, and finally the presidency. After four years of living without a true home during the war, Grant bought and was given several homes in the three years after Appomattox. In March 1869, he would enter the most prestigious of them all: the White House.

74. Garland, 339.

75. James S. Brisbin, *The Campaign Lives of Ulysses S. Grant and Schuyler Colfax* (Cincinnati: C.F. Vent and Co.; Chicago: J.S. Goodman and Co., 1868), 322; Garland, 414.

76. USG to Edwin Stanton, June 21, 1865, *Papers*, XV, 215.

CHAPTER TEN

President Ulysses S. Grant

"Grant's administration was marked by some of the most constructive work that has ever taken place during a president's term of office." C.V. Mosby, "A Little Journey," 18, Missouri Historical Society.

"Inaugurated the eighteenth President of the United States, March 4, 1869, he served two terms. This was the most corrupt period in U.S. political history." Patrick and Vinmont, "Mr. President, Ulysses S. Grant," St. Louis Globe-Democrat, October 21, 1960.

When Grant entered office in March 1869, he faced a series of challenges that few people would envy. With the end of the war, the country was not yet at peace. Somehow, Grant had to protect the recently freed blacks while bringing all Southerners back into the Union's fold. Rapid settlement of the West had exacerbated conflicts between Native Americans and the waves of settlers who coveted their land. While the United States practiced a kind of colonialism in its own western country, European colonialism and civil wars threatened many small countries in the Americas. One of these was the island nation of the Dominican Republic, which Grant attempted to annex as Jefferson did with Louisiana. The United States was recovering from wartime debts, but neither the states nor the federal government had adequate resources to pay off the bills. Grant's elementary attempts to clear the national debt and then to increase the money supply contributed to an economic depression. To make matters worse, Grant's attorney general discovered a distillery tax scandal that was defrauding the government of significant taxes annually. Some of Grant's close associates were accused of lining their pockets with the proceeds.

When Grant left the White House eight years after he became president, he was one of the most popular and most despised of men who had held the office. His years in the White House were some of the most trying in United States history. His programs for Reconstruction and human rights largely failed; however, they failed not because of Ulysses Grant the man, but because the climate of the country would not allow success. Few men could have done better under the circumstances.

The Inauguration

The occasion of Ulysses S. Grant's inauguration as president of the United States was naturally a subject of worldwide attention, and reporters took particular notice of Grant's family, absent and present.

Julia and Ulysses' youngest son Jesse remembered almost nothing of the ceremony, except that a large man stepped on his foot.¹ Ulysses' father Jesse attended with his daughter Jennie but without his wife. Hannah Grant remained in Covington, Kentucky, and a friend related that she ignored unavoidable questions about her son who was entering the White House. Grant biographer Hamlin Garland found "an element of pathos" in Hannah's not attending the ceremony. Jesse and Jennie apparently stayed in a hotel near the White House, because the cadre of Dents already overwhelmed the I Street house. Nellie Sharp, Emma Casey, one of Julia's brothers (probably Lewis), and her father attended the ceremony and stayed with Ulysses and Julia.²

Also in attendance was thirteen-year-old Nellie Grant, who provided journalists with a human-interest element for their accounts of the inauguration. Nellie and Julia were seated uncomfortably behind the Supreme Court justices with other ladies. After her father began his address, Nellie made her way through the crowd and "stood by her father, gazing with child-like wonder at the strange scene." The warrior-statesman and innocent child provided a remarkable contrast for onlookers who did not associate general and president Grant with father Grant.³

Questions of Qualifications and Character: Grant's Cabinet and Other Appointments

W.P. Fessenden wrote of Grant after his election, "He comes into the office perfectly unpledged to anybody.... Still, you know how a new President is beset, and time only can show how far he will be able to exercise an independent judgment." Fessenden was writing to a government appointee who was questioning whether he would still have a job after Grant's inauguration, and if not who might fill it.⁴ Grant had the task of filling his cabinet, the diplomatic corps, and numerous local appointments such as postmasters across the United States.

On the eve of Ulysses S. Grant's elevation to president of the United States, the power brokers of the country apprehensively awaited news of his selection of cabinet members and other appointees. Ordinarily, the president would confer with key politicians

1. Jesse Root Grant, *In the Days of My Father, General Grant* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1925), 56-57.

2. Hamlin Garland, *Ulysses S. Grant: His Life and Character* (New York: Doubleday and McClure, 1898), 396-397.

3. Charles A. Phelps, *Life and Public Services of Ulysses S. Grant from His Birth to the Present Time, and a Biographical Sketch of Hon. Henry Wilson, "People's Edition"* (Boston: Lee and Shepard; New York: Lee, Shepard and Dillingham, 1868, 1872), 317n.; Garland, 388.

4. W.P. Fessenden to George Harrington, November 7, 1865 [1868], typescript; George R. Harrington to William P. Fessenden, April 20, 1869, George R. Harrington Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

and civic leaders before announcing who his advisors would be. Grant did not do so. At first, members of Congress assumed that Grant was consulting someone, just not them. As the inauguration drew nearer and nearer, they began to whisper among themselves, who would he choose? No one knew, and that bothered them.

For secretary of war, Grant appointed John Rawlins, his old friend and a man with whom he worked through the hardest times of the war. Rawlins was dying of tuberculosis, and Grant's appointment was the last opportunity he would have to thank him.

For secretary of state, Grant selected Elihu Washburne, who resigned a few days after he was appointed to take the position of minister to France. Apparently Grant appointed him as an honor and a personal favor for Washburne's years of service to him. Washburne graciously stepped down after the honor was conferred and the real work of the office was to begin.⁵

Grant's second appointment for the position was Hamilton Fish, who was the only cabinet member to serve Grant through the entirety of his administration (excepting the six days Washburne held the office). Hamilton Fish began his public service in 1842 and served in Congress and as governor of New York prior to his work in the Grant administration.⁶ Fish's politics in the antebellum era were similar to Grant's. Hamilton Fish was a Whig until 1856, when he made the awkward leap into Republicanism. He believed that slavery benefitted North and South, despite its obnoxiousness. "While I sincerely wish there was not a slave on the face of the earth, I will not quarrel with those who find it an existing institution, which... man has not yet been able to shew the means of getting rid of."⁷ The Civil War eventually became the means. Fish's wife, Julia, was a friend of Julia Grant, and Grant biographer William McFeely believed the president's wife convinced Grant to select Fish.⁸

Grant nominated Alexander Stewart for the position of secretary of the treasury. He was the wealthiest man in New York, and he knew money. He also was a substantial contributor to the New York fund for Grant, the one that paid off the mortgage on the I

5. Washburne's daughter explained that her father was briefly very ill and that he resigned in consequence, but it seems more likely that he and Grant had pre-arranged for him to receive the appointment as a courtesy and then resign. Marie Lisa Washburne Fowler, "My Mother and I," Marie Lisa Washburne Fowler Collection, 24, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

6. Allan Nevins, *Hamilton Fish: The Inner History of the Grant Administration* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1936), 20-60, *passim*.

7. Hamilton Fish to H.H. Eliot, June 25, 1856, in Nevins, 61.

8. McFeely cites JDG, *Memoirs*, 188, which has but one brief mention of Julia Fish. Julia Grant had a great deal of influence with her husband, but she rarely flaunted the fact in so public a place as her memoirs. See William S. McFeely, *Grant: A Biography* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981), 297.

Street house. The only problem, as one of Stewart's political opponents Charles Sumner indicated, was that an obscure 1789 law prohibited businessmen from being treasury head. After some waffling, Grant relented on his choice; Stewart was out, and George S. Boutwell, less experienced in business but sincerely interested in the job, was in.

Grant selected Adolph Borie, a wealthy Philadelphian, as secretary of the navy. He was a friend, and he contributed "liberally" to the fund with which Grant's Philadelphia home was purchased.⁹ And he was not sure he wanted the job. Borie resigned in June 1869, to be replaced by New Jersey lawyer George M. Robeson. Attorney General Ebenezer Hoar was a Massachusetts judge whose family had a sterling moral reputation and who came from a tradition of supporting blacks. Neither he, nor Postmaster General John Creswell, nor Secretary of the Interior Jacob Dolson Cox were old Grant cronies. Grant chose these men based on their reputations and the political balance he believed they would bring to the cabinet.¹⁰

Grant and members of Congress had the responsibility of filling thousands of lesser government positions, and at the time Grant was president, no regulations existed to ensure that appointees could do the job for which they were hired. Rather, the primary qualifications for government jobs were contributions to campaigns, visible membership in the party in power, and friendship with those who had the power to appoint. Friends of Grant were besieged with requests from acquaintances to assist them with obtaining appointments.

For example, John Darby of St. Louis wrote to Abel Corbin, "I am desirous of procuring the appointment of the U.S. Pension Agent at St. Louis, From my personal relations with Genl Grant, and having voted for and sustained him, in his election as President; --and my long and intimate relations of personal regard with his family; from my very childhood..." Darby asked Corbin how he could get the appointment.¹¹ Corbin replied that Darby should write to Grant directly, but he also told him, "I shall, on the 5th March write, full & positive, to Frederick Dent and to his daughter Mrs. Grant; they are my friends & yours & will talk that night with Grant, having that day rec'd your formal application, everything will be fresh in his mind..." Corbin asked only one thing in return: "Do not, *in any event*, name me in connection with your matter, For I have been applied to by many & have refused to recommend any of them for *anything*. Except *one*..."¹² The correspondence

9. Nelson Cross, *The Modern Ulysses: His Political Record* (New York: J.S. Redfield, 1872), 160.

10. McFeely, 291-302.

11. John F. Darby to Abel R. Corbin, February 24, 1869, John F. Darby Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

12. Abel R. Corbin to John F. Darby, February 28, 1869, John F. Darby Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

between Corbin and Darby is typical of what one could go through to get a lucrative appointment.

Darby was not the only St. Louisan to expect a post; Taylor Blow desired to be postmaster, and his wife wrote, "If Genl Grant is independent of party enough to give *important* positions to *personal* friends Taylor stands as good a chance as anybody."¹³ She wrote as though she believed it was right and proper for presidents to appoint friends, just as the power brokers and politicians expected presidents to make appointments based on political allegiance, business interests, and anything but qualifications.

Grant did appoint some personal friends. Charles Ford, for example, he named collector of customs in St. Louis. Grant met Ford in Sackett's Harbor, New York, and had maintained his friendship with him after they both moved to St. Louis. Charles Ford assisted Grant with business around the city when he could not travel there to attend to it himself. John Russel Jones, a Galena friend, Grant appointed as minister to Belgium. Augustus Chetlain, whom Grant knew in Galena in 1860 and during the Civil War, he appointed consul at Brussels. As Hamlin Garland noted, however, most appointees who had ties to Grant were not recommended by him, but rather by power brokers who wanted to please Grant.¹⁴

In this manner, Andrew Johnson appointed old Jesse Grant to be postmaster of Covington and Fred Grant to West Point. President Grant was quick to remove his father in 1872, when it became obvious that he was senile and could not handle the job. President Grant received a letter from a special agent of the post office, who apparently was resigning because of differences with Jesse Grant. "Please allow me to ask you to reconsider," Grant wrote him. "I regret that my father should in any way interfere with the management of the office and will ask him to desist and send in his resignation. He can never be fit to take charge of the office again."¹⁵ Charles Phelps implied in the same year that Jesse Grant was no longer "in the full enjoyment of his powers of mind and body...."

Jesse suffered a stroke about the time his son was elected, and he "was unable to talk or think very clearly on any subject." When reporters asked him what he thought about Ulysses' possible cabinet appointments, he recommended that they talk to Ulysses' sphinx-like mother Hannah, who remarkably (or fictitiously) "talked freely and with great shrewdness on the political situation."¹⁶ Grant could have saved himself from criticism by forcing Jesse's resignation as soon as he became president.

13. Minnie Blow to Sister C., February 21, 1869, Blow Family Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

14. Garland, 393-394.

15. USG to Mr. Easton, September 7, 1872, photostat copy, Ulysses S. Grant III Papers, SIUC-USGA.

16. If Hannah Grant in fact talked to reporters at this point, it would have been unusual. Phelps, 3; Garland, 418-419.

Fred Grant, who received his appointment to West Point from Andrew Johnson, was also open to extensive criticism, despite the fact that there was nothing irregular about his appointment. Fred was young and had a poor education when he entered the academy, and his academic difficulties became a subject for national discussion. One campaigner wrote he "was barely *squeezed* through... after having been *set back* a whole year by reason of his failure to reach the educational standard." Having cut down Fred's academic record, the Grant opponent then went on to describe how Fred tormented the first black cadet admitted at West Point, James Webster Smith. Smith was born in South Carolina but was brought north by a philanthropist to be educated. His academic record had been excellent, and he appeared to be the perfect black man to desegregate the United States Military Academy. He entered Fred's last year at West Point, and immediately he began suffering discrimination and harassment. Fred Grant contributed to Smith's harassment along with the other cadets, and his academic record coupled with his participation in Smith's trouble opened his appointment to criticism.¹⁷

In 1871, Grant appointed his brother-in-law, Michael John Cramer, minister to Denmark. Cramer married Ulysses' sister, Mary Frances, in 1863. He was born near Schaffhausen, Switzerland, but emigrated to the United States with his family when he was ten years old. He attended college at Ohio Wesleyan and was ordained in the Methodist Church. His European birth in neutral Switzerland, his education, and a previous European consulate fitted him for the post Grant bestowed on him, and he retained his appointment through two more presidents. In 1881, President James Garfield moved Cramer to Bern, Switzerland, where he remained until he resigned in July 1885.¹⁸

Regardless of how admirably Cramer performed his duties, Grant's appointment of him gave Republican and Democratic opponents additional ammunition with which to criticize Grant. The anti-Grant campaign biographer Nelson Cross wrote in 1872, "From what we have been able to learn of Mr. Cramer, he was a kind of itinerate preacher, fortune-hunter and adventurer in the West, pretending to much and practicing very little Christianity." As a matter of course, Cross accused Cramer of alcoholism.¹⁹

In the 1872 campaign in particular, allegations of the "shameless practice of nepotism" surfaced to smite Grant. "*Nepotism by wholesale*," his opponents called it, "from the center to the remotest border; at home, abroad, and upon the seas. Great Grants and little Grants, old Dents and young Dents, father, father-in-law, brothers, brothers-in-law, nephews, first cousins, second, third, fourth cousins; the list is a stigma and a reproach in the eyes of considerable men."²⁰ The campaigner was correct about Grant's father, although Ulysses

17. Cross, 78-79; McFeely, 375-379.

18. "Michael John Cramer," *Dictionary of American Biography* (1930), IV, 499; *Papers*, XV, 215n.

19. Cross, 78-79.

20. Cross, 72-73.

had little to do with his appointment. He was correct about Ulysses' brothers-in-law, namely Cramer, Jim Casey, who was collector at New Orleans, and John Dent, who was an Indian agent. Lewis Dent and Alexander Sharp also held posts periodically courtesy of the United States government. Grant also had a first cousin, Bailey Hudson, who held a European consulate. Grant and his cousin had rarely if ever met, though, and they did not know each other well. One newspaper tried to make a joke from the apparent nepotism. "As a matter of fact," the journalist wrote, "he has appointed very few of his own people to office.... It might be said with greater justice that he has appointed his wife's people to office," which resulted in a veritable "plague of Dents."²¹

Republicans and Democrats who were thwarted in their own attempts to get near the president criticized the army officers who succeeded. Grant detailed to the White House Orville Babcock, his personal secretary but officially an army officer, as well as former aides Horace Porter and Fred Dent. That the men remained on the army payroll was problematic. By detailing them to the White House, Grant walked a fine line in breaking the law by allowing army officers to serve in what were essentially civilian posts.²² Grant's former army aides served a useful purpose in his administration; unlike his new political colleagues, Grant's army friends obeyed him when he issued an order.²³

Remarkably, President Grant strongly advocated reform of civil service appointments. "There is no such duty which so much embarrasses the executives and heads of departments as that of appointments; nor is there any such arduous and thankless labor imposed on senators and representatives as that of finding places for constituents," he informed Congress.

Always favoring practical reforms, I respectfully call your attention to one abuse of long standing, which I would like to see remedied by this Congress. It is a reform in the civil service of the country. I would have it go beyond the mere fixing of the tenure of office of clerks and employés who do not require the advice and consent of the Senate to make their appointments complete. I would have it govern... the manner of making all appointments.... The present system does not secure the best men, and often not even fit men, for public place. The elevation and purification of the civil service will be hailed with approval by the whole people of the United States.²⁴

21. Garland, 398.

22. Cross, 45-46; McFeely, 302-303.

23. Nevins, 132-133.

24. Quoted in Phelps, 324-325.

President Grant's message revealed that he disliked the system of graft and politics by which federal employees received their jobs. He despised being petitioned for places as president as he had as general, and he remembered the instability of federal employment, having lost his own job in the St. Louis custom house when the collector died. On March 3, 1871, Congress passed the first Civil Service Reform Act. The following day Grant appointed George William Curtis as head of the Civil Service Commission. Curtis remained in the position until 1875, despite the fact that Congress failed to appropriate necessary funds for him to work.²⁵ Grant's support of civil service reform is the greatest irony of his administration; unwittingly he abused the system of hiring federal employees as much as any president had.

Reconstruction and Civil Rights

During his two terms, Ulysses Grant took a rended nation and tried to mend it. Although he evidently did not comprehend completely the plight of Southern blacks and Native Americans, he followed what he believed to be a fair and humane course toward them. For blacks, he attempted to protect their newly won civil rights, and he worked to keep in office Republicans whom he believed to be more sympathetic to them. While he would have preferred to avoid martial law, he authorized it when groups such as the "White Liners" of South Carolina violently intimidated blacks and Republican whites. When Grant's administration closed, former Confederate sympathizers were gradually regaining Southern state governments and reversing his progressive civil rights measures, but it was through little fault of his own. He could not control the entire country without turning the presidency into a military dictatorship, which he no doubt would have abhorred.

On February 26, 1869, Congress passed the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution and sent it on to the states for ratification. The Fifteenth Amendment prevented the states from denying male citizens the right to vote based on "race, color, or previous condition of servitude" and authorized Congress to pass enforcement legislation.²⁶ Once the sufficient number of states ratified it, the amendment would make it illegal to restrict black men from voting on racial grounds or the grounds that they had once been slaves, as Southern legislators had proposed. In President Grant's inaugural address a few days later, he urged the states to ratify the amendment.²⁷ On March 30, 1870, the

25. Following President James Garfield's assassination in July 1881 at the hands of a disgruntled and unsuccessful appointment seeker, Congress passed the Pendleton Act on January 16, 1883. The Pendleton Act affected about one-tenth of federal employees but paved the way for future, more stringent reform, and provided enforcement that the Civil Service Reform Act of 1871 had not provided.

26. The Fifteenth Amendment was worded in such a way as to exclude women and certain male immigrants, such as those from Asia, who were not considered worthy of the right to vote by some late nineteenth-century white male Americans.

27. Phelps, 320.

amendment received the requisite number of state ratifications and became a part of the Constitution.

During Grant's first administration, he worked with Congress to strengthen enforcement of the Reconstruction acts. On May 31 and July 14, 1870, Congress passed the first two sets of Enforcement Acts of Grant's administration. On January 13, 1871, Grant submitted a report of activities of the vigilante group the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), which was founded at Pulaski, Tennessee, by Nathan Bedford Forrest in 1866. After a brief period of strife within the organization in the early post-war years, the KKK grew rapidly and, along with other white supremacist groups such as the Knights of the White Camelia, was responsible for terrorizing Southern blacks. As a result of Grant's report, Congress set up a committee to examine enforcement options where vigilantism existed. On February 28, Congress passed an additional enforcement bill, and after Grant encouraged yet another bill in March, Congress passed a strong enforcement bill on April 20, 1871.²⁸ The new legislation, commonly called the Ku-Klux Act, imposed criminal penalties for those who infringed on the rights of citizens, authorized federal courts to try cases when state and local authorities failed to act, and, most importantly, authorized the president to suspend the writ of *habeas corpus* and declare martial law.²⁹

As a result of the legislation, United States Attorney General Amos T. Akerman began investigations and arrests of KKK members in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Mississippi. On October 17, 1871, Grant used his presidential power to suspend the writ of *habeas corpus* in nine South Carolina counties and sent in federal troops. Akerman arrested several hundred suspected KKK vigilantes and within time got convictions on a significant number of them. Violent times required drastic measures.

In December 1871, Grant asked Akerman to resign because of his position on other national issues. Akerman complied, and Grant appointed George H. Williams, who continued Akerman's vigorous prosecution of vigilante violence.³⁰

The primary issue in the 1872 presidential campaign was Grant's Reconstruction program. A group of liberal Republicans in May 1872, broke from the party to nominate moderates Horace Greeley and B.G. Brown for president and vice-president to run against Grant. In July, the Democratic Party convention endorsed Greeley and Brown as well. Both groups complained primarily about Grant's sending federal troops to South Carolina and the

28. According to William McFeely, Grant justified federal intervention on the grounds that tax collection and mail service had been disrupted. McFeely, 369.

29. Suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus* allowed officials to arrest individuals on suspicion without immediately proffering charges.

30. An 1872 campaign propaganda book in opposition to Grant reported 501 people arrested in South Carolina, 944 indictments in North Carolina, and 642 indictments in Mississippi on the KKK Act from its passage. Nelson Cross, 156. Akerman and Williams had an impressive record if the statistics are true.

prosecutions by Akerman and Williams. "We sincerely congratulate the people of the Southern States... upon the overthrow of that most pernicious and unnecessary [Ku-Klux Act]... destructive of public justice and human liberty," a campaign piece proclaimed in opposition to Grant and his Reconstruction. The author of the piece called the act "infamous and tyrannical."³¹ In June, however, the greater Republican convention nominated Grant and Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts, and they won handily in the November election. The registration of black voters continued to work in their favor.

In early December 1872, President Grant continued to authorize enforcement of the Reconstruction Acts and recent constitutional amendments. Democrats and Republicans contested the Louisiana election returns, and two sets of representatives attempted to take office. After the United States Circuit Court confirmed the Republican version of the returns, on December 3 Grant authorized the use of federal troops in Baton Rouge to put Republican Governor Kellogg and the Republican electoral college members in the state house.³² Not desiring to prohibit free speech, however, Grant permitted protestors opposed to Kellogg to remain in the vicinity of the state house for several months. In May, violence escalated to the point that he ordered troops to remove the protesters.

For more than a year, Louisiana carried on with an uneasy truce. On September 14, 1874, violence broke out again when White League militia conducted a *coup d'état* and ousted Governor Kellogg. Two days later, Grant ordered five thousand federal troops to the city to restore order and put Kellogg back in office. On November 17, Grant felt sufficient time had passed to withdraw the troops, but he made plans to send Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan to observe in Louisiana.

Sheridan was present in New Orleans during Christmas that year. On January 4, 1875, five Democrats took over the Louisiana legislature, and Kellogg appealed to Sheridan for assistance in removing them. Sheridan attempted to try them by a military tribunal with President Grant's support. Grant strengthened Sheridan's position by praising his action in his annual message to Congress. Grant also asked Congress to intervene with the Louisiana legislators and negotiate a compromise. That compromise was reached in April 1875, but the result was that fewer friends of blacks sat in the Louisiana state house.

31. This same piece claimed that President Ulysses S. Grant declared martial law in South Carolina on the basis of purely circumstantial evidence. According to the author, there was evidence only of one school burning, and the Ku Klux Klan was a "mythical" organization. Cross, 154-155, 158-159. While Cross paraded as a moderate in favor of racial harmonization in sections of this piece, he clearly falls into the category of a white supremacist in his description of the Southern state governments under former slaves. Cross, 148-149.

32. During the 1872 campaign accusations emerged that Grant's brother-in-law Jim Casey, Collector of the Port of New Orleans, had led federal troops in preventing free speech at a Republican nominating meeting. The author of the accusations predicted Grant's use of martial law to support Republican election returns. Cross, 170.

Grant demonstrated a commitment to Republican Reconstruction in the South throughout his two terms. The Louisiana incidents reveal that, while he hesitated to use military power to reconstruct former rebels and white supremacists, he would do so when necessary. The years of violence in Louisiana taught Grant that some white Southerners' xenophobia, hatred, and insecurities about black Americans ran so deep that they might never be reconstructed.

Grant had one last chance to help African Americans before he left office. On March 1, 1875, he signed into law the Civil Rights Act, which prohibited racial discrimination in public accommodations, travel, and on juries. The Civil Rights Act of 1875 attempted to force white and black Americans to treat each other as equals. Grant's participation in the passage of the legislation was foreshadowed by his days working alongside the Dent slaves at White Haven and by his attempts during the Civil War to insure that black soldiers got paid whenever white soldiers did. The Civil Rights Act would not survive long beyond Grant's second term, however; Supreme Court rulings whittled away at it until all force in the law was gone by the late 1890s.³³

Native Americans

When Grant considered the Native Americans being displaced by white settlement on the western plains in the 1860s and 1870s, he remembered his personal encounters with them in his lifetime. First, he remembered the docile and defeated people he met while on the Pacific Coast from 1852 to 1854. He did not fear them but rather pitied them. He also knew his friend, Ely Parker, the Seneca sachem who had served under him from Chattanooga to Appomattox. Parker would treat other Native Americans fairly, Grant believed, so he appointed him commissioner of Indian affairs in the spring of 1869. Accelerated white settlement due to the Homestead Act of 1862 made Native American policy an important issue during Grant's administration. He conceived that Indians as a group required protection from whites, and that they could survive best if they appeared to be more like whites. Therefore, he concentrated them on reservations and tried to force formerly nomadic tribes to become agriculturalists.

33. Black soldiers did not get equal pay during the Civil War, however. Civil rights for blacks eroded significantly in 1883, when the United States Supreme Court heard five cases involving blacks being denied accommodations or privileges. The court ruled that the civil rights acts and Amendment 14 could protect only political rights, not social rights, and that the court could only prohibit states, not individuals, from infringing on civil rights. See 109 U.S. 3. (The court ruled the following year that Congress could punish individuals who attempted to block blacks from voting. 110 U.S. 651.) In 1896, the court ruled in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that state laws could require separate public accommodations for blacks and whites, as long as those accommodations were "equal." This upheld a Louisiana law that required separate facilities for blacks and whites. 163 U.S. 537. *Plessy v. Ferguson* was overturned in 1954, when in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, the Court ruled that separate is inherently unequal. 347 U.S. 483, 74 S.Ct. 686, 98 L.Ed. 873.

In Grant's inaugural address, he said, "The proper treatment of the original occupants of this land--the Indians--is one deserving of careful study. I will favor any course toward them which tends to their civilization and ultimate citizenship."³⁴ He recommended an Indian peace policy that would treat Native Americans as individuals rather than as members of tribes or nations. He did not believe they were prepared for life among whites, however, so he continued and strengthened the reservation system and set up American-style schools in association with the reservations. Ely Parker rose to his level of success under just such a policy, and Grant believed that the other 321,000 Native Americans in the United States could do so as well. He justified the expenditure on the grounds that it would be less expensive than continued warfare between Native Americans and the U.S. Army and white settlers. "I recommend liberal appropriations to carry out the Indian peace policy, not only because it is humane, Christian-like, and economical, but because it is right," Grant said. He had a sense that justice should prevail, and he believed that his system would promote justice.³⁵

In February 1871, Ely Parker was accused of corruption. He was investigated by Congress and cleared of the charges, but he could not effectively carry out his position thereafter. On June 29, 1871, he resigned. For the next four years, Grant left the administration of Native American affairs to army officials such as William T. Sherman, who had a debatable human rights record. Grant attempted to use the army to keep gold-rushers out of the Black Hills of Dakota Territory, which had been designated Sioux land by treaty. The influx of prospectors by the fall of 1875, however, caused him to give up. The army began to round up wandering tribes, and on June 25, 1876, a group of Sioux and North Cheyenne had their last victorious battle against United States troops at the Little Big Horn River in Montana. There they killed Lt. Col. George Custer and 262 men. The battle was the last desperate attempt by a defeated people; within the next year the surviving Native Americans surrendered.³⁶

The Native Americans fought hard against moving to reservations because they knew it would result in a loss of their culture. They also may have known of the high incidence of corruption associated with the army trading posts with which they would have to do business, corruption that went all the way to Secretary of War William W. Belknap. On the morning of March 2, 1876, Belknap hurriedly resigned with the knowledge that if he did not, he would be impeached that afternoon for receiving \$20,000 in kickback bribes from a post agent. Belknap's first wife had made the arrangements, and his second wife--the deceased woman's sister--continued it to support the Belknaps' expensive Washington lifestyle. Grant accepted Belknap's resignation without ascertaining the details of the accusations against

34. Quoted in McFeely, 289.

35. McFeely, 305, 307, 308; G.W. Childs, *Recollections of General Grant, with an Account of the Presentation of the Portraits of Generals Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan at the United States Military Academy, West Point* (Philadelphia: Collins, 1890), 31; Phelps, 323-324; "President Grant; His Official Record," 6.

36. McFeely, 436-438.

him, much to the chagrin of Congress, which proceeded to impeach him despite the fact that he no longer fell under their jurisdiction. In the end Belknap was relieved of charges because his hasty resignation put him outside their purview.

The Belknap investigation could have easily reached the Grants. Both Orvil Grant, Ulysses' brother, and John Dent, Julia's brother, "owned" posts obtained with the endorsement of the president. Their holding post positions was unethical if not illegal, and the Grants probably were relieved that congressional attention focused on their unfortunate friend Belknap. Julia felt particularly sorry for Mrs. Belknap, who had been one of Washington's greatest society entertainers. When the two ladies met after the impeachment began, they cried together over her misfortune, "tears... falling thick and fast." Julia believed that Mrs. Belknap had not known what she did was wrong.³⁷

William T. Sherman wrote his and Grant's old friend David Porter with his own opinion of Grant's involvement. "I knew Belknap was running the machine, for his individual purposes, ...but I did not think he was openly peddling out offices for the profits.... All this time I am sorry for Grant, for while he supposed he was using others, simultaneously they were using him," Sherman cynically wrote. He expressed his own belief that Grant had known nothing of the scandal, but he told Porter that the rest of St. Louis was suspicious.³⁸

Grant's heart was in the right place when he developed his Indian peace policy, but as president he had difficulty implementing it. As his policy was carried through in other administrations, it proved more and more damaging to Native American culture and society. Repeated U.S. government intervention in Native American affairs from the early national period to the 1930s resulted in loss of religious, agricultural, and social traditions that had been at the core of Native American societies.³⁹

Women's Rights

In 1848, a group of primarily abolitionist women held the first women's rights convention in the United States. At the convention, women voted in favor of the right to vote in local, state, and federal elections, and they initiated education and agitation nationwide to gain equal rights for women. When the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S.

37. McFeely, 433-436. JDG, *Memoirs*, 189-192.

38. William T. Sherman to [David Dixon] Porter, March 15, 1876, William T. Sherman Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

39. The Dawes Severalty Act of 1887 was similar to Grant's policy in that it dissolved tribes and recognized individuals. The Dawes Act also divided tribal land and gave it to individual Native Americans and removed Indian children from their parents to be educated in boarding schools, presumably to Americanize them. R. Douglas Hurt, *Indian Agriculture in America: A Prehistory to the Present* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1988).

Constitution passed, at least one hundred women across the United States took the opportunity to try to vote in the 1872 presidential election. One of these women was Susan B. Anthony, who led a group of Rochester women to the polls to exercise what they considered their right as citizens. Anthony was arrested as she had desired, but she did not succeed in making her case a test case for women nationwide. Instead, the judge ruled in her trial in such a way as to prevent her from voting or carrying her case to a higher court. In the year following Anthony's trial, the case of *Minor v. Happersett* reached the United States Supreme Court. In *Minor*, the court ruled that states could prohibit women from voting.⁴⁰ Allan Nevins recorded that Grant had a plan for woman suffrage: "I would give each married woman two votes; then both husband and wife would be represented at the polls, without there being any divided families on the subject of politics."⁴¹ President Grant's joke about woman suffrage offers little insight into his true feelings about the subject, but it does lead one to believe that he did not see the necessity of women voting.

Santo Domingo

"General Grant's Civil War was, of course, the great event of Abraham Lincoln's presidency; the absence of civil and international war was the greatest of Ulysses Grant's," wrote historian William McFeely.⁴² To the credit of Grant and Secretary of State Hamilton Fish, the only cabinet member who remained from March 1869 until March 1877, the United States avoided war during Grant's two terms. Two affairs dominated the international scene in those years: the proposed annexation of the Dominican Republic, and negotiations with Great Britain primarily related to Civil War reparations.

During Andrew Johnson's term in office, the United States acquired Alaska from Russia. When Grant took office, he looked south for more land, and he found it in the island country of the Dominican Republic, or Santo Domingo as he called it. William H. Seward began negotiating to acquire the Dominican Republic while serving as secretary of state for Andrew Johnson. Soon after Grant took office, he assigned Orville Babcock, his personal secretary, to continue the talks. On July 17, 1869, Babcock traveled to Santo Domingo. For the next month, he assisted Dominican president Buenaventura Baez in fending off a naval invasion from Haiti and an inner threat to his power. On September 14, Babcock returned to Washington with a treaty for annexation. The problem was that

40. Anthony was voting for Grant. Herma Hill Kay, *Text, Cases, and Materials on Sex-Based Discrimination*, 2nd. ed. (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Co., 1981), 4-6; Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States* (New York: Atheneum, 1974), 165-169. Flexner indicted the Grant administration as having pressured the New York court to bring a guilty charge against Anthony and prevent her from taking her case to a higher court, but she did not cite evidence to support her assertion. The ruling on *Minor* was not written by a Grant appointee.

41. Nevins, 135. Nevins does not cite his source.

42. McFeely, 332.

Babcock did not have the authority to negotiate a treaty. On November 29, Babcock returned with a properly authorized treaty.

Grant wanted to annex Santo Domingo for a variety of reasons. First, he believed that the country would be useful for U.S. security in the Caribbean. Second, and more importantly, he envisioned in Santo Domingo a colony for recently freed U.S. blacks. He believed that Santo Domingo could be a safety valve for the American South.⁴³ When Grant pleaded with influential Senator Charles Sumner to support the annexation treaty the following January, he described the annexation in terms of its potential relevance to the American racial dilemma.

On January 10, 1870, the treaty of annexation went to the Senate and was referred to committee. In March, the committee reported on it unfavorably. On May 31, Grant addressed the Senate on the grounds that the measure was an extension of the Monroe Doctrine and that it could hasten the end of Caribbean slavery. On June 30, the Senate voted and rejected the treaty, 28 to 28. In December, Grant asked Congress to reconsider, and the measure again went to committee. In spring 1871, the committee reported favorably, but Grant lost interest. The annexation treaty faded from view.⁴⁴

The attempted annexation of Santo Domingo and Grant's reasons for advocating annexation, his Native American policy, and his course during Reconstruction all suggest that Grant was mistrustful of white Americans and the ability of the United States to survive as an obviously racially mixed society. Throughout his life he watched as army officers ordered the slaughter of docile and hostile Native Americans. He wanted to believe that white Southerners were willing to reform quickly in the post-war years, until he learned the unavoidable truth of black bodies swinging in Southern trees. Deep inside, Grant was a humane person, as his attempts to protect blacks and Native Americans prove. His mistrust of their ability to protect themselves, however, taints his policies in the eyes of modern readers. At worst, Grant was paternalistic.

Peace with Great Britain

With the assistance of Hamilton Fish, Grant's administration is now known for his successful use of arbitration to settle another international dispute. The United States and Great Britain had numerous issues over which to negotiate during Grant's first

43. Robert Walker popularized the idea of a "safety valve" for blacks in 1844. Frederick Merk, *Fruits of Propaganda in the Tyler Administration* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 221-252.

44. McFeely, 336-346; Cross, 94, 103, 108, 115, 117-118; Garland, 407-408; Aaron F. Stevens, "Grant and His Administration: Speech of Aaron F. Stevens, of New Hampshire, in the House of Representatives, February 19, 1870."

administration. Grant appointed Fish and four other commissioners to negotiate the various issues, and he asked Fish to settle them before the 1872 election.

During the Civil War, Britain aided the Confederacy by allowing rebel ships to dock and outfit at British ports. The United States government held Britain accountable for damage done by these Confederate ships. The claims against Britain came to be known by the name of one of the ships, called the *Alabama*. The United States wanted several million dollars in reparations for the *Alabama* claims. Britain expressed willingness to negotiate the claims, but in return she wanted reparations for Irish-American ("Fenian") raids into Canada.

The United States and Great Britain also desired to set boundaries between the United States and Canada and establish trade agreements. They negotiated to set the water boundary between Washington Territory and British Columbia, to guarantee United States navigation of the St. Lawrence River, and to define fishing rights. They also negotiated a trade agreement between the United States and Canada. At Grant's urging, the commissioners agreed to arbitration by neutral countries over the *Alabama* claims, resulting in eventual settlement which balanced in favor of the United States for about fourteen million dollars. The territorial disputes were decided by Otto von Bismarck, who ruled in favor of the United States. The commissioners signed the Treaty of Washington on May 8, 1871, and final arbitration was complete by August 25, 1872, just in time for the presidential election.⁴⁵

The peaceful settlement of conflict between the United States and Great Britain was considered a hallmark in the history of diplomatic relations. How great was Grant's role in deciding for peaceful negotiation is questionable. Allan Nevins, who wrote a glowing biography of Hamilton Fish, believed that Grant had little opinion on how to settle the disputes. Nevins' sources do not support Fish as the exclusive actor, however. Whether or not Grant was a mover during the negotiations from 1871 to 1872, one has to acknowledge that his appointments set the action in motion and that years later it was Grant, not Fish, who served as the unofficial negotiator between China and Japan in similar disputes. Grant established the concept of international arbitration as a means of resolving disputes between sovereign states, and this was the greatest accomplishment and most admirable and enduring legacy of his administration.⁴⁶

45. Grant requested Fish in November 1870 to settle the disputes before the 1872 election. He also directed Fish not to propose the United States annexing Canada as part of the agreement, believing that to do so would stall or end negotiations. He had powerful Charles Sumner removed as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee because Sumner was in favor of Canadian annexation; Grant feared he would influence the committee to report unfavorably on the treaty. McFeely, 347, *passim*. See Chapter Eleven for Grant's assistance to China and Japan.

46. For an alternative viewpoint, see McFeely, 332.

In the Black, Black Friday, and Barroom Bankrollers: Fiscal and Monetary Issues

In his inaugural address in 1869, Grant addressed the financial health of the nation. He expressed his desire to reduce rapidly the national debt and to insure that all government bonds be redeemable in gold. He laid out some concerns for improving the health of the American economy and stabilizing it as it recovered from the war. "First among these is strict integrity in fulfilling all our obligations," he said.⁴⁷ For his secretary of the treasury, Grant appointed George S. Boutwell, who was an admirable politician but had little fiscal experience. Secretary Boutwell tackled his new job with vigor, and initially he so rapidly reduced the national debt that he seriously constricted the supply of paper money and flooded the market with gold.⁴⁸

One of the ways in which the national debt was reduced was through decreased expenditures and increased revenue in the first few months of Grant's first term. A.F. Stevens, in what appears to be an early campaign piece, compared government expenditures from March 1868 to January 1869, and from March 1869 to January 1870. Stevens found that the Grant administration spent more than fifty-five million dollars less, or about one-fifth of the total budget, than the Johnson administration spent for the corresponding period the previous year. As Stevens did not detail from where budget cuts were made and as Grant would have had little opportunity to have a significant effect on the budget, one cannot be sure of how much credit should go to Grant for this significant decrease. Increases in internal revenue, decreases in the expenses of collecting customs revenue, and other factors added an additional twenty-five million dollars to Grant's balance sheet over what Johnson could credit. Stevens noted that the reduction in general expenses and net increase in collections gave Grant an additional eighty million dollars to apply to the national debt.⁴⁹

Early in 1869, Ulysses' sister Jennie married Abel Rathbone Corbin, a New York financier. Jennie was thirty-seven years old and had never been married; Corbin was a widower and was sixty-one.⁵⁰ While Jennie found her life with Corbin to be congenial, she probably knew that Corbin's affection for her was in part an attraction to her older brother's

47. Aaron F. Stevens, 2.

48. McFeely, 298. Incidentally (not coincidentally), Grant held a substantial part of his savings in government bonds, some gifts from the citizens of New York in 1866 and some which he had purchased during the Civil War.

49. Aaron F. Stevens, 5-6. The cuts described by Stevens did not include the downsizing of the army mandated by Congress, as significant cuts did not take effect until the early 1870s. Maurice Matloff, *American Military History*, 2nd. ed. (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1969, 1973), 282; William T. Sherman to E.O. C. Ord, October 28, 1870, William T. Sherman Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

50. JDG, *Memoirs*, 29.

power. Corbin rewarded Jennie with two things that she had not found in the penurious Jesse and Hannah Grant household: high society and plentiful money. In June, Corbin began to work at controlling that power when Grant visited his sister at her new New York City home. There financiers Jay Gould and James Fisk, Jr., amiably counseled Grant about his monetary policy, instructing him that the economy would benefit if the government did not sell gold.

Corbin, Fisk, and Gould had a plan. They would convince Grant not to sell government gold and would buy it themselves. Over time, the price of gold would rise substantially, and they would sell and reap the profits. In time, Jennie learned of the plan and approved; she could not pass up the opportunity for so much money. Corbin was to keep tabs on Grant and warn the others if it looked like he would sell. Daniel Butterfield, who had been in charge of fund-raising efforts for the Grants' I Street house, wrangled an appointment to the Treasury Department as an added protection; he would contact the three investors if the government was going to sell. It seemed as if the plan was fail-safe.

On September 19, 1869, Horace Porter, Ulysses, and Julia were visiting her maternal cousin, William Wrenshall Smith, in Washington, Pennsylvania. One of Grant's closest friends, John Rawlins, had died of tuberculosis on September 6, and the trip away from the east coast afforded him a chance to mourn and recover. Porter and Grant were playing croquet when a courier arrived with a letter to Ulysses from Abel Corbin. (Having done Corbin's bidding the courier wired him, "Delivered. All right." Corbin misinterpreted the telegram as meaning Grant agreed with the contents of the letter.) Corbin's letter was a lengthy speech on the hazards of the government selling gold at that time. Grant thought the letter curious, but he was not suspicious until he learned that the letter had been hand-delivered by an employee of Corbin rather than having come through the mail. He understood then. Corbin had a vested interest.

Ulysses went inside and found Julia writing a letter to his sister, Jennie. He told her, "Write this." And then Julia wrote either, "The General says, if you have any influence with your husband, tell him to have nothing whatever to do with ----. If he does, he will be ruined, for come what may, he (your brother) will do his duty to the country and the trusts in his keeping;" or, "Tell your husband that my husband is very much annoyed by your speculations. You must close them as quickly as you can!" The former Julia recorded in her *Memoirs*; the latter was reported by Corbin and Gould as the response. Julia signed it obliquely, "Sis."⁵¹

The Corbins received the letter September 23, and that evening Corbin showed it to Gould. Corbin wanted out, but Gould made sure he stayed in. The next day, Gould anonymously began selling his gold. Meanwhile, the Grants returned to Washington, D.C., and the president met with Secretary of the Treasury Boutwell. On the evening of

51. McFeely, 325, 329-330; JDG, *Memoirs*, 182.

September 23, they agreed to start selling gold. On the 24th, they ordered four million dollars worth of gold sold, sending the message over two telegraph lines, possibly because of suspicion about Daniel Butterfield. The day had begun with gold at \$145 per ounce; just before noon it reached a high of \$160, and the rest of the day it fell off, until it reached \$140. Although Grant and Boutwell had stopped the speculation and returned the price of gold to safe levels, that day some people made fortunes and others lost fortunes. The Corbins' finances were closer to the latter.⁵²

In the course of congressional investigations into the gold market, Julia Grant, Jennie Corbin, and Horace Porter were all under suspicion. Julia, it was said, had made \$2,500 off the deal, and Porter a corresponding amount. No evidence surfaced to link them conclusively to the speculation, and even the circumstantial evidence was scant and faulty.⁵³ As far as the president was concerned, if he committed any error it was in not returning to the capital immediately to begin selling gold and in putting so much gold on the market in a single day.

While President Grant and his advisors such as Boutwell had much to learn about monetary policy, they did attempt to use the supply of money to assist with the country's economic development. Their fiscal policy was more successful than the monetary policy, as demonstrated by Grant's sweeping cuts in expenditures. During his first administration, Grant also concerned himself with the United States' commercial ventures. He took an interest in improving the nation's shipping industry, which had been injured by the Civil War; in increasing trade with other nations such as China and Japan, a project he began before he entered the White House; in expanding the railroad system and exploring alternative transportation to transport raw materials and goods between agricultural and manufacturing states; in guaranteeing American access to waterways such as the St. Lawrence River; and in reserving public lands for "actual settlers," farm families who would help in the advancement of the U.S. frontier.⁵⁴ Throughout Grant's administration and for many years thereafter, federal revenue exceeded expenditures and allowed for the continuing reduction of the national debt. Grant's fiscal, monetary, and commercial policies during his first administration resembled his battle plans during the final war years; his was a three-prong plan in an attempt to rout economic disaster as the country recovered from the war.

During the president's second term, the country faced a poor economic situation. Various price indexes had risen sharply during the Civil War years; the remainder of the nineteenth century they dropped almost every year. The Treasury Department under Boutwell, William Richardson (who replaced Boutwell in March 1873), and Benjamin Bristow (who replaced Richardson the following year) worked with Grant and professional

52. McFeely, 327-328; Garland, 409.

53. Julia was linked to the incident by the delivery of \$25.00 in cash from the Adams Express Company that fall, which some investigators suggested might have actually been \$2,500. McFeely, 329.

54. Phelps, 325-33, *passim*.

financiers to control the money supply and decrease damage. They also toyed with the standard on which U.S. legal tender notes would be based (gold or gold and silver) and with redemption of notes in specie, or gold and silver.

On February 12, 1873, Grant signed the Coinage Act. The Coinage Act demonetized silver, which proscribed using silver as money. Recent discoveries of silver in the western mountains had significantly increased the quantity in circulation, and Congress believed that demonetization was necessary. Formerly, both gold and silver could be used as money in trade. Now the country was on the gold standard exclusively. Farmers and miners who opposed the Coinage Act called it the "Crime of '73," and the issue of a bi-metal standard (based on gold and silver) remained at the forefront of American politics for two decades, until silver production declined. The Coinage Act and related legislation generated William Jennings Bryan's famous "Cross of Gold Speech" in 1896, in which he advocated return to the bi-metal standard.

Within a month of the Coinage Act, Congress and the president further infuriated most sectors of American society by passing what opponents called the "Salary Grab" Act on March 3, which increased the salaries of government officials. Grant's salary doubled from \$25,000 to \$50,000. Congressional salaries rose from \$5,000 to \$7,500, and other salaries rose accordingly. The public outcry was so great against this act that Congress repealed the law the following January, preserving increases only for Supreme Court justices and the president.

Congress might have survived the "Salary Grab" unscathed had it not been for the financial collapse of Wall Street financier Jay Cooke's empire on September 18, 1873. For the next several days, Cooke's failure precipitated additional failures, launching a national depression. The depression lasted with intensity for the next three or four years, and economic historians debate whether recovery came about before the turn of the century.

Grant and his new treasury secretary, William A. Richardson, faced the monetary crisis by increasing the cash supply in a limited way. Grant authorized Richardson to buy United States bonds with currency available to the federal government. This increased the supply of cash by about thirteen million dollars, but it was not sufficient to bring about recovery. In December, Grant addressed Congress and urged members to take prudent steps to help the country recover. He did not want to abandon the gold standard; rather he believed that if the United States held to the gold standard the economy would correct itself over time. He was opposed to measures that could produce inflation.

Throughout the winter of 1874, Congress worked on ways to increase the money supply. Ohio Senator John Sherman proposed that the supply of greenbacks be set at four hundred million dollars, which would approve those already released by Richardson into circulation under emergency measures and would allow him an additional eighteen million to continue expanding the supply. On April 14, 1874, Grant received the bill for his signature. For two weeks he debated the prudent course, and on April 22, with little

warning, vetoed the bill. One early twentieth century historian wrote, "If Grant had done no other praiseworthy thing in his eight years of office, this in itself would have given him rank among our great executives. It fixed the place of the United States among the financial powers of the world." The author of this praise was Louis Coolidge, who wrote before the advent of Keynesian economics.⁵⁵ Grant renewed his request for Congress to resume specie payments in December 1874, and on January 14, 1875, Congress complied with the Specie Resumption Act. The measure, which went into effect in 1879, was designed to return the country solidly to the gold standard and reduce the number of greenbacks in circulation.

In the months that followed, a congressional inquiry into a tax collecting scandal tainted Secretary of Treasury Richardson and he resigned. Under great pressure from members of Congress, Ulysses Grant appointed Benjamin Bristow to replace him. Bristow was a conservative, and he was equal to his job.

Grant's administration was open to charges of corruption from its first days, but in May 1875, the biggest scandal of his administration broke. A St. Louis newspaper editor exposed widespread fraud in the collection of distillery taxes, leading the perpetrators to be named the "Whiskey Ring." The conspiracy began in St. Louis and spread to other major cities. Benjamin Bristow immediately jumped on the case, and Grant told him, "Let no guilty man escape." When news of the ring began to surface, Grant appointed special prosecutor John B. Henderson, who was, according to Hamlin Garland, "well known as an opponent of the administration." This appointment lent credence to his desire for no guilty man to go free. Over the next eight months, more than two hundred people were indicted on Whiskey Ring charges.⁵⁶

Apparently, the Whiskey Ring frauds began almost as soon as Grant entered office. One St. Louisan claimed to have resigned in 1869 because he would not go along with the frauds. Orvil Grant was accused of fraud in Chicago as early as the election of 1872, and the fraud of which he was accused was the same on which Bristow got convictions three years later. Grant's old friend Charles Ford, who died in 1874, may have been involved. According to the former St. Louis collector, the ring leaders convinced Ford that Grant knew about the operations and that he saw no harm in them. Grant did not know.

The fraud was simple. Inspectors allowed distillers to overproduce, and the revenue collectors overlooked the additional alcohol. Some tax stamps were issued for which no revenue was received. At other times, low measurements were allowed to slip by. The distillers paid off the collectors, inspectors, and any middle men with the proceeds of the additional whiskey sales. The result was the loss of significant revenue for the United States.

55. Louis Coolidge, *The Life of Ulysses S. Grant*, with an introduction by Major-General James G. Harbord (Boston, New York, and Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin and Riverside Press, 1922), 442-452; McFeely, 392-396.

56. Garland, 434.

The regional head of tax collections around St. Louis was John MacDonald, an old friend and appointee of Grant. In April 1875, Secretary of the Treasury Bristow confronted MacDonald with mounds of evidence against him, and he broke down and confessed. The major investigation and indictments began the next month. By late spring, they pointed in the direction of none other than Grant's personal secretary, Orville Babcock, and his friend, Horace Porter. Grant was beside himself, and it took a visit from his brother-in-law Alexander Sharp before he would entertain any idea that Babcock and Porter could be involved. Throughout the rest of the year, significant circumstantial evidence mounted against Babcock, and yellow journalists did their best to connect Grant family members--the president's brother, Orvil; the president's deceased brother-in-law, Lewis Dent; and the president's son, Fred. Grant was under attack.

From St. Louis, John Dent's brother-in-law, Bill Barnard, wrote Grant with all of the sordid gossip and newspaper stories. He knew that members of the Dent's old St. Louis crowd--the Blows, Walshes, Bentons and others--were probably culpable in some way. He warned Grant, "General you are surrounded by intrigues and unworthy persons trying to undermine you. You have in your cabinet three persons of this stamp ie, [Secretary of Treasury] Bristow, [Attorney General Edwards] Pierrepont and [Postmaster General Marshall] Jewell--a self-constituted triumverate to designate one of their number to be your successor?" Barnard also told him that a friend of ring leader John MacDonald told him that Grant would not push prosecutions toward them "or Babcock would be lost." Barnard wanted to believe in Babcock's innocence, and his letter suggests that Grant's personal secretary was set up by MacDonald and others as insurance for themselves.⁵⁷

In February, Babcock's trial began, and on February 12, attorneys for the prosecution and the defense visited Grant in Washington to take his deposition. Ulysses stood firm for his friend, and on February 28, Babcock was acquitted. John MacDonald and others implicated in the investigation were found guilty.⁵⁸

Grant biographer William McFeely gave the harshest scholarly interpretation of Grant's knowledge of the Whiskey Ring. First, he stated that Babcock was guilty. Second, he stated that Grant must have known and that he was trying to shield him. He suggested as well that close members of the Grant family could have been involved in the tax scandal, and he believed that Babcock could have been blackmailing Grant.⁵⁹ McFeely's assertions go too far.

57. W.D.W. Barnard to USG, July 19, 1875, Ulysses S. Grant Papers, Missouri Historical Society. See also John MacDonald Scrapbooks, 1861-1880, MHS Library.

58. Garland, 434; James L. Post, *Reminiscences by Personal Friends of Gen. U.S. Grant and the History of Grant's Log Cabin* (St. Louis: J.L. Post, 1904), 132; McFeely, 405-416; Cross, 89-91.

59. McFeely, 413-415.

The evidence against Babcock was not significant enough to convict him beyond doubt. He acted suspiciously. He knew John MacDonald well, and he obviously had lied, but none of the evidence against him was conclusive. With regard to members of Grant's family having been involved, Ulysses' past behavior indicated that was irrelevant to Babcock's case. While Grant might not bring family members before proper authorities for illegal activity, he would stop them and let them suffer the consequences. One recalls when he ordered all Jews out of his military department to keep his father from cheating in the cotton trade, and how he let his sister Jennie Corbin lose in the gold market. Ulysses did not like or trust his brother Orvil since he worked with him in Galena. He had no reason to protect him in 1876, especially considering that an 1872 anti-Grant campaign piece had already produced evidence implicating Orvil Grant in the whiskey frauds as early as 1869.⁶⁰ One cannot be blackmailed for what is already public knowledge.

Education and Other Domestic Issues

During Ulysses Grant's administration, the opportunity for the nation's children to receive a rudimentary education began to expand. Grant's efforts and the efforts of the Indian commission and the Freedmen's Bureau contributed significantly to increased educational opportunities for blacks and Native Americans. Southern whites who formerly advocated private education organized their own public school systems in response. Grant also urged Congress to continue the policy established in the old Northwest Territory (the Midwest in today's terminology) of setting aside one out of every thirty-six sections of public land for school funding purposes.⁶¹

Early in Grant's administration, Congress passed a law declaring the eight-hour day for federal workers. This was an early step toward reasonable working conditions for all American workers, but it could have hurt them as easily as it could have helped. On May 19, 1869, Grant issued a proclamation to clarify the law. He stated unequivocally that the eight-hour day would result in no reduction of daily wages because of the reduction in hours of work.⁶² Grant's proclamation set the stage for future labor legislation over the course of the next century.

Another positive legacy of the Grant administration was increased security of the validity of election returns. In 1868, the New York elections were plagued with charges of fraud associated with "Boss" Tweed and the political machine Tammany Hall. The legislation passed by Congress in the early 1870s that provided legal protection for Southern black voters began to protect voters nationwide from bribes, threats, and other forms of

60. Cross, 90-91.

61. Phelps, 324.

62. Phelps, 322-323.

intimidation. The legislation enacted during Grant's administration left many loopholes, but it was a beginning.⁶³

A Reassessment of Leadership

Much has been made of President Ulysses Grant's intellectual ability or lack thereof. He was one of the most unpredictable presidents the nation has ever suffered through. He had a capacity rare to politicians; he admitted when he made mistakes and readily changed course to correct his past errors in judgment. He learned from politicians, his cabinet and aides, and from everyday citizens.⁶⁴ He relied little on any one advisor, however. Henry Adams revealed how little Grant's aides mattered in his total analysis of his job. He wrote, "[The aides] could never follow a mental process in his thought. They were not sure that he did think."⁶⁵ Ulysses Grant did think, and in the area of human rights he was years ahead of his time.

Of Grant's administration and his corrupt advisors and appointees, the fairest that can be said is that they were in harmony with post-bellum American politics and society. From Ragged Dick to the Vanderbilts and Astors and the rising Carnegies and Rockefellers, the nation believed that if one worked hard, one deserved rich rewards. As Richard Hofstadter demonstrated in his classic study *The American Political Tradition*, there were more "self-made men" in this era than in any other in American history. Grant's political appointees were schooled by Tammany and military occupation governments; they believed that they knew best what their constituents needed and did not hesitate to break laws or ethics to get it, and they were expected to line their own pockets in the process. In light of American society at the time, his administration was typical.⁶⁶ Of Grant, he was one of the purer men to serve in office in the era. He was considered a failure because he continued to expect honesty and obedience of his colleagues, as he had expected as army commander. He did not get it.⁶⁷ It was truly the "Gilded Age," when the beauty of city, state, and national government was but a thin layer of gold over rough and shoddy building materials.

63. Phelps, 322.

64. Grant's ability to learn from his mistakes was recognized by a few even during his first term. One editor wrote, "He is a better President now [1871] than when he began.... Those who have observed Grant closely see his character as that of a man who grows. This was seen in the army.... As he rose in station his character broadened into a higher capacity for command and authority." See "Without Grant--What?" *The Standard*, January 27, 1871, U.S. Grant Papers, Library of Congress.

65. Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, 264, quoted in Nevins, 133.

66. Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1948, 1973), 211-231, 214n. Hofstadter cites C. Wright Mills, "The American Business Elite: A Collective Portrait," based on a study of the *Dictionary of American Biography*.

67. Nevins, 132-33.

The First Family of the White House

The Grants became the First Family of the nation in 1869. Throughout the White House years, Ulysses and Julia continued to watch their children grow up. They had graduations, weddings, births, and deaths. The old generation, represented by Julia and Ulysses' fathers, passed. Fred and Nellie, indubitably children at the time of the inauguration, had children of their own by the time the Grants left the White House, and these children filled the places left by their great-grandfathers. Young Jesse Grant was still all-boy; he and his friends enjoyed games of ball with the president. St. Louis and White Haven were intense interests of Ulysses at the beginning of his administration, but by the close they soured for him. It was doubtful if he would ever retire there, as he dreamed. All of these phases of birthing, living, dreaming, and dying were carried out in the microscope that was the White House, the center of Washington and the nation.

Julia liked the house on I Street, and she was not quite ready to leave it for the White House. Therefore, when Ulysses informed her that he had sold her house, she refused to sign her consent to the deed. Finally, he persuaded her to release it for more than twice what the Grants had not paid for it. The same New York friends who purchased the house for the Grants for thirty thousand dollars purchased it again, this time from the Grants for sixty-five thousand dollars. They gave it to William Tecumseh Sherman, who now occupied Grant's old post. (Sherman, incidentally, called the house an "elephant," although he was too polite to leave it.)⁶⁸

Julia eventually learned to live in the White House. In her *Memoirs*, Julia described charming receptions, and newspapers carried accounts of her elegant dinners. She entertained visiting dignitaries, and she and Ulysses invited to their table old friends from St. Louis and around the country. Although commonly quiet in company, Ulysses the president joined her for her afternoon socials with the ladies. As Hamlin Garland said, "He delighted in the presence of brilliant talkers. He enjoyed the company of bright women." Julia, sure of his love for her, was never jealous.⁶⁹

The Grants took their evenings quietly in the library when guests were not present. Their activities reveal how little of Ulysses Grant was known to the public. Often Ulysses read to young Jesse and Julia.⁷⁰ Sometimes Julia played the piano and sang. One night she tried several times without success to remember the accompaniment to an old song. She lifted her hands off the keys and sang it a capella. She caught a glimpse of her husband.

68. W.T. Sherman to E.O.C. Ord, August 1, 1870, William T. Sherman Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

69. John Clogged Proctor, "Some First Ladies of the White House," July 20, 1952, unidentified clipping, SIUC-USGA; Garland, 402, 404; Henry T. Blow to Minerva Blow, February 2, 1871, Blow Family Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

70. Jesse R. Grant, *In the Days*, 57-58.

"His eyes were fixed upon me," Julia remembered. He said, "That was very pretty," She asked him, "Were you listening?" He replied, "Yes. I was listening. It was very sweet."⁷¹ President Grant was portrayed generally as being entirely unable to appreciate the aesthetic, including literature, art, and music. Hamlin Garland reported that he was tone-deaf, completely disinterested in art, and unable to sit and read novels. How differently do Jesse and Julia's remembrances present him!⁷²

Sometime after the Grants moved into the White House, shocked journalists reported that the president had shaved off the beard from his chin but left peculiar sideburns. Politely, they wrote that he looked excellent.⁷³ In her old age, Julia offered an explanation of what had possessed him to do it. She had asked him for a picture, specifically a "clean, clear profile" for a miniature. Ulysses, always obliging his bride, shaved off his chin whiskers to give her just what she asked for, a "clean, clear profile." One almost detects a twinkle in Ulysses' eye in the picture.⁷⁴

Julia and Ulysses kept up their lifelong romance in the White House. They exchanged little love notes when Ulysses was shut up in meetings. For example, one day Julia sent Ulysses the note: "Dear Ulys, How many years ago to day is [it] that we were engaged: Just such a day as this too was it not? Julia." The president wrote back, "Thirty-one years ago. I was so frightened however that I do not remember whether it was warm or snowing. Ulys." Sweetly, the first couple of the country had their private moment.⁷⁵

Jesse Grant quickly accustomed himself to the White House. As before he could easily get out of attending school by appealing to his father.⁷⁶ When Ulysses happened on his son and his friends playing baseball, the president often as not would stop and join the game a while himself.⁷⁷ He acted the same way with children who visited inside the White House. One mother was afraid her crying baby would disturb the president. Grant played with the baby instead and told him, "Now tell them that you will do as you please and that the whole place belongs to you."⁷⁸ For Jesse the president did the same. After a series of Jesse's dogs died under mysterious circumstances, the president got him a "magnificent Newfoundland" and called the White House steward. "Jesse has a new dog," said the

71. "Mrs. U.S. Grant Seriously Ill," December 14, 1902, unidentified clipping, SIUC-USGA.

72. Garland, 399-400.

73. "Personalities," unidentified clipping, SIUC-USGA.

74. Abbey G. Baker, "Mrs. Grant's Reminiscences," April 1903, unidentified clipping, SIUC-USGA.

75. Garland, 404.

76. Jesse R. Grant, *In the Days*, 58.

77. Garland, 402.

78. Franklin Spencer Edmonds, *Ulysses S. Grant* (Philadelphia: G.W. Jacobs and Co., 1915), 339.

president. "You may have noticed that his former pets have been peculiarly unfortunate. When this dog dies every employee in the White House will at once be discharged." The dog lived unmolested at the White House for many happy years.⁷⁹

The president was equally solicitous when his young son came to him with a dilemma. He and his cousin Baine Dent, who lived with them, saved their money and secretly sent away for a stamp collection from Boston. They were afraid it would never come. "A matter of this importance requires consideration. Suppose you come to the Cabinet meeting tomorrow, and we will take the matter up there," said Grant. At the meeting, Jesse and Baine explained their problem, and Hamilton Fish and William Belknap conducted a mock debate about who would write to the company in Boston. The other cabinet members voted them down, however, and Kelly, a policeman and friend of Jesse, wrote the letter. "In due time," Jesse wrote, "the stamps arrived. As I remember, that... assortment exceeded our expectations."⁸⁰

Jesse and Baine next embarked on a letter-writing campaign to obtain stamps from foreign diplomats. They were extremely pleased at the stamps that poured in, but equally disappointed when Julia insisted that they write thank-you letters for each set received. That was the end of their collecting.⁸¹

While Julia obviously was the disciplinarian in the White House, Ulysses occasionally reached his limit with his children. One day, an alligator arrived at Long Branch, a "gift" to Jesse with a fourteen-dollar express charge to be paid. Ulysses was unhappy, and although he paid the bill, the alligator did not become a pampered family pet.⁸²

Eighteen seventy-three was a particularly trying year for Julia and Ulysses personally. In June, Ulysses' father died in Covington, Kentucky. He was eighty years old, and he had been slipping for several years. Always a bit unusual, "he grew more eccentric as he grew older," Hamlin Garland noted. Ulysses took a special train when he learned that his father was breathing his last, but he did not arrive to see him alive. Grant was in Goshen, New York, visiting John Rawlin's orphaned daughters.⁸³ One wonders if the son was not a little relieved. The story of Jesse's attempt to take over the cotton trade in the Civil War made

79. Jesse R. Grant, *In the Days*, 65.

80. Jesse R. Grant, *In the Days*, 68-71.

81. Jesse R. Grant, *In the Days*, 71.

82. *Middletown Daily Evening News*, quoted in Elizabeth Sharts, "President Grant Was a Horseman," *Middletown Times Herald*, June 29, 1957, 11.

83. Elizabeth Sharts, "A President Who Was a Horseman," *The Historic Record*, June 1-6, 1957, 1; Elizabeth Sharts, "President Grant Was a Horseman," *Middletown Times Herald*, June 29, 1957, 11, SIUC-USGA.

the newspapers in the previous year. His postmaster position was an embarrassment. He could not get along with Fred Dent. When the widow Hannah Grant left Covington, she went to live with her daughter Jennie in New Jersey.⁸⁴

In October, a week after Grant visited with him, Charles Ford died unexpectedly of pneumonia. Ford was one of Grant's oldest and truest friends, and Grant was overcome by his death. He tried to write their mutual friend, John Fenton Long, a few days later about business, but the most he could say was, "Our old friend Ford is gone!" Grant told Long about his last meeting with Ford and praised his friend. He shared his grief with Long, whom he knew would understand, and then he closed his letter, the business left unmentioned.⁸⁵

In December, death struck again. This time it was Julia's father. The remains of Mr. Dent traveled back to St. Louis, where he was laid out at John Dent's house until he could be buried at Bellefontaine Cemetery. Ellen Wrenshall Dent and two of Julia's nieces were moved from their resting places at White Haven to be with him in the family plot. In March 1874, Julia's brother Lewis died. His body, too, was sent to St. Louis, this time accompanied by Alexander Sharp and Fred Grant. They saw to it for him to be buried at Bellefontaine, too. Now Baine Dent, Lewis' son, was more than ever like young Jesse's brother.⁸⁶

The Grants did not have long to mourn, for they had a wedding for which to make preparations. Somehow, Nellie Grant, who stood so sweetly by her father just a few years before, was ready to be married. On May 21, 1874, eighteen-year-old Nellie married Algernon Edward Sartoris, an Englishman she met while she was traveling in Europe. Her parents sent her there to get her away from the social scene in Washington, with which she was becoming much too familiar. The Grants cried the day that they gave away Nellie, and perhaps they had a foreboding of the unhappy marriage that was to follow for her. While she and her husband had three children who survived to adulthood, her marriage lasted only to 1890. Nellie then returned to the United States to live with her mother.⁸⁷

84. USG III to F.R. Ritzman, December 8, 1958, SIUC-USGA; Garland, 397, 424; Clippings, *World*, January 30, 1872, *Tribune*, January 31, 1872, SIUC-USGA; USG to Jennie Corbin, January 30, 1873, George D. Smith Catalogue, Ulysses S. Grant Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

85. USG to John Fenton Long, October 25, 1873, Ulysses S. Grant Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

86. "Judge Lewis Dent," Charles Van Ravenswaay File, Missouri Historical Society; "Frederick Dent," Charles Van Ravenswaay File, Missouri Historical Society; JDG, *Memoirs*, 181-182.

87. McFeely, 400-404; JDG, *Memoirs*, 181.

Also in 1874, Fred Grant married, and in October he and his bride moved into the White House. In 1876, the first Grant grandchild to survive was born, named Julia Dent Grant after her precious grandmother.⁸⁸

From Washington to St. Louis and the World

During the White House years the Grants visited St. Louis infrequently, but Ulysses thought of the rambling porches, wide fields, and thick forests of White Haven. He decided that his Missouri property would be the perfect place to retire, and he would do so in style, by raising championship horses. He could make a good living doing something he loved. But in the late 1860s, Grant could not have foreseen the Panic of 1873 and the consequent agricultural depression, the "Whiskey Ring" scandal, or the possibility of a trip around the world followed by a third term. In the 1860s when he purchased White Haven, he simply imagined living out his days there with Julia, their children, and grandchildren in idyllic comfort.

On November 7, 1866, Ulysses wrote his father about hiring William Elrod to be caretaker at White Haven. Elrod was the husband of Sarah Ellen Simpson, who was Samuel Simpson's daughter. Samuel Simpson was Ulysses' favorite uncle. Grant wrote his father about his plans for the Gravois farm. "It is my intention to stock it in a small way and keep about three men on it to put the place in meadow and to cultivate it but very little beyond the orchards. There is now about twenty acres or more young orchard and with a few acres more set out in strawberries and other small fruit the principle work will be marketing hay and fruit and hauling manure to replace what is taken off the ground."⁸⁹ One of the orchards was near Wish-ton-wish, and the other one was near White Haven.⁹⁰

William Elrod moved to St. Louis in the spring of 1867. Grant intended him to live at White Haven, but a tenant of the Dent family on a lease had control of the house until 1868. In the meantime, Elrod lived at Hardscrabble with his wife and daughters, Mary, Clara, and Sadie. By the following year he occupied White Haven. Grant's first task for Elrod was to clear the tenants off his land and that of Fred and Wrenshall Dent. He wanted any old cabins torn down, although later correspondence indicates that Elrod did not remove all of them. Grant directed Elrod how to plant each field, which to leave fallow, and which to plant in grapes for wine. He sent prize cattle and horses to the farm to board and be

88. JDG, *Memoirs*, 181. Remarkably, the second Julia Dent Grant became a Russian Countess, who fled St. Petersburg for the United States during the 1917 Russian Revolution. She told her story in Princess Julia Cantacuzene, *My Life Here and There* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923).

89. USG to Jesse Root Grant, Sr., November 7, 1866, *Papers*, XVI, 375.

90. USG to William Elrod, September 4, 1867; USG to Elrod, August 24, 1870, in LeRoy Fischer, "Grant's Letters to His Missouri Farm Tenants," *Agricultural History*, 21 (1947), 26-42; 29, 33. Fischer printed a series of letters from Grant to his tenants, and their contents are summarized here.

bred. Sometime around 1870, Elrod built a cow barn and horse barn under Grant's direction.

In 1871, Elrod, Ford, and Grant showed horses and cattle and placed at the St. Louis Fair. Three of Grant's horses won awards, but he expected them to do better.⁹¹ In May 1872, the Missouri Pacific Railroad put in a branch from Carondelet to Kirkwood, both in St. Louis County. The line ran directly through Grant's property, at his wish. Grant desired Elrod to make some changes on the farm to accommodate the railroad, but apparently he did not comply. In February 1873, the Grant's showplace, Wish-ton-wish, burned. The stone house was occupied by tenants who lived only on the first floor. The Grant furniture was stored on the second floor.

In the spring or summer of 1873, Grant informed Elrod that he would not need him after the fall. It is likely that Elrod's handling of the railroad construction and the loss of Wish-ton-wish were part of the cause for Grant not renewing his contract. He was replaced by Nat Carlin, who was employed previously by Charles Ford at his express company. After some delay, Elrod moved out of White Haven and Carlin moved in. Grant demonstrated that he considered the Gravois farm a business; he would not allow Elrod to remain in one of the spare houses on the place and recommended that he rent a neighbor's farm.⁹²

Over the next two years Carlin managed the farm, but his expenses seemed excessive to Grant. In 1874, Grant sent him more than twelve thousand dollars to improve the farm. The following year, Grant's friend and agent John Fenton Long and manager Carlin auctioned off Grant's stock and equipment on November 19, 1875. Between then and 1879 or 1880, Grant leased the farm to the Henry Leis family of Pennsylvania, and Grant's farming experiment in Missouri ended.⁹³

Certainly descending farm produce values contributed to Grant's decision to abandon the Gravois farm to tenants. He had difficulty finding a caretaker who would make the farm break even, much less make him money. St. Louis residents believed the "Whiskey Ring" scandal, which tainted most of his St. Louis associates by the time the investigations ended, had as much to do with his decision as economics. Guilty or innocent, his friends were no longer as close to him as they had been. In addition, St. Louis was the prime originator of some of the worst stories about Grant that surfaced during his campaigns. Ugly fabrications about him staggering through the streets penniless emerged from pretended acquaintances.

91. Fischer, 35n.

92. Fischer, 38n.

93. USG to John Fenton Long, December 25, 1879, Ulysses S. Grant Papers, Missouri Historical Society; Leis Family Notes, Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site.

The city harbored former Confederates, enemies of the Dents, and enemies from the Whiskey Ring. Grant would not retire there.⁹⁴

March 1877 came sooner than Julia and Ulysses believed it would. Ulysses withdrew his name from nomination the previous year, much to Julia's dismay. Except for White Haven, she never lived anywhere else as long as she had in the White House. On Saturday, March 3, Julia held her last party as first lady, for two thousand people. Rutherford B. Hayes was sworn in at a private ceremony the next day, and following the public ceremony on Monday, he and his wife Lucy arrived at the White House. In the tradition of Washington, Julia arranged for a luncheon for the new president and first lady. With her usual charm but, much outside Washington tradition, Julia ordered the house to be cleaned from top to bottom until it sparkled and shone. She planned the evening meal as well for the Hayeses, and then she left, wistfully but gracefully, saying, "Mrs. Hayes, I hope you will be as happy here as I have been for the past eight years."⁹⁵

A few weeks later on a cross-country train, Ulysses found her crying. "I feel like a waif," she confessed. "You must not forget that I too am a waif. So you are not alone," he comforted both of them.⁹⁶ A new era in the life of the Grants was about to begin.

94. Walter B. Stevens, *Grant in St. Louis* (St. Louis: Franklin Club, 1916), xi-xii; Garland, 382-383; Lynn Zipfel Venhaus, "Grant First Visited Home in 1844; Grant's Former Home an Important Part of St. Louis's Past," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, May 26, 1985. One recent newspaper article stated that early allegations during 1874 kept Grant from attending the Eads bridge opening in July. Grant had two weddings that year, though, and the fair to attend in St. Louis a few months later, so he had ample other reasons to miss the opening. Walter E. Orthwein, "Eads Opened to Vehicles 100 Years Ago Today," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, June 4, 1974.

95. McFeely, 448-449; JDG, *Memoirs*, 195-196.

96. JDG, *Memoirs*, 197.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

"The Light of His Glorious Fame":

The Last Days of Mr. Grant

"If I live long enough I will become a sort of specialist in the use of certain medicines.... It seems that one mans destiny in this world is quite as much a mystery as it is likely to be in the next. I never thought of acquiring rank in the profession I was educated for; yet it came with two grades higher prefixed to the rank of General officer for me. I certainly never had either ambition or taste for a political life; yet I was twice president of the United States. If any one had suggested the idea of my becoming an author, as they frequently did I was not sure whether they were making sport of me or not. I have now written a book which is in the hands of the manufacturers. I ask that you keep these notes very private lest I become authority with treatment of diseases. I have already to many trades to be proficient in any." Ulysses S. Grant to his doctor, July 8, 1885, 4:00 p.m.

What is a president when his term of office ends? How does one who has risen so high finish life? For Ulysses and Julia Grant, the solution was a round-the-world tour, followed by life in New York City among their high-society friends, and finally the dramatic scene of Ulysses writing his memoirs while the nation engaged in a death watch.

The World Tour

On May 17, 1877, Ulysses, Julia, and Jesse Grant set sail for Great Britain, accompanied by journalist John Russell Young, whose newspaper the *New York Herald* was paying part of the bill in exchange for an exclusive day-by-day travelogue of Grant's journey. Jesse almost missed the boat, and he irritated his father by not visiting his grandmother Grant before they departed. "You young worthless!" Ulysses wrote him with an uncharacteristically critical tone.¹ The Grants would be accompanied by all of their children at various points, and along the way other friends such as Adolph Borie and Joseph Seligman would meet them and travel with them a while. The Grants did not return to the United States until September 20, 1879.

During their tour, the Grants visited England, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Scotland, France, Italy, Greece, Egypt, Turkey, Jerusalem and the Holy Land, Holland, Norway,

1. USG to Jesse Root Grant, Jr., [May] 1877, Ulysses S. Grant Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

Sweden, Russia, Austria, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, India, Siam, China, and Japan.² They visited several European countries more than once, and along the way the Grants were treated like royalty almost everywhere that they went. As Hamlin Garland wrote:

[Grant] was undoubtably the greatest traveler that ever lived; that is to say, no other man was ever received by both peoples and sovreigns, by scholars and merchants, by tycoons, and sultans, and school-children and work-people and statesmen, as was General Grant. With him the Pope dispensed with etiquette, and welcomed him as a man of no creed, who did not kneel; with him the King of Siam formed a personal friendship; while rulers of Russia, Germany, and Japan talked politics with him. The greatest potentates on earth laid aside their traditions and showed him courtesy. Not only the government, but the plainest people, did him honor. The multitudes thronging around him in Birmingham and Frankfort and Jedda dimly perceived that they were honoring the democratic principle in honoring citizen Grant.³

What Garland so eloquently recorded was true; Ulysses and Julia Grant raised democracy and the United States in the eyes of the world. In their unassuming manner, this couple from the Midwestern United States took the world by storm and became two of the most popular people of the nineteenth century. Because details of their travels are well-documented in three travelogues, only highlights of their journey will be presented here.⁴

Mr. and Mrs. Grant set out on their great adventure as two private American citizens. George Childs was surprised to learn that Grant was taking neither uniform nor sword with him. Childs and others urged Grant to get them just in case he would need them.

2. The travels of the Grants are summarized in detail in John Russell Young, *Around the World with General Grant: A Narrative of the Visit of General U.S. Grant, Ex-President of the United States, to Various Countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa in 1877, 1878, 1879, to Which Are Added Certain Conversations with General Grant on Questions Connected with American Politics and History*, Vols. I and II (New York: American News Company, 1879); L.T. Remlap [Palmer], ed. *General Grant's Tour Around the World, Embracing His Speeches, Receptions, and Description of His Travels with a Biographical Sketch of His Life* (Chicago: J. Fairbanks and Co., 1879); and Joel Tyler Headley, *The Life and Travels of General Grant* (Philadelphia: Hubbard Brothers, 1879).

3. Hamlin Garland, *Ulysses S. Grant: His Life and Character* (New York: Doubleday and McClure Co., 1898), 467-468.

4. See note 2 for full references to Young, Remlap, and Headley (1879).

Eschewing pomp, Grant grudgingly ordered a new dress uniform and requested one of his swords be sent from Washington.⁵

Ulysses Grant was the first American dignitary to be recognized almost universally with respect by leaders worldwide. Early in his tour, he encountered difficulties with the leader of the one country that still looked on the United States as a former colony: Queen Victoria of Great Britain. Queen Victoria frequently "entertained" visitors at her country estate Windsor, but her method of entertaining was to invite visitors, duck into her private halls at the last minute, and send her steward with the news that the Queen could not receive that evening, but that the entertainment would go on as planned. The papers the next day carried news of the event as if the Queen attended, and the visitors retained the honor of having been invited to Windsor. If they kept quiet, who was to know that they did not have dinner with Her Majesty?

When the Grants had been in London for some time, they were surprised to receive an invitation to Windsor. They arrived, and Jesse Grant went to his guest room. In a little while, Master of the Household Sir John Cowell appeared to tell Jesse that the queen was not feeling well and that she could not tolerate a large crowd at dinner. Only Ulysses and Julia of their party were invited to eat with her, but Jesse and General Grant's assistant, Adam Badeau, would eat with the household, all of whom were nobility. Not knowing Queen Victoria's game and insulted to have left London to have dinner with "the help," Jesse was angry. He informed Cowell that he would return to London immediately. Jesse was then twenty-one years old, but he was acting more like the little boy who was angry during the Civil War when he did not get to eat with the adults at the dinner honoring his father. Badeau tried to mediate. Negotiations included the fact that Jesse entertained Prince Arthur in Washington. American minister Edwards Pierrepont became involved. Even Ulysses tried to intervene with his defiant son. After a few rounds between Sir John and the queen, followed by a series of apologies from all, Jesse was admitted to dinner. The affair could have turned out badly for the Grants, but for the fact that Queen Victoria realized it was more trouble to let Jesse leave than it was to allow him to come to dinner. In the end, no one but the parties immediately involved learned of the affair for years, and all reputations were preserved outwardly. Helen Todd commented succinctly, "[Jesse] overcame Victoria of England as he had all his life overcome his mother and father."⁶ The queen, however, was not amused.

5. G.W. Childs, *Recollections of General Grant, with an Account of the Presentation of the Portraits of Generals Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan at the United States Military Academy, West Point* (Philadelphia: Collins, 1890), 48.

6. Jesse Root Grant, *In the Days of My Father, General Grant*, in collaboration with Henry Francis Granger (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1925), 221-230; JDG, *Memoirs*, 206-208; Helen Todd, *A Man Named Grant* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin; Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1940), 532.

In Berlin, Ulysses Grant handled Prince Otto Von Bismarck of Germany more skillfully than his son had handled Queen Victoria. Bismarck called on Grant twice when Grant was out of his hotel room, so Grant asked him to appoint an hour for them to meet. Bismarck did so, and a few minutes before the hour Grant "sauntered" into the courtyard of the palace. "The sentinel had been told of his expected arrival, and seeing a group of strangers, naturally inferred that he must be among them and presented arms.... Grant carelessly threw away the stump of his cigar as he answered the salute and advanced to the door," J.T. Headley reported, much to the dismay of the guard, who expected Grant to look and act like royalty.⁷ Bismarck was more at ease with him, and the two men talked casually at length of Philip Sheridan, Abraham Lincoln, assassinations, and capital punishment.⁸ William McFeely compared Grant's entrance into Bismarck's palace with Thomas Jefferson's decision to walk to his inauguration; "It was American," McFeely said.⁹

Grant's audience with Pope Leo XIII was received in the United States with mixed reviews. To some Protestants, the meeting was unAmerican. John Russell Young was careful to present the interview as secular: "Of course this reception, highly flattering as it was to the distinguished head of our party, was not to be considered as partaking of anything of a religious character," he explained.¹⁰ In contrast, Grant's entrance into Jerusalem sounded remarkably like the entrance of Jesus of Nazareth almost two thousand years before him:

They rode about a mile through a suburb, the highway lined with people. "The General passes on, with bared head, for on both sides the assembled multitude do him honor. They see through the mist a mass of domes and towers of Jerusalem. There are ranks of soldiers drawn in line, the soldiers presenting arms, the band playing, the colors falling. They passed through a narrow gate... and under the walls of the Tower of David, and the flag that floats from the pole on the consulate tells them that their journey is at an end and that they are within the walls of Jerusalem."¹¹

According to the travelogues, Grant was distressed that he was disturbed with ceremony in the Holy City.

7. Headley (1879), 220-221.

8. Headley (1879), 222-226.

9. William S. McFeely, *Grant: A Biography* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981), 453.

10. Young, I, 362.

11. Inserted quotations marks are in the original. Headley (1879), 167.

In Turkey, the Grants were received in Istanbul with full ceremony and a gift from the Sultan: two Arabian horses. One was called *Djeytan*, meaning "Panther," and the other was called *Missirli*, or the "One from Cairo." The Grants received many precious gifts from rulers whom they met, but these horses were something unusual. Ulysses arranged for them to travel back to the United States by steamer.¹²

The Grants spent more than a month each in China and Japan. In China, Prince Kung the regent asked Grant for his advice on a dispute between the two Asian countries over the Loochoo Islands. For centuries the Chinese extracted tribute from the islands, but recently Japan began threatening them, he informed Grant. He asked Grant to take up the subject with Japanese officials and to negotiate a settlement. After some discussion of the subject, Grant told Prince Kung, "Any course short of national humiliation or national destruction is better than war. War in itself is a great calamity, that it should only be invoked when there is no way of saving a nation from a greater [calamity]." Grant promised to study the subject from both sides and discuss it with officials in Japan if he could. Grant also mentioned the *Alabama* claims and the successful negotiations between Great Britain and the United States during his administration. Kung knew of the arbitration and believed it set a precedent for all countries.¹³

In Japan, the emperor greeted Ulysses Grant as he had no man before: He shook hands with him. Grant took up the subject of Loochoo in an interview with the emperor. Grant refused to give an opinion on the subject, but he counseled the Japanese emperor against war and advocated that officials from both governments meet face to face to negotiate control of the islands.¹⁴ Having experienced war so intensely himself, Grant could not bear the thought of two countries entering a violent conflict that could be avoided. In Nagasaki Mr. and Mrs. Grant planted trees as memorials of their sojourn there. At the request of their hosts, Ulysses wrote an inscription for a plaque:

12. In the United States, the horses were called "Leopard" and "Linden Tree." Oddly enough, the horse which the sultan called *Missirli* may provide the origins for the story behind a German linden tree at White Haven. Until recently two substantial linden trees flanked the vista of the entrance to the main house. In the last fifty years, a legend was told that the linden trees were gifts from Bismarck from the Grants's world tour. (See, e.g. M. Barrett, "The House With A Proud Pedigree," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, September 30, 1956). In 1986, though, one of the trees blew down in a storm, and, under the direction of the St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation, a dendrochronology was done on the tree. It dated the tree at about eighty years old, not old enough for the Grant tour. The discovery of the horse named Linden Tree adds a twist to the story. Perhaps Grant did receive a linden tree on his round-the-world tour: the horse named Linden Tree!

Headley, (1879) 181-182; Clipping, *Evening Star*, May 12, 1879, SIUC-USGA; Postcard depicting "Leopard and Linden Tree," to USG III from Bay Point Park, Sarasota Florida, December 29, 1945, SIUC-USGA.

13. Headley (1879), 425-435.

14. Young, II, 542; Headley (1879), 514-517.

At the request of Governor Utsumi Togatsu, Mrs. Grant and I have each planted a tree in the Nagasaki Park. I hope that both trees may prosper, grow large, live long, and in their growth, prosperity, and long life be emblematic of the future of Japan.¹⁵

Ulysses and Julia were treated to the best that the courts of Europe and Asia could offer them, but they also enjoyed the time they were able to spend with the people of the countries they visited. In Manchester, England, Grant delivered his first public speech of any length. Americans were shocked. "The silent man" proved himself an orator before ten thousand people.¹⁶ In France, Ulysses enjoyed a respite from ceremony by slipping off to the home of Grenville Dodge, who served under him during the Civil War.

We were in the habit of going to the *Champs Elysees* and sit there watching the crowds. I had with me my youngest daughter, and General Grant would take her and go into the Punch and Judy shows and stay an hour or more.... He was more interested in the people, in what they did, and in the manufacturers, etc., of the country than anything else.... His visits to the *Champs Elysees* seemed to be of great relief to him, and... changed him from a great General and President to a simple boy.¹⁷

Dodge noticed that Grant despised the military reviews to which he was constantly subjected. Whether he was in France or in India, Grant delighted in leaving aside the formal ceremony to walk through a market or bazaar and see the real people of each country.

After more than two years abroad, on September 2, 1879, Ulysses, Julia, and the rest of their entourage boarded a steamer for the United States. Eighteen days later, they arrived in San Francisco at sundown. There the former president and first lady found such a greeting as they had received throughout the world, but this one was special. It was their welcome home from the people who knew how they brought the United States to the attention of the world. The Grants reached their hotel for dinner at eleven o'clock.¹⁸ "So

15. Just as the linden trees at White Haven have been reported to be gifts from the world tour, a ginkgo tree on the property by legend was a gift from the emperor of Japan. No contemporary source is available to prove or disprove the legend, although the tree does not appear to be large enough for its species to be more than one hundred years old. Assessment by Landscape Architect Technician Linda Bullard, Summer 1991. Young, II, 483.

16. Headley (1879), 6-7.

17. Grenville M. Dodge, *Personal Recollections of Presidents Abraham Lincoln, General Ulysses S. Grant and General William T. Sherman* (Council Bluffs, Iowa: Monarch Printing Co., 1914), 107-108.

18. Young, II, 628.

came to an end an experience one can never hope to see again," John Russell Young wrote.¹⁹

The Return: To the West Coast and To Choose a Home

In 1854, when Ulysses Grant left the California coast he left a downtrodden man, depressed and anxious from his long separation from his family. When he returned in 1879, he returned with his wife Julia to his family, the American people. Across California, Ulysses and Julia explored new places, the astounding Yosemite, and the army posts where Grant lived from 1852 to 1854. They made new friends and met old ones again.

In San Francisco, Ulysses Grant had the opportunity to return the hospitality the Chinese had shown to him in China with a courtesy in the United States. A delegation of Chinese Americans desired to honor Grant, but the local army commander Maj. Gen. Irvin McDowell thought that Grant should not receive them because they were looked down on in California. Grant graciously accepted their offer for a reception, which was held at McDowell's residence. They presented Grant with a scroll and Julia with an ivory box, thanking her for her influence in opening Chinese society.²⁰

In Sacramento, the Grants attended a reception in their honor. A black woman entered and was announced as Mrs. Jones. She immediately stepped toward Julia and said, "Miss Julie, I do not believe you know me. I am Henrietta, or Henny, as you used to call me at home." Julia clasped both of her hands in joy. Henny traveled to California thirty years before with Julia's brother Wrenshall as a nursemaid for his children. Mrs. Grant invited Mrs. Jones to visit her in her hotel the next day, and she was disappointed when she did not come. Like Ulysses, Julia enjoyed making old acquaintances again, and Henny's familiar face from White Haven was so lovely after Julia's two years abroad.²¹

The Grants also traveled to the area of Fort Vancouver. Ulysses showed Julia his house, the infamous potato field that flooded, and the river that washed away his cordwood. To the people of nearby Salem, Oregon, he said, "It is a pleasure to be back again near the place where I enjoyed so much twenty years ago."²²

Gradually, the triumphant Grants worked their way east. They stopped at the gold and silver mines of Virginia City, Nevada. They rested briefly in Ogden, Utah, and they

19. Young, II, 631.

20. Young, II, 629-630.

21. JDG, *Memoirs*, 311.

22. Charles G. Ellington, *The Trial of U.S. Grant: The Pacific Coast Years, 1852-1854* (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1987), 218; Headley (1879), 601.

paused again in Omaha, Nebraska. From there they traveled to Galena, to a reunion of the Army of the Tennessee, and finally to Philadelphia in December.

The Grants had lived in temperate climates for several years, and the thought of winter in any Northern city was not appealing to them. In January 1877, Ulysses wrote John Fenton Long that he was not sure where he would live as a private citizen. "You see I am in that happy condition but few people reach--of being able to select the home of my choice."²³ In April 1879, he was less pleased with his choices. He confided to Elihu Washburne from Asia, "I am both homesick and dread going home. I have no home, but I must establish one after I get back. I do not know where."²⁴

In January 1880, the Grants forgot their homeless state and discovered the delights of St. Augustine, Florida. Now to Washburne, Grant said, "I am very much pleased with Florida. The winter climate is perfection, and I am told by Northern men settled here that the summers are not near so hot here as in the North, though of longer continuance. This State has a great future before it." Ulysses pictured Florida growing all of the sugar and "semi-tropical fruits" the United States could need, and he was especially pleased about the fruit. After having been served the most sumptuous feasts that could be prepared abroad, he would still prefer to nibble on the juicy sweet delicacies that Florida nurtured. The Grants planned to leave Florida in March for a Caribbean cruise and trek through Mexico.²⁵

Mexico was better than Ulysses remembered. He enjoyed sharing with Julia the sights of his days before they married. He became interested in the idea of a railroad from Mexico to the United States, once again with the idea of transporting tropical produce. Still seeking warmth, he and Julia made plans to visit Memphis, Tennessee, and Hot Springs, Arkansas, to further delay their return to Galena.²⁶

In 1865, Grant pledged that Galena, Illinois, would be his political base until he gave further notice. His dutiful return there in the spring of 1880 was to await the results of the Republican convention. Grant was being considered for a third term as president, and even he probably was not sure if it was what he wanted. Both his enemies and his friends believed that his world tour was the greatest campaign any presidential candidate could ever conduct. He had been honored and feted, and the United States delighted in tales of his adventures. Friends were afraid now that he had returned too soon and that the people's enthusiasm was waning.²⁷

23. USG to John Fenton Long, January 28, 1877, Long Family Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

24. USG to Elihu Washburne, April 4, 1879, in U.S. Grant, *General Grant's Letters to a Friend* (New York and Boston: T.Y. Crowell and Co., 1897) [hereafter Grant, *Letters to a Friend*], 90-91.

25. USG to Elihu Washburne, January 18, 1880, in Grant, *Letters to a Friend*, 97-98.

26. USG to Elihu Washburne, March 25, 1880, in Grant, *Letters to a Friend*, 106-107.

27. Garland, 464; McFeely, 478.

Entertaining books and pamphlets appeared in opposition to a *déjà vu* of President Grant, and they presented the world tour as part of Grant's plan to take over the United States and turn it into his own personal empire. With predictions befitting Nostradamus, "an American Citizen" from St. Louis cautioned voters, "Read and be warned in time!" According to the author, Grant had held private interviews with the rulers of England, Germany, Austria, and Russia in order to obtain their support. Grant would win the election by trickery if necessary, and he would expand the army and navy with "tramps and vagabonds" who could not think for themselves. "Then, when the auspicious moment has arrived, General Grant will proclaim himself Emperor of North America," the false prophet wrote ominously.²⁸ In 1880, a delightful satire of official news sources appeared called "The Coming Crown." Published in Philadelphia, the pamphlet pretended to report events from 1882, when Ulysses and Julia raised themselves to Emperor and Empress, they made all of their friends lesser royalty, and they renamed all of the nation's ships *Dictator* and *Ulysses*.²⁹

The real Ulysses Grant had ambivalent feelings about a third term. He dreaded the thought of being president again, but he would have liked to have known that he could be re-elected. He did not deny that he was a candidate, and he claimed, "I shall not gratify my enemies by declining what has not been offered."³⁰ The nominating session at the convention was one of the longest in the history of the United States, and the Grant family sat near a telegraph machine in Galena to hear news of the proceedings. When the convention selected James A. Garfield, Grant replied, "Garfield is a good man."³¹ In the fall, Grant campaigned for him. In the winter, the Grants moved to the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York City.

The following spring Ulysses Grant embarked on a career as president of the new Mexican Southern Railroad. As part of his job, he traveled to Mexico to obtain government concessions. He returned to the States just in time for the summer season at Long Branch, which he enjoyed with his family. In the fall, the Grants moved to a house in New York City at 3 East 66th Street, which was purchased for them by subscriptions raised among friends and political allies. Grant invested one hundred thousand dollars, his liquid assets, in a private banking firm started by his son Buck and Ferdinand Ward, who was considered one of the young wizards of Wall Street. Ward immediately sent the Grants high returns on their investments, and they believed that the firm flourished. A newspaper correspondent guessed they were worth a million dollars.³²

28. An American Citizen, *The Great American Empire; or, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, Emperor of North America* (St. Louis: W.S. Bryan, 1879), 3-4.

29. "The Coming Crown" (Philadelphia: Ferguson Bros. and Co., 1880).

30. USG to Elihu Washburne, February 2, 1880, in Grant, *Letters to a Friend*, 102.

31. Horace Green, *General Grant's Last Stand* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 266.

32. "New York Letter," *Watkins Democrat*, November 9, 1881, partially identified clipping, SIUC-USGA.

Julia and Ulysses delighted in their children when they were growing up, and now they had grandchildren to spoil. Grandmama Julia especially loved treating her namesake Julia, the daughter of Fred and Ida. For her first grandchild, Grandmama Grant kept a little box in her room where she left candy and fruit surprises. She let young Julia play dress-up with her pretty things. "Grandmama was gay, knew poetry and stories, and was a human, sunny friend, and a sympathizer to little people..." Fred's Julia remembered.³³

Little Julia's Grandfather Grant made her feel important and like she was grown up. "I remember his smile as rather out of the ordinary, more in the eyes than in the mouth... Only the eyes glowed or grew deep with intensity." Sometimes Ulysses was silly with his granddaughter, and sometimes they took quiet walks together.³⁴ Little Julia understood the family dynamics even though she was not yet old enough to attend school. One day, Grandfather Ulysses was preparing for a walk, when little Julia spied him. She asked him if he had gotten Grandmama's permission. He went to ask her and said to his wife, "Mrs. G., things have come to a pretty pass; even our little granddaughter seems to have learned who really is the boss..."³⁵ For the Grant family, life floated along more calmly and quietly than ever before.

The Grant and Ward Failure

On Sunday, May 4, 1884, the peacefulness ended. That day Ferdinand Ward arrived at the Grant house on East 66th Street to ask for a favor. One of the banks with which Grant and Ward did business was temporarily short on deposits and might collapse when it opened the next day if he did not cover it. He was arranging for a \$150,000 loan to cover some of the assets. Could General Grant do the same?

It all seemed reasonable. For three years Ward made money for the Grants, and they had no reason to doubt his veracity now. Ulysses agreed and went to his friend William Vanderbilt for a loan. Vanderbilt made out a check to the firm of Grant and Ward for the full amount, and Ulysses took it back to Ward, who was pleased he could get the money.³⁶

On May 6, the Grants were shocked to learn that the bank they thought they were rescuing failed anyway. Ulysses rushed to the office. Buck was there, but Ward was gone. So were all of their deposits and the money from Vanderbilt. Ward took the money and left

33. Princess Julia Cantacuzene, Countess Speranksy, nee Grant, *My Life Here and There* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923), 11-12.

34. Cantacuzene, 12, 28-29.

35. Cantacuzene, 36.

36. Garland, 489-490.

the country. The Grants were ruined, and so were their friends and family members who had invested with the company on their good report.

Because Vanderbilt's loan was given as a personal favor, Ulysses rushed to cover it by mortgaging his Missouri property and his Civil War trophies and gifts from his world tour to Vanderbilt. That way Vanderbilt could be paid back before business creditors, who Grant believed could more easily take the losses. To mortgage White Haven was not difficult for Grant at that point. For the past several years he tried unsuccessfully to sell the place for a reasonable price. If he had to surrender it to Vanderbilt, he would do that.³⁷

For ready cash, the Grants relied on their income from Wabash Railroad stock, which was given to them several years previously as a gift, and rental money from the properties Julia retained in her name.³⁸

In June, Ulysses Grant agreed with Robert Underwood Johnson, editor of *Century Magazine*, to write a series of articles on his Civil War experiences for which he would receive \$500 per article. He completed his first, on Shiloh, in July, and immediately began working on articles on Vicksburg and Chattanooga. In October, Grant hired Adam Badeau to assist him with checking facts and so forth, and he began writing his memoirs. (Grant dismissed Badeau the following May when he attempted to take credit for ghost-writing the *Memoirs*). The Century Company was eager to publish them, and they drafted a contract for him offering a ten percent royalty.

On October 22, 1884, Ulysses learned that his persistent sore throat was a serious cause for concern. Throat specialist John Douglas examined him and discovered that he probably had cancer, although the condition was "sometimes capable of being cured." Throughout the fall and winter Grant continued writing and considered an offer for his memoirs made by Samuel Clemens (better known as Mark Twain) and Charles Webster's new publishing company. At the beginning of February, he was delighted when his article on Shiloh appeared in print, but by the end of the month he learned that his throat was cancerous and inoperable. There was no doubt that he was dying, and he was in a race against time to finish the last great work of his life.

Samuel Clemens retained tremendous faith in Grant's ability to fight until he completed his memoirs, and at the end of February, Clemens and Grant negotiated a contract for Grant to receive seventy percent of the net profits. Clemens and Webster immediately began selling subscriptions to the book, and by May 1 they already sold sixty thousand sets. They were bolstered in the efforts by a March 1 story in the *New York Times* confirming that Grant had cancer. In response, Congress revived Grant's army appointment

37. USG to John Fenton Long, November 12, 1880; USG to Long, December 16, 1881; USG to Long, April 15, 1882, Long Family Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

38. Garland, 489; JDG, *Memoirs*, 327-328.

and placed him on the retired list, guaranteeing a pension for himself and widow's benefits for Julia that Grant lost when he resigned to become president.

Toward the end of March and beginning of April, it appeared as if Grant would die soon. Wanting to leave his affairs in good order, Grant wrote quit claim deeds for old mortgages he held against the Dent family, and he released his property in Missouri and his trophies to William Vanderbilt. Vanderbilt offered to forgive the loan, and at first Julia wanted to accept. Almost immediately she reconsidered, and she told him that, as kind as his offer was, the Grants must pay the debt.³⁹ Vanderbilt accepted on the terms that the family allow him to donate the war trophies and world tour items to the nation.⁴⁰

Later in April, Grant rebounded and was able to get out some and continue writing. Meanwhile, Clemens and Webster began printing page proofs of the first volume. In the middle of June, Grant, Julia, and the children and grandchildren traveled to the Adirondacks to Mount McGregor to get away from the city's summer heat.⁴¹

A month later, Grant finished his work on his memoirs and settled into a fitful daily routine of sleeping, waking, and medicating. He was in almost constant pain, and his doctors applied both alcohol and cocaine topically to numb his throat. Without his memoirs to write, he wrote notes to his doctors: "The fact is I think I am a verb instead of a personal pronoun. A verb is anything that signifies to be; to do; or to suffer. I signify all three."⁴² On July 23, 1885, at 8:00 a.m., all of the suffering ended, and Ulysses S. Grant died. Julia remembered:

He, my beloved, my all, passed away, and I was alone, alone.

For thirty-seven years, I, his wife, rested and was warmed in the sunlight of his loyal love and great fame, and now, even though his beautiful light has gone out, it is as when some far-off planet disappears from the heavens; the light of his glorious fame still reaches out to me, falls upon me, and warms me.⁴³

For the rest of her life, Julia lived with the confidence that her husband truly loved her.

39. JDG to William Henry Vanderbilt, January 11, 1885, Grant Family Papers, SIUC-USGA.

40. The trophies and other items are in the Smithsonian Institution in various collections. Ulysses S. Grant to William H. Vanderbilt, Mortgage, May 17, 1884, St. Louis County Recorder of Deeds, Book 25, 71; Ulysses S. Grant and Julia Dent Grant to William J. Van Arsdale, Quit Claim Deed, April 15, 1885, St. Louis County Recorder of Deeds, Book 30, 1.

41. The house at Mt. McGregor is preserved as a New York state historic site. Green, 296-326; USG, *Memoirs*, 1159-1161.

42. "Notes to the Doctor" in USG, *Memoirs*, 1120.

43. JDG, *Memoirs*, 331.

The family of General and President Ulysses S. Grant now faced a dilemma: the location of his final resting place. The family owned plots in St. Louis and Galena, but Grant's preference would have been at the United States Military Academy at West Point. West Point would allow his burial, but they would not allow Julia to be buried with him when she died. Therefore, the family elected for him to be buried in New York City's Riverside Park, where a tomb for him and Julia could be erected. He was laid to rest in a temporary tomb there, and within a few years citizens completed the permanent monument. Julia joined him in 1902.⁴⁴

There was something almost psychotic about the way Ulysses S. Grant drew the distinction between his public and private lives. In public, he was serious, and he suggested he was neither able to speak before crowds nor to enjoy music. Privately, he had an amazing dry wit and loved funny stories and jokes. He spoke for hours in front of his friends and on his overseas trips; he wrote page after page of lucid text for his memoirs; and he listened with pleasure to his wife playing the piano and singing.

In his final years, Ulysses S. Grant showed the world what he had hidden preciously before: himself. He toured the world and the United States, being with the people, sharing with them his view of Earth. In his final years, he and Julia shared private moments with their family that previously they had known only at White Haven and, briefly, in Galena. Their children were adults, but they could tease and coddle the grandchildren who now flocked around them. One might perceive Ulysses' last days as a tragedy because his throat cancer cut short his life. He accomplished what he wanted to do, however. He fought his last battle, and he was ready to sleep.

44. J.K. Larke and J. Harris Patton, *General U.S. Grant: His Early Life and Military Career with an Account of His Presidential Administration and Tour Around the World* (Deposit, New York: Phillips and Burrows, 1885), 568; Childs, 45; Dodge, 113, 122.

CHAPTER TWELVE

White Haven into the Twentieth Century

With the death of Ulysses S. Grant, the Gravois farm entered a new phase of life. For the first time in decades it was a real farm, operated by an owner who lived in St. Louis and who had experience in farming. Frederick Dent and Ulysses Grant were real estate speculators who selected White Haven as their primary residence. The private owners that followed them were also in the real estate business, and they were aware of the prize that they captured when they acquired White Haven, the former home of General and President Ulysses S. Grant. The story of the farm's ownership from 1885 to the present is summarized here briefly.¹

On April 15, 1885, Ulysses and Julia Dent Grant deeded White Haven to William J. Van Arsdale, the agent of the Grants' creditor, William H. Vanderbilt.² After sixty-five years, the land was no longer in the Dent family. For the next three years, Vanderbilt left the property substantially as Grant left it, retaining the tenants who were already under contract.³

In 1888, Luther Conn, a Kentuckian by birth, purchased the farm from Vanderbilt.⁴ Conn planned to raise championship horses on the estate in the same manner as Grant wanted to do. Conn fought with John Morgan's Confederate raiders during the Civil War, and he took strange pride in owning his former enemy's prized home.⁵ During Conn's ownership, Julia Grant and Fred Dent Grant revisited White Haven, both commenting on

1. The author refers the reader to the scheduled National Park Service administrative history of Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site for additional information about owners from 1885 to 1986.

2. Ulysses S. and Julia Dent Grant to William J. Van Arsdale, Quit Claim Deed, St. Louis County Recorder of Deeds, Book 30, 1.

3. Henry Leis Family Notes, Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site.

4. William J. and Elizabeth Van Arsdale to Luther Conn, Quit Claim Deed, July 12, 1888, St. Louis County Recorder of Deeds, Book 37, 480; Conn to Van Arsdale's Trustee, Deed of Trust, July 12, 1888, St. Louis County Recorder of Deeds, Book 36, 576; Van Arsdale to Conn, Deed of Release, November 21, 1889, St. Louis County Recorder of Deeds, Book 45, 356.

5. "Luther H. Conn," William Hyde and Howard L. Conard, *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*, I (New York, Louisville, St. Louis: Southern History Company, Haldeman, Conard, and Company, 1899), 465-467.

how well-preserved the farm was.⁶ They were not able to visit Hardscrabble on its original location, as it was sold and dismantled prior to their visits.

In 1903, Conn subdivided the property and sold off the southernmost portion to August A. Busch, the anchor of the St. Louis brewing family. This was the section where Wish-ton-wish stood before it burned.⁷ Two years later Conn sold the core fifteen acres surrounding White Haven to James Hughes, an agent of the St. Louis Development Corporation, which in turn was associated with the Grant Park Land Company. From 1905 to 1906, White Haven changed hands four times.⁸ The Development Corporation planned to make White Haven an amusement park, and they proposed to run a trolley line through from Watson Road to allow easy access. They did not have sufficient funds to follow through on the project, and White Haven deteriorated while they scrambled to complete the project.

Finally, in 1913, Albert Wenzlick of St. Louis bought out the remaining interests of the amusement company in White Haven.⁹ From 1913 until 1937, the Wenzlick family made few changes to the property. In 1937, Albert Wenzlick died and his son Delbert inherited White Haven. Delbert launched a substantial renovation project on the main house in 1940, changing the fenestration, adding modern conveniences throughout the residence, and removing two wings that dated from the first half of the nineteenth century. A Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) team of the National Park Service was in St. Louis when Wenzlick began dismantling the old wings. The HABS team recorded only basic information about the house, and photographs were taken.¹⁰

Both Albert and Delbert Wenzlick were aware of the importance of White Haven to Ulysses S. Grant's life, and they opened the home periodically as a showcase. In 1979, Delbert and his wife Anne began to work with the St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation to list the house on the National Register of Historic Places. Delbert Wenzlick died of a heart attack while leading a tour for the National Register researchers in the same year. In 1981, White Haven was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

6. "Old Dent Farm," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, July 12, 1896; "Col. Grant Visits Boyhood Home," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, September 30, 1903.

7. Luther and Louise Conn to August A. Busch, Warranty Deed, June 16, 1903, St. Louis County Recorder of Deeds, Book 143, 92.

8. Relevant books and pages in the St. Louis County Recorder of Deeds are 167: 408-409; 171: 32-33; 171: 159-160; 173: 229.

9. Grant Park Association to Albert Wenzlick, Quit Claim Deed, November 29, 1913, St. Louis County Recorder of Deeds, Book 337, 17-18; "A. Wenzlick Buys the Old Dent Home," *Historic Homes of Missouri*, Scrapbook, Missouri Historical Society, III.

10. See Historic American Buildings Survey, MO-1150 (1940), Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site.

Following Delbert's death, White Haven became the subject of a bitter probate dispute among his heirs. Some family members desired to capitalize on the prime real estate values of the estate, while other family members wanted to donate the property to a preservation organization. The family formed a corporation called U.S. Grant's White Haven for its disposition.¹¹

In the early 1980s, preservationists in St. Louis formed Save Grant's White Haven, with the intent of acquiring White Haven as a historic site. In 1986, they succeeded in purchasing the property from the Wenzlick family for \$510,000, to be owned jointly by St. Louis County and the State of Missouri until the land could be transferred to the National Park Service. In 1989, Congress authorized the Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site.¹²

From 1820 until 1986, three primary families owned White Haven. The longstanding association of each of these families with the property and their role in preserving the historical and architectural treasure that is White Haven should be recognized. Their impact on the buildings and land are immutable and significant to the understanding of Ulysses S. Grant and his own association with the Gravois farm.

11. Informal interviews with H.A. "Bill" Wenzlick; informal interviews with Anne Wenzlick.

12. See the enabling legislation in the appendix.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Conclusion: White Haven, American History, and Ulysses S. Grant

In the last months of his life, Ulysses S. Grant reflected on his country, the United States of America. He reflected on the nation's pioneers, who were forever "[pushing] out farther from civilization. Their guns furnished meat, and the cultivation of a very limited amount of soil, their bread and vegetables.... Trapping would furnish pelts to be brought into the states once a year to pay for necessary articles they could not raise.... Little was known of the topography of the country beyond the settlements of these frontiersmen." But, he continued, "This is all changed now.... The country has filled up 'from the centre all around to the sea'...."¹

Reading Ulysses S. Grant's 1885 *Memoirs*, William McFeely and other twentieth-century scholars have scoffed at his description of rough fur traders and pioneers, pushing into the interior with their guns, traps, and finally homes. How could Grant understand the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century explorers and mavericks, the origins of the Midwest and the nation?

Ulysses Grant and his wife, Julia Grant, were the children of fur traders. Before they were established, tanner, mayor, Southern aristocrat, Frederick Dent and Jesse Grant lived similar lives to the ones Grant described in his *Memoirs*. The characters that Grant encountered growing up in Ohio and Kentucky; the relatives he met from his family line and Julia's in Pittsburgh; the French and Spanish Creoles, the pioneer Anglo settlers, all amalgamized into St. Louis and the Gravois communities: these people in his life were the subject of his reflection in his *Memoirs*. He envisioned the country filling up from the middle outward, a strange view for most historians, because he viewed the country from the Ohio and Mississippi River corridors. From his birth to his death, New England, the middle Atlantic states, and the Pacific coastline were not the driving forces in Grant's American life.

White Haven was an essential part of Grant's understanding of American history and his role in the continuum. At White Haven, he was connected to James Mackay through Mackay's nephew, John Fenton Long. Grant knew Thomas Hart Benton, and like other St. Louis residents, he knew what happened in 1817 on Bloody Island. He knew of Anne Lucas

1. See the inscription of Chapter Two for more of the quotation. USG, *Memoirs*, 779.

Hunt, who died in 1878, just seven years before himself.² Across the Gravois farm paraded the people of westward expansion and American history, of which Ulysses S. Grant was one. Grant recognized his place in American history, and he knew that long after his death, he would endure as a symbol of the war that rended the nation and made him famous.³

White Haven is a place where one can learn about Ulysses S. Grant. As historians abandon the campaign literature and hasty pronouncements in Civil War histories about Ulysses S. Grant in favor of research based on recently released primary sources, they are reassessing the man who was Grant. Through the history of White Haven, one learns that the finances of Ulysses Grant, his father-in-law Frederick Dent, and his father Jesse Grant were not as people assumed them to be one hundred years ago. The picture that emerges is one of Grant as a better and more crafty businessman than anyone ever knew. Likewise White Haven contributes to the image of Grant as a devoted husband and loving father. It is difficult to place Grant the alcoholic on the Gravois farm, and continued study of him with his family will do much to correct yellow journalists' scandalous tales from the Pacific coast and war years.

With the exception of his boyhood home in Ohio and the White House, Ulysses Grant lived at White Haven longer than anywhere else. His association with White Haven spanned all of his adult life, from his first visit there in 1843 to his decision to release it to William Vanderbilt in 1885. By the Gravois, Ulysses courted his wife, Julia, the single most important person to him. She was raised at White Haven and returned to live there when she could not accompany Grant to the Pacific coast. In 1854, she welcomed him back to her home, and within time it became their home. The Grants' decision to purchase the property at almost any cost was indicative of their feelings for the place. They dreamed of returning there to live out their days, and, in the lives of two people who never escaped from public duty, dreams of seclusion were all that they had.

White Haven remains a fascinating piece of property because of its unusual history. The farm in suburban St. Louis was home to a cavalcade of extraordinary individuals, and like Ulysses S. Grant they came to White Haven to settle down in ordinary lives. None of them succeeded in their goals, but they left behind an incredible story for future generations.

"My first recollections in life reach back a long way," wrote Julia Dent Grant at the turn of the century. "We... were on the south end of the front piazza at our old home, White Haven. We had just arrived. Dear papa, coming out with seeming pleasure, caught me up and held me high in the air, telling me to look, the very trees were welcoming me, and, sure enough, the tall locust trees were tossing their white-plumed branches gleefully."⁴

2. "The Mt. Vernon Ladies' Association Centennial," *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin*, IX (July 1953), 412.

3. USG, *Memoirs*, 780.

4. JDG, *Memoirs*, 33.

The trees of White Haven have beckoned and welcomed visitors for generations, and under the auspices of the National Park Service continue the tradition at the Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site.



Figure 27. Nellie and Jesse Grant. *Courtesy St. Louis Mercantile Library*



Figures 28 and 29. Ulysses S. Grant, 1874, and Julia Dent Grant. *Courtesy Missouri Historical Society*



Figure 30. The House Given to the Grant Family in Galena. *Courtesy St. Louis Mercantile Library*



Figure 32. Ulysses, Jesse, and Julia Grant at the Cottage at Long Branch, New Jersey.
Courtesy Missouri Historical Society



Figure 32. John Dent, Brother of Julia Dent Grant. *Courtesy Missouri Historical Society*



Figure 33. John Fenton Long, Who was Born at White Haven. *Courtesy Missouri Historical Society*



Figure 34. The 1869 Inaugural Address of Ulysses S. Grant. Photographer Matthew Brady. *Courtesy the National Archives of the United States of America*



Figure 35. The 1873 Inaugural Ball of Ulysses S. Grant. *Courtesy St. Louis Mercantile Library*



Figure 36. Julia Dent Grant. *Courtesy Missouri Historical Society*



Figure 37. Ulysses S. Grant. *Courtesy Missouri Historical Society*



Figures 38 and 39. Nellie Grant Sartoris and Child; Algernon Sartoris. *Courtesy Missouri Historical Society*



Figure 40. Ulysses S. Grant After He Shaved His "Whiskers" to Comply with Julia Grant's Request for a "Clean Profile."
Courtesy Missouri Historical Society



Figure 41. The Grant Party in Egypt. From *John Russel Young, Around the World with General Grant* (New York: American News Company, 1879).



Figure 42. The Grant Party on Elephants. From *John Russel Young, Around the World with General Grant (New York: American News Company, 1879)*.



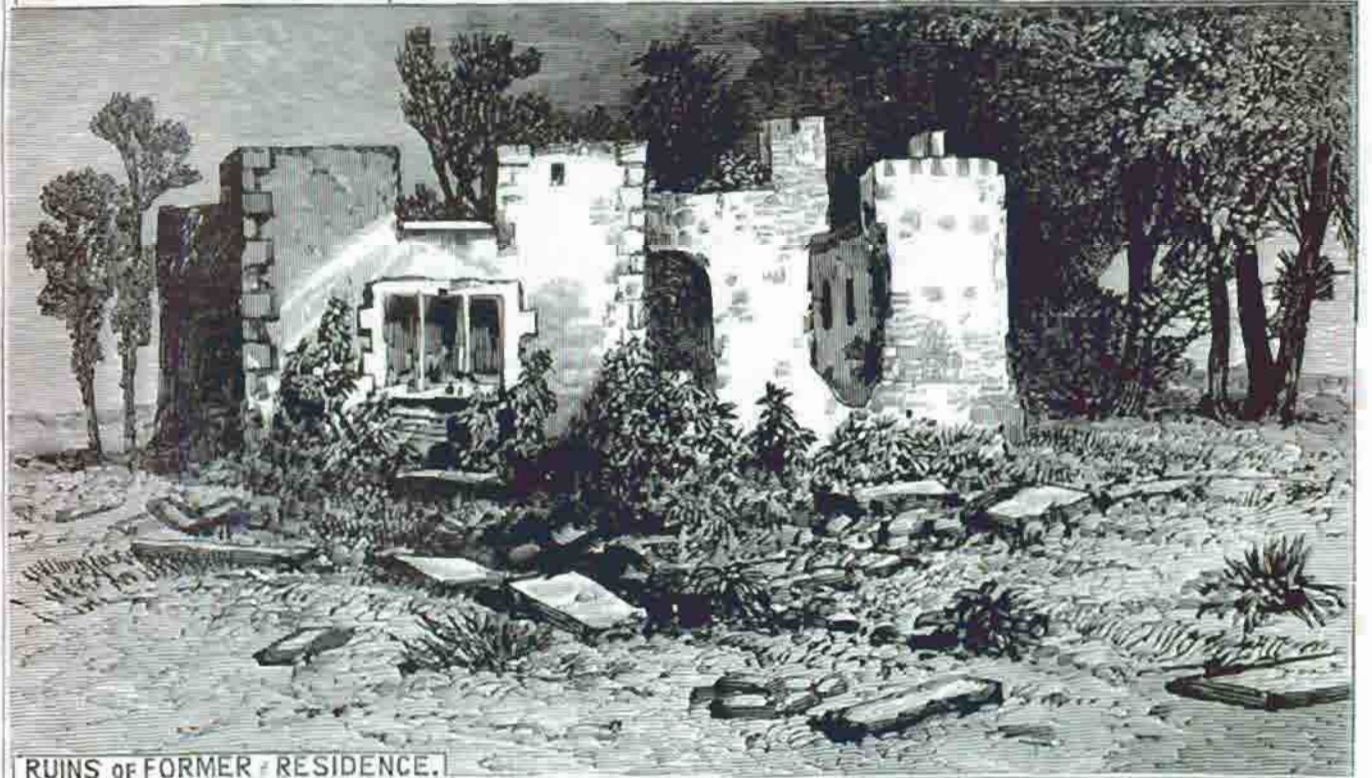
Figure 43. The Grant Family at Mt. McGregor. *Courtesy Missouri Historical Society*



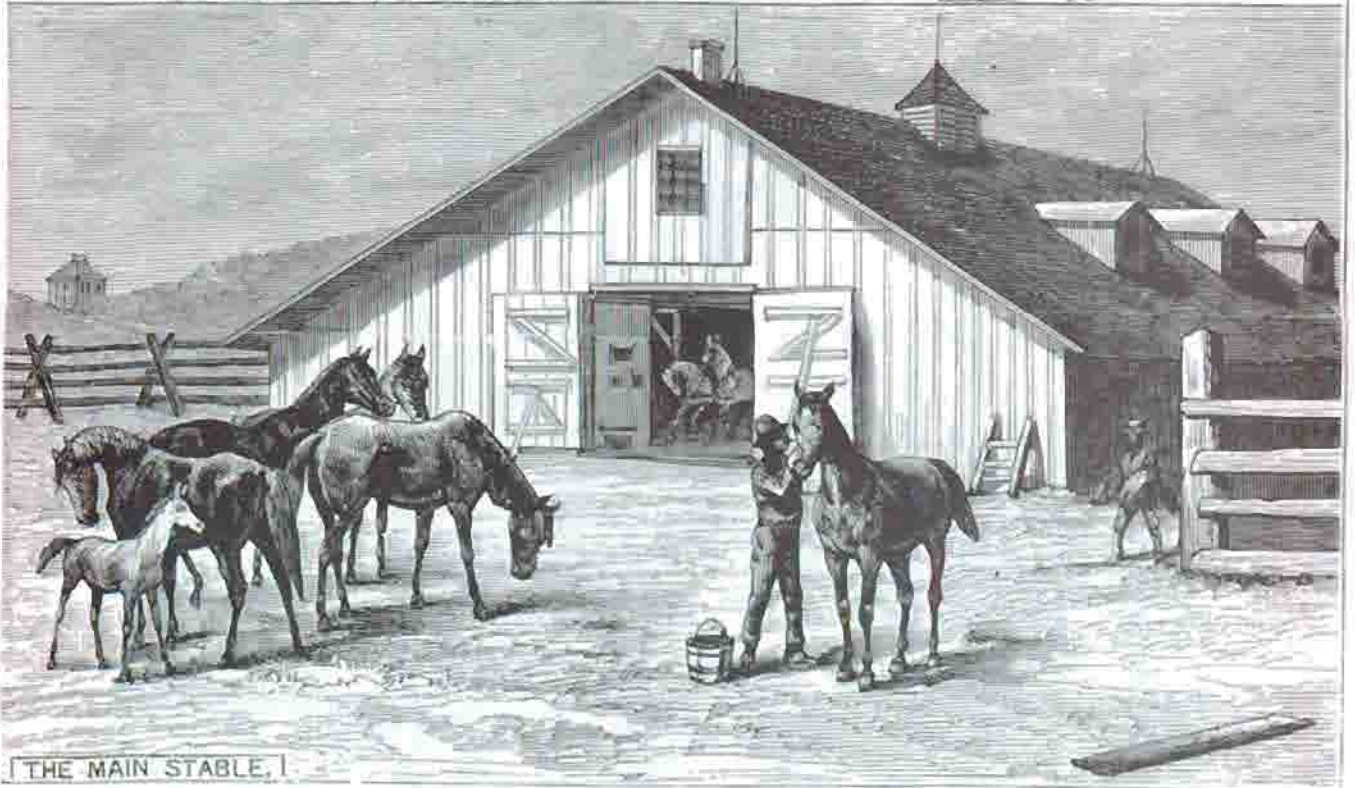
Figure 44. The Dying General at Mt. McGregor. *Courtesy Missouri Historical Society*



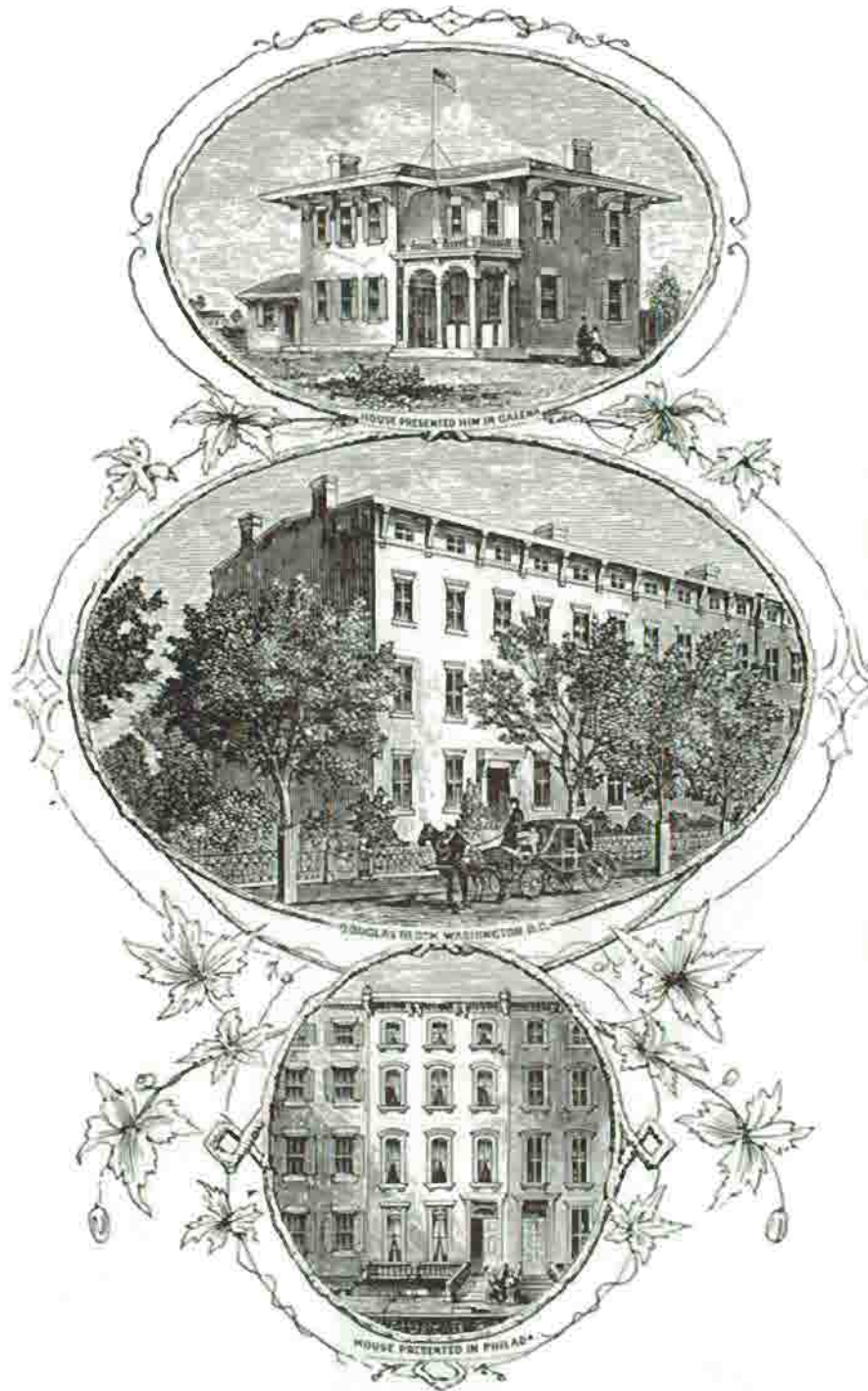
THE OLD DENT HOMESTEAD.



RUINS OF FORMER RESIDENCE.



[THE MAIN STABLE.]



GEN. GRANT'S RESIDENCES SINCE THE WAR.

[Illustrations on pages 300 and 301: Figure 45. Views of President Grant's Farm, White Haven. From Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, *October 16, 1875.*]

Figure 46. Grant's Residences, 1865-1868. From *Albert D. Richardson, A Personal History of Ulysses S. Grant. Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1969.*

APPENDIX

Enabling Legislation for the
Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site, Missouri

and

Inventory of Existing Conditions at the
Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site, Missouri

Public Law 101-106
101st Congress

An Act

To provide for the establishment of the Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site in the State of Missouri, and for other purposes.

Oct. 2, 1989
(H.R. 1529)

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. ULYSSES S. GRANT NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE.

16 USC 461 note.

In order to preserve and interpret for the benefit and inspiration of all Americans a key property associated with the life of General and later President Ulysses S. Grant and the life of First Lady Julia Dent Grant, knowledge of which is essential to understanding, in the context of mid-nineteenth century American history, his rise to greatness, his heroic deeds and public service, and her partnership in them, there is hereby established the Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site near St. Louis, Missouri.

Julia Dent Grant.

SEC. 2. PROPERTY ACQUISITION.

Gifts and property.

(a) **WHITE HAVEN PROPERTY.**—The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to acquire by donation the property and improvements thereon known as White Haven in the unincorporated portion of St. Louis County adjacent to Grantwood Village within the area generally depicted on the map entitled "Boundary Map, White Haven National Historic Site", numbered WHHA-80,000 and dated July 1988. The map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the offices of the Director of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

Public information.

(b) **PERSONAL PROPERTY.**—The Secretary is authorized to acquire by donation or purchase with donated or appropriated funds personal property directly associated with White Haven or President or Mrs. Grant for the purposes of the national historic site referred to in section 1.

SEC. 3. ADMINISTRATION.

The property acquired pursuant to section 1 of this Act shall be administered by the Secretary of the Interior in accordance with provisions of law generally applicable to units of the National Park

Contracts. System, including the Act of August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535), and the Act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666). The Secretary is authorized to enter into cooperative agreements with adjacent landowners for the provision of such parking and safe access to the property as may be necessary for public use.

SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.

Approved October 2, 1989.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 1529:

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 101-83 and Pt. 2 (Comm. on Interior and Insular Affairs).

SENATE REPORTS: No. 101-115 (Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources).

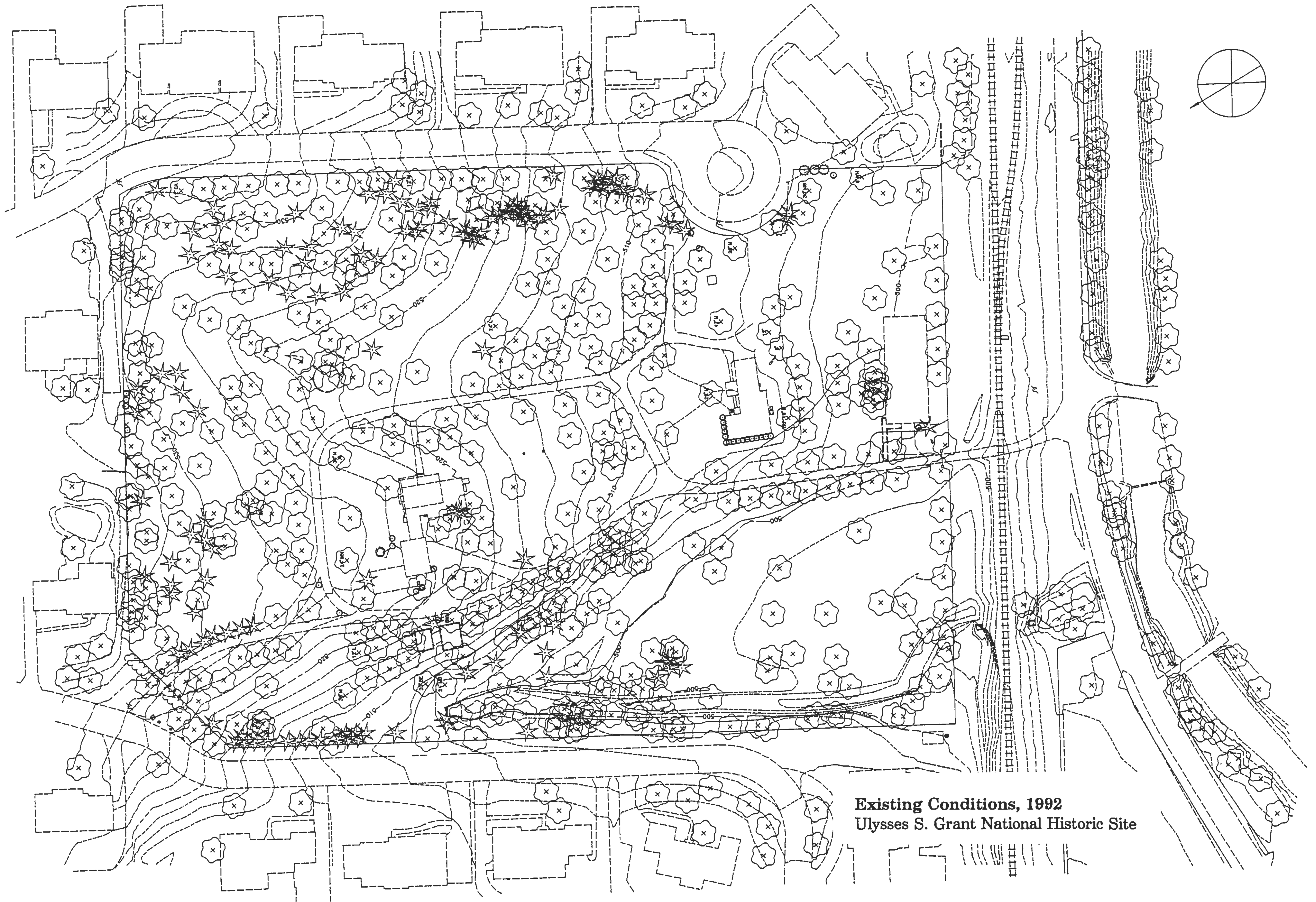
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 135 (1989):

June 20, considered and passed House.

Sept. 12, considered and passed Senate.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS, Vol. 25 (1989):

Oct. 3, Presidential statement.



Existing Conditions, 1992
Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site

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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the United States Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities to protect and conserve our land and water, energy and minerals, fish and wildlife, parks and recreation areas, and to ensure the wise use of all these resources. The department also has major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under United States administration.

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