



News from White Haven

Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site, dedicated to Civil War General and 18th President Ulysses S. Grant and his wife, Julia Dent Grant, is located in south St. Louis County, Missouri.

News from White Haven is a quarterly publication of Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site. It is also available online by visiting <http://www.nps.gov/ulsg/>.

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

Something old, something new



The new museum in the historic stable and the visitor center will be the site of many Grand Opening events.

It's true! We are finally finished with restoration, building, exhibit development and installation projects. White Haven is again as beautiful and welcoming as it was in 1883. On June 14th of that year, Ulysses and Julia Grant made their last visit to White Haven together. Please join us to commemorate that event and to celebrate our Grand Opening on Saturday, June 16th.

The morning festivities will commence with a ribbon cutting ceremony, followed by music provided by the 33rd Illinois Regimental Band. During the day, special events will feature Civil War reenactors, a history panel discussion, and children's activities.

At the heart of the Grand Opening are the new museum, visitor center, and refurbished historic buildings. The museum, located in Grant's original horse stable, explores Ulysses and Julia's relationship and how world events affected their lives.

The visitor center hosts a theater, classroom, bookstore, and information desk. Rangers guide visitors through the main house and outbuildings, and conduct special programs, including the Junior Ranger program.

Whether you are a regular visitor or have not yet been to the site, we urge you to come out to the Grand Opening and experience White Haven at it best.

The importance and legacy of White Haven

Ulysses S. Grant's reputation has endured repeated ups and downs since his rise to fame during America's Civil War—from failure to hero, military genius to butcher.

White Haven provides the setting for understanding Grant in the personal roles of husband, father, neighbor, and citizen. It was here that Ulysses Grant met Julia Dent, the woman who became his wife in 1848. Here their loving partnership was solidified amidst the turmoil of the 1840s and 1850s.

White Haven provided a sense of home for them throughout the Civil War, during his presidency, and finally, a place that held memories even after its transfer to new owners in 1884. The site is also significant because as many as 30 slaves lived and worked on the plantation. Their experiences, and the Dents' and Grants' interaction with them, reflect a microcosm of the



This new fence replicates one seen around White Haven in an 1860 picture.

country's moral and political conflicts over the issue of slavery.

The historic core was privately owned from 1913 until the early 1980s, when it was threatened by redevelopment. Local residents formed the grassroots group Save Grant's White Haven and their efforts, supported by other organizations, resulted in the preservation of the property. White Haven became a unit of the

National Park Service in 1990.

Four historic structures have been restored to their 1875 appearance. The fifth building, the stable Grant had built for his horses, is rehabilitated as the site's museum. Here, the dual focus on Ulysses and Julia's personal and public lives is crucial to understanding their important roles in our nation's history.

A small remembrance of Hardscrabble's original location

In September 1856, Ulysses and Julia Grant moved into the first home they'd ever owned: a four-room log cabin Ulysses built less than a mile from her father's house. The Grants only lived in the cabin, dubbed Hardscrabble, for a few months.

Their small home now sits just off Gravois Road in south St. Louis County, but its original location has not been forgotten. A new stone tablet marking the original

site of Hardscrabble, in present-day St. Paul's Church Yard on Rock Hill Road, will be dedicated on April 28 at 2 p.m.

The old stone tablet was placed as a memorial at the site 60 years ago by the Webster Groves Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. This same chapter has been instrumental in getting the new marker placed.

The bronze plaque on the first

marker has been refurbished by St. Paul's Church Yard, and has been mounted on the new stone base. Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site assisted in the project.

The ceremony is expected to include the Sons of Union Veterans, Daughters of Union Veterans, Civil War reenactors and other organizations. More information will appear in local newspapers.

A place to work... and personal space

One of the important stories here at White Haven is that of the enslaved people. Intertwined with the stories of the white people, their narratives are told throughout the site, but nowhere more poignantly than in the winter kitchen.

A new exhibit in the anteroom of the winter kitchen tells the slaves' story. It is based on objects found in archeological digs in this space and addresses the work and the personal lives of some of the enslaved people.

The exhibit contains two panels. One panel describes the work done by the enslaved women in this space and how that work defined them in the eyes of their owner. The other panel addresses how work space was more than just a place to perform expected chores, but also a space to conduct personal activities and secret pursuits.

Supporting the panels will be two cases containing objects discovered during a series of archaeological digs in the kitchen. For example, one case will contain African beads, clay marbles, and broken slate pencils showing that slaves were able to pursue activities outside of work. The other case will house fragments of fine china, earthenware storage vessels and bowls, and various types of bones demonstrating the type of work performed by the enslaved people at White Haven.

Introducing the park's staff



Front Row: John Deutch, Abbi Telander, Karen Maxville, Mike Ward, Pam Sanfilippo, Katherine Potter, Jean Freeman, Karen Loeffelman
Back Row: Mike Cebulski, Mary Grace Ford, Kris Sneeringer, Albert Banks III, Chris Eckard, Al O'Bright, Larry Lapinski, Chuck Ryan, Mark Hill
Not pictured: Terry Orr

The staff of Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site is a diverse group of people. Combined, we have 172 years with the National Park Service and have worked at 16 different National Park Service sites. We come from as far away as Italy, Washington, Colorado, and South Dakota, and as close as St. Louis County. Despite our differences, we each have this in common with Ulysses S. Grant: the paths of our lives have led us all to White Haven.

Kids' corner: Exploring the museum

I went to the Ulysses S. Grant museum. It's brand new, but I got to go there first and try out the kids' activities. There are games of spinning blocks to match about the Grants' trip around the world. I liked matching the blocks of India. They show pictures of where the Grants went and the people they met. Before my visit, I didn't know that Mr. Grant went to China. I think other kids will like the museum, too.

~Gwyneth Potter, age 7



Images of India and Asia from the Grant's world tour make up a game for kids of all ages.



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Upcoming Events

- April 18 - Opening day at neighboring Grant's Farm
- April 21-28 - National Park Week
- April 27 - Ulysses S. Grant's 185th birthday
- April 28 - National Junior Ranger Day
- May 12-13 - Grant's Farm hosts Civil War Living History at Hardscrabble cabin
- June 16 - Grand Opening of Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site

Did you know?

On April 27, 1822, the first child of Jesse and Hannah (Simpson) Grant was born, a boy weighing in at 10 lbs, 12 oz. When he was six weeks old, the Grants took their son to visit his Simpson relatives. It was then that the family named the baby.

Hannah wanted to name her son Albert, after a famous politician.

Her sister favored the name Theodore. Their father thought Hiram was a good, strong name. Jesse and his mother-in-law leaned toward the name of the hero in a popular novel based on Greek mythology, Ulysses.

The family agreed to write their choices on slips of paper and call the baby whatever name was

drawn. The name picked was Ulysses. Mr. Simpson was disappointed that his choice had not won, so Jesse diplomatically declared that the boy would be named Hiram Ulysses Grant.

Based on information from [Ulysses S. Grant: Triumph over Adversity, 1822-1865](#), by Brooks D. Simpson.