We'll vote for Grant again.

Music by
Arthur Percy.

Words by
Jas. F. Keegan.

General Grant's Gaiter,
The Chief of Bravery.

Gen. Grant's Grand March.

courtesy of Dori McCann
GRANT'S TOMB CENTENNIAL: A PAGEANT OF HONOR AND PEACE

by Donna Neralich

Towering high on a bluff overlooking the Hudson River, the Grant Monument was a vision to behold on the morning of April 27, 1997. The bright morning sunshine reflected on the newly polished granite structure that was elegantly bedecked in bunting. Large American flags hung at the entrance to the monument while Civil War era music echoed throughout the newly renovated plaza area in front of the tomb.

Hundreds of visitors were already gathered to participate in the festivities commemorating the centennial of the dedication of Grant's Tomb and the 175th anniversary of his birth. They filed inside the monument to pay their respects to Ulysses and Julia Grant who rest side by side in two identical red granite sarcophagi. Some stopped to glance at the array of Grant memorabilia exhibited in glass display cases inside the tomb. Others ventured outside to buy postcards, biographical materials, programs and other souvenirs of the occasion. It was a festive yet fitting atmosphere in which to honor the great general and president.

After several years of neglect, the Grant Monument was now ready to be showcased thanks to renovations and security provided by the National Park Service. These changes reflect the catalytic efforts of Frank Scaturro and members of the Grant family. In 1991, Scaturro, the tomb’s most vocal advocate, noted the deterioration of the monument in a document which he wrote and distributed to elected officials in Washington and to the media. Substantial television and press coverage provided enough media attention to create a national awareness. A lawsuit initiated by Grant’s descendants against the National Park Service also served as a catalyst for action.

In the early afternoon of April 27, 1997, visitors gathered along a one-mile stretch of Riverside Drive to watch a parade of West Point cadets, veterans, patriotic groups, scout troops, and school children. Marching bands, floats, reenactors and marchers in costumes contributed to make the event entertaining and picturesque. Two schools traveled a great distance to participate in the parade - U.S. Grant School from Portsmouth, Ohio and U.S. Grant High School from Portland, Oregon. The William R. Satz School from Holmdel, New Jersey, created a school project based on the Grant Centennial. The students, dressed in period costumes, represented the New York City students and educators that participated in the dedication of the Grant Monument in 1897.

When the parade concluded at the tomb the official dedication ceremony began outside on the tomb plaza. Approximately three thousand people were present, to include many direct descendants of Ulysses S. Grant.

A spokesperson from the office of the Governor of New York read a proclamation designating April 27, 1997, as General U.S. Grant Day in the Empire state. Lloyd Williams, President and CEO of the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce, was Master of Ceremonies, and introduced several speakers, to include Judge Frank Williams and John Y. Simon of the Ulysses S. Grant Association, Alan Loomis, Commander in Chief of the Sons of Union Veterans, and Ulysses Grant Dietz, a great great grandson of Ulysses S. Grant. Mr. Dietz emphasized the importance and meaning of the Grant Monument today as a source of inspiration, hope and pride. The theme "Let Us Have Peace" was woven through most of the speeches. Comments about Grant’s brilliant and triumphant military career, his magnanimity at Appomattox, his leadership as president, as well as his exemplary character, emphasized how deserving Grant is of such a monument in his honor. Other speakers included Brigadier General Robert J. St. Onge, Jr., the Commandant of Cadets at the United States Military Academy at West Point, Edgar M. Andrews III, Executive Director of the Civil War Trust, and Congressman Jerrold Nadler from the 8th District in New York.

Bands participating in the ceremony included the Manhattan School of Music Brass Ensemble, The United States Merchant Marine Academy Band, and the Repasz Band, a musical unit based in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. This band, founded in 1831, served as a military band and played at Appomattox as well as at the dedication of Grant’s Tomb in 1897. The band played marches that were written especially for Grant during the 19th century.
The observance continued with a presentation of the colors and a wreath laying ceremony. Wreaths were placed representing the National Park Service, The United States Congress and President Clinton. A rifle salute, "Taps" and benediction followed. All joined in the singing of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" to conclude the commemoration of a day 100 years earlier when the Grant Monument was officially opened to the public.

On the day following the dedication of Grant's Tomb in 1897, a headline in The New York Herald proclaimed "Grant's Tomb Now Our Sacred Trust." This proper and fitting decree now becomes the responsibility of the present generation to carry into the next millennium.

LITTLE KNOWN FACTS

At the age of seven, young Ulysses nearly drowned while fishing in White Oak Creek, near his home in Georgetown, Ohio. His friend and fishing partner, nine year old Daniel Ammen, reached down and pulled him to safety after a thorough dunking.
April 27, 1997 Marked 175th Anniversary of Grant's Birth

Ohio Sites Celebrate

Each year the people of Point Pleasant and Georgetown, Ohio celebrate the birthday of Ulysses S. Grant. This year the events commemorated the 175th anniversary of Grant's birth.

On Saturday morning, April 26, the events began in Point Pleasant just outside the small frame house where Ulysses S. Grant was born. A 21-gun salute by the American Legion, and a flag raising ceremony by the Girl Scouts led off the festivities. A brass plaque commemorating Grant was rededicated by Clermont County Commissioner, Bob Proud at the U. S. Grant Park adjacent to the birthplace.

The celebration continued with historic displays, music and speeches. Tents were set up with Grant memorabilia and a souvenir pictorial cancellation was offered by the Post Office. A formal program began in the afternoon. State Representative Rose Vesper spoke, and Warren G. Harding III, grand nephew of President Harding was guest speaker. Mr. Harding quoted from a speech given by President Harding when he visited there in 1922 for the Centennial of Grant's birth. The Davis Band from New Richmond, Ohio presented a colonial music program. After an invocation and benediction, cake and coffee were served by Clermont County trustees, Mr. And Mrs. Richardson.

Georgetown, Ohio began their celebration at the Brown County Fairgrounds and the town square several days prior to Grant's birthday. A five day program of events included an address given by John Y. Simon, executive Director of the Ulysses S. Grant Association, as well as presentations and seminars by several other speakers. The program also featured an exhibition of the world famous Clydesdale horses, a theatrical production "Point to Point" (Point Pleasant to West Point), and the rededication of the Grant Memorial Schoolhouse. Walking tours of Georgetown included Grant's boyhood home, The Bailey House, and Jesse Grant's Tannery. Other events included Civil War settlers, living history demonstrations by 19th century craftsmen, and Grant memorabilia displays.

Over three hundred Civil War re-enactors camped on the fairgrounds demonstrating drills and firing ammunition. On Saturday night many visitors dressed in costume attended an authentic Civil War Ball complete with 19th century music and refreshments.

On Sunday, April 27, the actual day of Grant's birthday, a 19th century church service was followed by an old fashioned Sunday dinner. The parade was canceled due to rain, but a steady stream of visitors filed through Grant's Boyhood Home the entire day. Closing ceremonies at the homestead concluded the festivities.

Thanks to Loretta Fuhrman and Selma Brittingham for information on the Ohio sites.

Ulysses S. Grant Association Held Annual Meeting in New York City

This year members of the Grant Association attended the Centennial of the Grant Monument as well as several other planned events in New York City. Activities included dinner at the Union League Club with a slide show presentation, "Grant Images in the Graphic Arts" by Harold Holzer of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, a group tour of Grant/Civil War sites to The Forbes Museum, City Hall and Cooper Union, and a Grant Symposium at The Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace with speakers John Y. Simon and author Geoffrey Perret.
UPCOMING EVENTS

Grant Cottage:

On Sunday, July 20 at 2:00 p.m., Grant Cottage will present "Grant Remembrance Day." This portrayal of the members of the Grant family at the Cottage during the summer of 1885 will include narration and music to help tell the story of Grant's last courageous days at Mount McGregor, N.Y.

On Sunday, August 24 from 10:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m., the Cottage will hold a Victorian Day and Picnic. Exhibits, demonstrations, and music highlight a day spent in a Victorian mood. Bring your own picnic; Victorian dress is encouraged but optional. For further information contact the Friends of Grant Cottage at 518-587-8277.

Galena:

On Saturday, August 16th, the 10th Regiment, Illinois Volunteer Infantry will have a Civil War Encampment on the grounds of the U.S. Grant Home in Galena. Drills, demonstrations, and a reenactment of the presentation of the house to General Grant will be held.

On Sunday August 17th, a Civil War reenactment will take place at Eagle Ridge starting at 9:00 a.m. and lasting until 11:00 a.m. A field meal will follow at 12:30 and at 1:30 there will be a band concert at the flag pole area. At 2:30 there will be a program "Women's Work During the Civil War Era".

There is no admission to the encampment. The event is sponsored by Galena State Historic Sites.

Galena is having a year-long birthday party to mark the 175th anniversary of that town's most famous resident, Ulysses S. Grant. The town has dubbed 1997 "The Year of History" and is celebrating with special events and activities ranging from Victorian tea parties to tours of historic homes. For further information contact Galena/Jo Daviess County Convention & Tourist Bureau, 101 Bouthillier St., Galena, Illinois 61036. 800-747-9377.

Point Pleasant:

The Annual Craft Show will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on August 23, 1997, at U. S. Grant Park, adjacent to the Grant Birthplace in Point Pleasant, Ohio. All craftspeople are welcome. Proceeds from the tables will go the U. S. Grant Birthplace. For further information contact Loretta Fuhrman at 513-553-4911.

ATTENTION ALL GRANT SITES

Please be sure to submit your upcoming events list to Diane Meives, W 3547 Playbird Road, Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085. Please give at least 3 months notice to guarantee that the events will be published in the forthcoming issue of the newsletter.
BELMONT—GRANT'S FIRST CIVIL WAR BATTLE

by Geoffrey Perret

At dawn, the steamers cut their lines and followed the two gunboats south. Around eight o'clock the transports pulled away from mid-channel and headed for the Missouri shore, aiming for a point three miles from Belmont, where the wide river made a large bend to the east.

The gunboats steamed beyond, bringing them in sight of the Confederate stronghold, Columbus, Kentucky. The big guns on the bluffs opened up. The gunboats briefly and ineffectually engaged some of the enemy batteries, steamed around in a circle, then pulled back upriver.

While the gunboats were barking defiance at Columbus, Grant was disembarking his troops. Three hundred men were formed into a reserve and left in a hollow near the landing. The rest, including a small cavalry detachment and two artillery pieces set off on a southeasterly course, towards Belmont and the Confederates' camp. Mounted on a fine bay horse and erect in an expensive saddle with his name on it, Grant had a good view of the terrain ahead as it unfolded this fine autumn morning.

The troops advanced first through fields filled with well-ripened corn, and being farm boys, admired it. Beyond the cornfields, they came in sight of a dense woodland. Grant ordered each of his five regiments to send two companies forward as skirmishers to develop the enemy position. "They had gone but a little way when they were fired upon," Grant informed his father, "and the Ball may be said to have fairly commenced." As he rode forward the firing grew intense and his horse was shot. Grant dismounted safely and took the horse of his aide, William Hillyer, but with bullets flying all around there was no time to rescue the expensive saddle or his silver mess kit, engraved "U.S.G."

Confederate General Leonidas Polk had entrusted Belmont to Brigadier General Gideon J. Pillow, whose conduct in command of a division of volunteers in Mexico had made him a laughing stock among regular officers. Pillow had been given a division not because he had any military experience but because his good friend, James K. Polk, happened to be President.

Pillow was holding Belmont with approximately 2000 men, although when Polk heard that Grant was coming south, he immediately started ferrying reinforcements over to Belmont. In the opening stages of the battle, each commander put around 2500 men into the fight. Grant's great advantage was not in numbers but in surprise. The Union troops advanced into the woods and fought their way from tree to tree. A Confederate counterattack was defeated and Pillow's men began to fall back toward the river.

The Confederate camp, named Camp Johnston in honor of Albert Sidney Johnston, the commander of Confederate forces in the West, was screened by an abatis several hundred yards long created from recently felled trees, but lightly manned. The onrushing Federals scrambled over the thousand sharp points of the abatis and jumped in among the defenders. A brief hand-to-hand struggle sent routed Confederates fleeing over the top of the riverbank. Around 2 p.m. the shooting and screaming stopped abruptly as Grant's men found themselves in undisputed possession of the enemy camp. From here, it was possible to see people moving about in Columbus on the opposite shore.

Pillow's demoralized troops were out of sight, down by the river, or skulking in the dense timber. His command was on the brink of annihilation. All it would take to round them up was to continue the pursuit. Instead, Grant, his two brigade commanders and his five regimental commanders sat on their horses, talked among themselves, and surveyed the chaotic scene before them while the troops threw a victory party and looted Camp Johnston in a frenzied search for booty. The band of the 22nd Illinois appeared as if from nowhere and pounded out "Yankee Doodle," "The Stars and Stripes," and other tunes bound to annoy the Confederates in Columbus. A captured flag, with the stars and bars on one side and the golden harp of Erin on the reverse, was mockingly paraded, before being dumped across an artillery caisson. The eternal politician in John Mc Clelmand, commanding one of Grant's two brigades, was roused to deliver an impromptu oration on the glory of the Union and the treachery of secession.

For 30 minutes, Grant lost control of his troops. Here was the volunteer spirit in action - the fight was won, the job was done, time to celebrate. Regular troops under regular officers would have continued the pursuit until ordered to stop. Grant, however, had to assert himself through brigade commanders and regimental commanders who were amateur soldiers. One of them, Mc Clelmand, was too powerful politically to risk antagonizing. Mc Clelmand had been Lincoln's neighbor in Springfield and was a Congressman before securing a general's commission. There were practical limits to Grant's command authority when it came to handling volunteers. He stayed well within them, at Belmont as back in Cairo.

The "volunteer spirit" affected not only the troops but their company officers as well. Having been elected by the men they led, they were always more likely to join the revelry
than to try curbing it. As Grant saw to his disgust, that was exactly what they did at Belmont. To restore control over the troops, he must first reestablish control over the officers, and he did not know how to do it. Grant had to wait until this stupidity had run its course.

The absurd scene over at Belmont may well have seemed to Polk to be close to divine intervention. Even while the battle raged he was pushing thousands of men aboard steamboats and sending them across. Cannily, he had two of them steam north. An alert lieutenant rode up to Grant and pointed to where their smokestacks, poking about the treeline, were making a black line that moved steadily toward where his own steamboats lay. A medical officer, John Brinton, rode up to Grant at the same time and made the same point.

Grant was incredulous. As first he refused to believe they were Confederate steamboats. But they had to be. And if they were disgorging troops to the north of his present position, he was in danger of being cut off from his own steamers. His cavorting regiments were courting their complete destruction.

Grant turned to an aide and commanded, "Fire the tents!" A good blaze would soon put a stop to the looting of Camp Johnston. Union officers set fire to the tents, to the grief of souvenir-hunting Federals.

Until now, the Confederate gunners at Columbus had restrained from opening fire on the camp for fear of killing their own men. The eruption of fires was a signal that there were only Federals there now. Polk's biggest guns opened up on Camp Johnston. Most of the huge projectiles flew harmlessly overhead as excited, poorly trained gunners set about their work.

Companies were hurriedly reformed into line as Confederate reinforcements fresh off their steamboats came crashing through the woods. They launched a vigorous counterattack and panic seized the Federal volunteers. A frightened aide, his face white with terror, rode up to Grant, "Why, General, we are surrounded!"

Grant calmly replied, "Then we will cut our way out."

It was now for him to manage what is generally considered the most difficult feat of arms for an infantry force, the fighting withdrawal. Facing the stark prospect of disaster, Grant's volunteers sobered up, formed a ragged line and began to pull back toward the landing, three miles to the northwest, where the Union steamboats were still waiting.

This was the point where the reserve ought to have entered the picture. The function of a reserve is to reinforce success if all goes well, and help stave off disaster if it doesn't. Grant however had completely mishandled his reserve. It was left too far in the rear to be of much use. Nor had he left clear instructions on what it should do, although his intention was evidently to have it cover a retreat if his main force found itself fighting its way back to the landing - the very situation he now faced. But when the reserve force commander heard the Confederate counterattack erupt less than a mile away, he rushed his men back to the landing and put them aboard the Belle Memphis, out of harm's way, instead of marching to the sound of the guns. When Grant rode back to the hollow where he had posted his reserve to order it to advance and cover the withdrawal, he was bewildered. Where had it gone? The reserve was no help in his retreat.

Nor had he handled his cavalry properly. The squadron of horse soldiers that Grant took to Belmont ought to have been scouting the flanks of the Federal line, monitoring Confederate movements. News that the enemy was building up a threat on the left flank should have come from Grant's cavalry and not from a doctor.

Once the initial shock of the Confederate charge had been absorbed without shattering Grant's line, the risk of the retreat turning into a rout passed. Aided by effective fire from the two Union artillery pieces, Grant's men withdrew steadily through the cornfields until they reached the steamboats. The entire force boarded in good order.

Grant was the last Federal soldier to quit the field. He rode through the high corn toward the landing, passing a company of Confederates barely 50 yards away. Polk, who had come over to see the battle first-hand, noticed him and said to his men, "There is a Yankee. You may try your marksmanship on him if you wish." No one bothered to take a pot shot at Grant's receding back.

When he reached the riverbank, every steamboat but one was making for mid-channel. Grant shouted to a group of soldiers standing alongside the vessel, "Get aboard the boat they are coming," and called to the ship's captain, "Chop your lines and back out." Once the lines were cut, the vessel instantly began drifting away. A plank was hurriedly pushed out from the lower deck to the river bank. Grant, the nonpareil horseman still, got Hillyer's mount, which he may never have ridden before, to settle down on its haunches, slide down the muddy bank, then tread carefully across the bending, swaying plank and onto the deck.

Geoffrey Perret is the author of eight books, mainly in the field of military history and biography. His ninth book, a biography of Ulysses S. Grant, will be published by Random House in September, 1997.
"I Determined Never to Ask for Anything, and Never Have, Not Even a Colonelcy."
--Ulysses S. Grant, August 3, 1861, in a Letter to His Father

Like the great military man of the 20th century General Colin Powell, Grant did quite well without actually seeking higher ranks and loftier positions in the military. It seems that both men took note of the words of Thomas Jefferson: "Whenever a man has cast a longing eye on offices, a rottenness begins in his conduct."

Upon the recommendation of Governor Yates of Illinois, Ulysses S. Grant entered the War as a colonel in June of 1861. He was 39 years old and was put in charge of the 21st Illinois Volunteer Infantry, a regiment known primarily for being "Governor Yates's Hellions." Grant quickly brought them under control and turned them into creditable soldiers. He led them on an expedition to a little village called Florida, Missouri in search Confederate Colonel Thomas Harris. When he found Harris's camp deserted, he realized that the enemy was just as afraid of his men as his were of Harris's, a lesson he never forgot throughout the war.

In August of 1861 Grant was promoted to brigadier general of volunteers upon the recommendation of Congressman Elihu Washburne of Galena. He learned of this from the newspapers. The appointment was retroactive to May 17, 1861.

On February 5, 1862 Grant captured Fort Henry on the Tennessee River. He pressed on to Fort Donelson on the Cumberland. On February 16th 1862 Simon Bolivar Buckner surrendered to Grant's famous demand: "No terms except unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted." Grant's jealous superior, General Halleck, ignored this first major northern victory. President Lincoln, on the other hand, promoted Grant to major general of volunteers. He was not yet 40 years old.
Vicksburg surrendered on July 4, 1863 and once again the Mississippi "flowed unvexed to the sea." President Lincoln promoted Grant to major general in the regular Army. He was a few months past his 41st birthday.

Grant's men took Chattanooga on November 25, 1863 and on February 26, 1864 Congress resurrected the rank of lieutenant general, held previously only by George Washington. On March 9, 1863 Grant received his commission as lieutenant general from President Lincoln at the White House. Later Lincoln was heard to say, "I don't know General Grant's plans, and I don't want to know them. Thank God, I've got a general at last!"

The Civil War came to an end at Appomattox, Virginia, April 9, 1865, 13 days short of Grant's 43rd birthday. In July of 1866 Congress created the rank of General of the Army and awarded it him. He had gone from being a salesman in a leather store to the rank of four star general in 5 years. He held this rank until he was inaugurated as 18th President of the United States on March 4, 1869. Eventually, Generals Sherman and Sheridan also held this rank. On March 4, 1885, Congress placed Grant on the list of retired generals, an act which would provide him with a yearly income.

Grant was never awarded five stars. The rank of General of the Army was created in 1944 and the following great American military men were awarded five stars: George C. Marshall, Douglas MacArthur, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Henry H. Arnold, and Omar N. Bradley.

How do Grant's achievements and promotions compare to generals of the 20th century? Are the ranks the same today as they were in the 1860's? The ranks of colonel through lieutenant general are the same now as they were then. When Grant was promoted to General of the Army in 1866, that was the highest rank any military officer could achieve and was created exclusively for him. In 1799 Congress had created the rank of General of the Armies (plural) of the United States for George Washington, but he never received it. John J. Pershing was awarded this rank after leading American forces in Europe in World War I (1914-1918). General Pershing never wore more than 4 stars, however.

On December 14, 1944, Congress created the temporary grade of General of the Army and awarded that rank five stars. See the table above for the names of the five generals that have held that rank. Before 1944, an officer holding the equivalent of the five star rank would have worn four stars. It's safe to assume that if Grant had served after 1944, he would have been a five star general.

Generals William Westmoreland, Norman Schwartzkopf, and Colin Powell were four star generals and that rank is known simply as General.

Grant Network would like to thank Marie Kelsey, web master, for this article which appears on our web site. Please note the stars on the left and their correlation with the description of the rank on the right.
From the collection of John Couper, Paris France. Painter unknown. The painting was apparently executed while Grant was Lieutenant-General, and the epaulettes were subsequently painted over and a fourth star and the date 1868 added. If anyone has any knowledge of this painting please contact one of the editors.
Headquarters Army of the United States  
Washington, D.C. June 21, 1868

Dear Sherman:

Your kind favor written from New Mexico is received. You understand my position exactly. It is one I would not occupy for any mere personal consideration, but from the nature of the contest since the close of active hostilities, I have been forced into it in spite of myself. I could not back down without, as it seems to me, leaving the contest for power for the next four years between mere trading politicians, the elevation of whom, no matter which party won, would lose to us largely the results of the costly war which we have gone through. Now the Democrats will be forced to adopt a good platform, and put upon it a reliable man who, if elected, will disappoint the copperhead element of their party. This will be a great point gained, if nothing more is accomplished. I feel very grateful to the officers of our Army, whose military achievements made my reputation as well as their own, to know that they support me in this new field. I do not expect, or want, active support, but merely the satisfaction of knowing what your letter assures me of on your part. Officers who expect to make the Army their home for life have to serve under successive Administrations and should not make themselves obnoxious to any party likely ever to come into power.

I shall not ask you to come to Washington until after November, and probably not then. For myself I expect to be away from here most of the time, but I shall keep within telegraph, and being within the limits of my command will exercise it.

Present my kindest regards to Mrs. Sherman and the children.

Yours truly,
U.S. Grant

Campaign ribbon courtesy of the Donna Neralich collection.

A true copy of the original now in my possession.
W. T. Sherman, General
New York, April 5, 1888

North American Review, Vol 146, Jan-June 1888