General U. S. Grant with his war horse Cincinnati
Rachel Maria Grant, the youngest of the sisters of Jesse Root Grant was born in Youngstown, Ohio, Sept. 6, 1804. The relationship between brother and sister must have been amiable as it is said that she taught young Ulysses his alphabet. Rachel married a recent widower from West Virginia in 1833 named William Tompkins who was residing briefly in Maysville, Kentucky. The couple returned to West Virginia making it their permanent home. Tompkins was a wealthy man who owned coal lands and several stores and steamboats. By the time the Civil War broke out he also had formed a distinct Confederate leaning which was of course picked up and shared by his wife.

While the war escalated a dispute of another kind was going on in the Grant family. Aunt Rachel was carrying on a heated correspondence with Clara Grant, the younger sister of Ulysses, who was in no way subject to reticence where the feelings of where she or the Union branch of the family stood. Aunt Rachel had a lot at stake during the war. She had sons in the Confederate army and several slaves endangered by the outcome of the war. Clara Grant had a brother as an officer in the Union army and the dispute continued. One letter in particular in the correspondence caught the attention of Ulysses, and he asked for the letter or a copy of it be sent to him. In it his aunt wrote “If you are with the accursed Lincolmites, the ties of consanguinity shall be forever severed”. Distressed, Grant replied to his sister “The conduct of eastern Virginia has been so abominable through the whole contest that there would be a great deal of disappointment here if matters should be settled before she is thoroughly punished. This is my feeling, and I believe it universal. Great allowance should be made for South Carolinians, for the last generation have been educated, from their infancy, to look upon their government as oppressive and tyrannical and only to be endured till such time as they might have sufficient strength to strike it down. Virginia, and other border states, have no such excuse and are therefore traitors at heart as well as in act”. In another letter printed in a book in 1912 by Jesse Grant Cramer, the nephew of U. S. Grant, called *Letters of Ulysses S. Grant to his Father and Youngest Sister 1857-78*, the secretary of Aunt Rachel claims “Mrs. Tompkins says that if you can justify your Bro. Ulysses in drawing his sword against those connected by the ties of blood, and even boast of it, you are at liberty to do so, *but she can not*”.

The Grant family survived the struggle and when President Grant visited West Virginia in 1874 his aunt came to Charleston to visit her famous nephew. Rachel Grant Tompkins died in Cedar Grove, West Virginia on May 17, 1882.
Exceptional weather contributed to the success of the annual festivities and ceremonies the weekend of April 24, 1999, commemorating the 177th anniversary of Grant's birth on April 27, 1822.

At the Grant Birthplace in Point Pleasant, Ohio there was a good turnout of people on April 24th to enjoy displays of Grant memorabilia, a special postal cancellation, and speeches by local officials and historians. Birthday cake added to the festive occasion.

In nearby Georgetown, at the local fairgrounds, activities and events filled the entire weekend. Civil War Reenactments, living history presentations, and a program titled "U. S. Grant in Galena, Illinois" by Steve Repp were among some of the highlights. Other special attractions included a walking tour of Georgetown's historic sites and the newly restored Grant Schoolhouse which is now open to the public.

Grant's Boyhood Homestead in Georgetown celebrated with music, speeches, birthday cake and a special presentation titled "That Grant Boy" given by local 6th graders dressed in costume. Both Point Pleasant and Georgetown are planning similar celebrations and ceremonies for next year. These commemorative events are always scheduled for the weekend just prior of April 27th, the actual date of Grant's birth. Mark your calendars for the weekend of April 22, 2000.

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WHEN GRANT WAS PRESIDENT

On June 25, 1876 a Sioux war party led by Chiefs Crazy Horse and Gall annihilated some 260 United States cav at the Little Big Horn River, Montana, scoring the greatest victory of Indian warfare. This battle went down in history as "Custer's Last Stand". President Grant's eldest son, Frederick Dent Grant, who was assigned to Custer at the time of the battle, was on leave at the time to be with his wife Ida for the birth of their first child, Julia, at the White House. He escaped possible death and a personal tragedy for the President and his family.
The following whimsical account is an excerpt from the book My Summer in a Garden by Charles Dudley Warner.

My garden has been visited by a High Official Person. President Grant was here just before the Fourth, getting his mind quiet for that event by a few days of retirement, staying with a friend at the head of our street; and I asked him if he wouldn’t like to come down our way Sunday afternoon, and take a plain, simple look at my garden, eat a little lemon ice-cream and jelly-cake, and drink a glass of native lager-bier. I thought of putting up over my gate, “Welcome to the Nation’s Gardener”; but I hate nonsense, and didn’t do it. I, however, hoed diligently on Saturday: what weeds I couldn’t remove I buried, so that everything would look all right. The borders of my drive were trimmed with scissors; and everything that could offend the Eye of the Great was hustled out of the way.

In relating this interview, it must be distinctly understood that I am not responsible for anything that the President said; nor is he, either. He is not a great speaker’ but whatever he says has an esoteric and an exoteric meaning; and some of his remarks about my vegetables went very deep. I said nothing to him whatever about politics, at which he seemed a good deal surprised: he said it was the first garden he had ever been in, with a man, when the talk was of appointments. I told him that this was purely vegetable; after which he seemed more at his ease, and, in fact, delighted with everything he saw. He was much interested in my strawberry-beds, asked what varieties I had and requested me to send him some seed. He said the patent-office seed was as difficult to raise as an appropriation for the St. Domingo business. The playful bean seemed also to please him; and he said he had never seen such impressive corn and potatoes at this time of year; that it was to him an unexpected pleasure, and one of the choicest memories that he should take away with him of his visit to New England.

N.B.- That corn and those potatoes which General Grant looked at I will sell for seed, at five dollars an ear, and one dollar a potato. Officer-seekers need not apply.

Knowing the President’s great desire for peas I kept him from that part of the garden where the vines grow. But they could not be concealed. Those who say that the President is not a man easily moved are knaves or fools. When he saw my pea-pods, ravaged by the birds, he burst into tears. A man of war, he knows the value of peas. I told him they were an excellent sort, “The Champion of England.” As quick as a flash he said, “Why don’t you call them ‘The Reverdy Johnson’?”

It was a very clever bon-mot; but I changed the subject.

The sight of my squashes, with stalks as big as speaking-trumpets, restored the President to his usual spirits. He said the summer squash was the most ludicrous vegetable he knew. It was nearly all leaf and blow, with only a sickly, crook-necked fruit after a mighty fuss. It reminded him of the member of Congress from—-; but I hastened to change the subject.

During our entire garden interview (operatically speaking, the garden-scene) the President was not smoking. I do not know how the impression arose that he “uses tobacco in any form”; for I have seen him several times, and he was not smoking. Indeed, I offered him a Connecticut six; but he wittily said that he did not like a weed in a garden, a remark which I took to have a personal political bearing; and changed the subject.

The President was a good deal surprised at the method and fine appearance of my garden, and to learn that I had the sole care of it. He asked me if I pursued an original course, or whether I got my ideas from writers on the subject. I told him that I had had no time to read anything on the subject since I began to hoe, except “Lothair,” from which I got my ideas of landscape-gardening; and that I had worked the garden entirely accordingly to my own notions, except that I had born in mind his
injunction, “to fight it out on this line if—” The President stopped me abruptly, and said it was unnecessary to repeat that remark; he thought he had heard it before. Indeed, he deeply regretted that he had ever made it. Sometimes, he said, after hearing it in speeches, and coming across it in resolutions, and reading it in newspapers, and having it dropped jocularity by facetious politicians, who were boring him for an office, about twenty-five times a day, say for a month, it would get to running through his head, like the “shoo-fly” song which Butler sings in the House, until it did seem as if he should go distracted. He said, no man could stand that kind of sentence hammering on his brain for years.

The President was so much pleased with my management of the garden, that he offered me (at least, I so understood him) the position of head gardener at the White House, to have care of the exotics. I told him that I thanked him, but that I did not desire any foreign appointment. I had resolved, when the administration came in, not to take an appointment; and I had kept my resolution. As to any home office, I was poor, but honest; and, of course, it would be useless for me to take one. The President mused a moment, and then smiled, and said he would see what could be done for me. I did not change the subject; but nothing further was said by General Grant.

The President is a great talker (contrary to the general impression); but I think he appreciated his quiet hour in my garden. He said it carried him back to his youth farther than anything he had seen lately. He looked forward with delight to the time when he could again have his private garden, grow his own lettuce and tomatoes, and not have to get so much “sarce” from Congress.

The chair in which the President sat, while declining to take a glass of lager, I have had destroyed, in order that not one may sit in it. It was the only way to save it, if I may so speak. It would have been impossible to keep it from use by any precautions. There are people who would have sat in it, if the seat had been set with iron spikes. Such is the adoration of Station.

Charles Dudley Warner (1829-1900) was part owner and editor of the Hartford Courant, which absorbed the Evening Press. He and his wife spent time vacationing in Europe, during which time he sent back popular travel dispatches to the Courant, later gathered into Saunterings (1872). His success as a book author had begun a year earlier with My Summer in a Garden, a set of whimsical essays written in a style often compared to that of Charles Lamb, one of his favorite authors. His garden was his three-acre homestead, later called “Nook Farm” in Hartford. Nook Farm’s most famous neighbor was author Mark Twain. Warner went on to write several successful books and went on to become a lecturer for the last fifteen years of his life.
ULYSSES S. GRANT TURNS 177

By David H. Lippman

The first time I went to Grant’s Tomb to mark my favorite American’s birthday was 11 years ago, in 1988. The General drew a West Point color guard, a West Point firing squad, a local audience of about 15, mostly people from the neighborhood, and an aide for a local Congressman. The ceremony took half an hour. Cleaning up took less than that. Within an hour of the ceremony, Grant’s Tomb was deserted again. I walked out of the cavernous building, laden with a feeling of dejection. Nobody seemed to care about America’s finest soldier.

I went back again in 1989 and 1990, and the ceremony was about the same. Then I went in the Navy for seven years, all of them overseas, and didn’t get back until this year. While I defended democracy, I’d heard that the Tomb had fallen into disrepair, and the state of Illinois even tried to move the General’s sarcophagus back to Galena. Grant’s Tomb was occupied by homeless people, one of whom apparently raised a garbage can lid on the flagpole. Meanwhile, Robert E. Lee’s tomb in Virginia was a shrine. I wondered who had really won the Civil War, and marveled at the Orwellian rewriting of history. Woe to the victors, indeed. I figured Ulysses S. Grant was dead, gone, and forgotten. I was wrong.

I was genuinely surprised when I walked up Riverside Drive on April 27th, 1999, to see hundreds of folding chairs lined up before Grant’s Tomb and massive American flags hanging from the stone rafters. Thanks to Frank Scaturro, the determined lawyer who had championed the General, Ulysses S. Grant was getting the birthday celebration he deserved.

Behind the Tomb, a small band of Union Civil War re-enactors had gathered, armed with fearsome-looking period muskets, a wartime medical kit, and a Civil War veteran cannon that menaced the distant New Jersey shore. Dressed in blue uniforms, the re-enactors demonstrated their firearms and equipment for a growing army of schoolchildren that bounced off buses.

There were literally hundreds of kids. They were invited from private and public schools in New Jersey, Queens, The Bronx, Long Island, and Manhattan. As they trotted off their yellow buses, Park Service rangers herded them over to the re-enactors, who loaded and fired off their muskets with an appropriate barrage of noise and lead. From there the kids were shepherded past the Tomb, which had lost its graffiti and dirt, and into the building. Inside, Park Service rangers briefly explained the significance of the Tomb, and how the African-American community, led by Richard Greener, had financed its construction. The exhibits had been changed – the 1970-era photographs and drawings that stood in the alcoves had been removed in favor of reproductions of Civil War Union battle flags and maps of Grant’s campaigns. New displays of Grant’s life stood in the main area.

After the kids went through the Tomb, they were seated behind me, and an elderly man in a Union Civil War sergeant’s uniform got down to business as master of ceremonies. Under cobalt skies, West Point cadets, in the same gray uniform Grant had worn more than 150 years ago, marched up to the Tomb, swords and brass gleaming. An honor guard carried the Army’s multi-colored battle streamers, which flapped in the wind – Bennington, Chickamauga, Meuse-Argonne, Boxer Rebellion, Normandy, Luzon, Grenada, Panama, fluttered in the breeze. Chaplain Russel of West Point offered the Invocation. Westbury High School’s choir launched into the National Anthem with gusto and drew a lot of applause. The National Park Service’s Joseph T. Avery spoke of how the Park Service had spent money to refurbish Grant’s Tomb, and of its importance to history. He noted that tour buses were once again including it on their routes.

“Grant’s Tomb is my favorite site of the ones I supervise,” Avery said. Frank Scaturro modestly accepted thanks for working to preserve Grant’s Tomb. I had never met him, but I’d read in The Pacific Stars and Stripes, The Department of Defense’s newspaper for the troops, that he’d been instrumental in rehabilitating the Tomb and the General’s reputation.

Two students from Franklin D. Roosevelt High School sat nervously by the podium, awaiting their turns. One had a two-page address on Ulysses S. Grant’s military career, the second on his political accomplishments. They sounded like the kind of essays history teachers like – wordy, stiff, and patriotic. But they were accurate and moving. They bore the stamp of their authors’ idealism and scholarship. The kids who’d written them and stood up before schoolmates and Army generals to read them had worked hard on them. I admired that. The essay on Grant’s generalship covered familiar ground – Belmont, Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, Appomattox. It reminded the audience of Grant’s generosity of spirit at the Civil War’s end. In 1865, Grant could have easily clapped Lee in jail and taken his sword, and most of the country would have applauded. But Grant was the leader of an army of a democracy, and democracies do not crow in triumph. The essay on Grant’s presidency pointed up something his detractors forget – Grant’s commitment to civil rights and peace. Grant’s achievements included things that had not happened – war with Spain or England, for example. He had created a climate of prosperity. I suspected – but never found out – that some history teacher had assigned the whole class to write essays on Grant, and these were the winners.

The stories of soldier and statesman were replaced by a bow-tied curator from The Newark Museum, Ulysses Grant Dietz, a direct descendant of the General. His task was to discuss Grant the man, and he had the happy combination of being a sharp historian and a
great-great grandson of the General. His perspective came from the odd angle of spoons and silverware, in that his family collected such material connected with Grant and the Tomb. His presence reminded the audience that Grant was not just a grim-faced man in an official photograph, but a human being who was devoted to his wife and four children. The descendants of those children, Dietz said, still remember. Ulysses, Julia, and Grant are staple first and middle names for Grant descendants.

Henry Stern, New York’s Commissioner for Parks and Recreation, talked about how this day was the most beautiful day of all the Grant Birthday celebration days he’d attended. He commended his workers for keeping the area around the Tomb clean and restoring it.

The main speaker, Brig. Gen. John Abizaid, Commander of Cadets at West Point, talked about how the West Point cadets wear the same uniform Grant did and do the same job—defend freedom and democracy. These gray-clad cadets are the spiritual and lineal heirs to Ulysses S. Grant, and they are entering a profession which could demand they expend their lives. (I was reminded of a friend’s account of a recent reunion of the West Point class of 1940. Many members of the class could not make the reunion. They had been lying in graves in France and Italy since 1944.) Abizaid talked about how Grant and his victories had changed America, freeing a massive suffering humanity and ending the tyranny of slavery. Lincoln had written the order to free the slaves; Grant had actually freed them with his armies. Many of the kids listening or squirming behind me were themselves black, direct descendants of freed slaves.

Abizaid finished his speech and joined a Civil War re-enactor in blues and forage cap to place the first of three memorial wreaths—one from the White House, one from the Army, and one from the Department of Parks and Recreation. The old general in modern greens and the young woman in Civil War blue, mixing time, age, and tradition, mounted the 102-year-old steps to lay the laurels. A prayer, a salute, an about face, and suddenly the cadet commander was barking orders to an honor guard of immaculate West Point Military Police in dress blue. The soldiers aimed their seven rifles, and volleyed a 21-gun salute. The loud crack of musketry and the acrid smell of cordite filled the air. The children were surprised by the noise. They were used to the sound-effect bang of television gunplay, which also lacks the odor.

As the smoke drifted away, a drummer from the West Point Army Band began the long roll, and the bugler next to him sounded the tune. Dan Butterfield wrote during the long Peninsular Campaign: “Day is done, gone the sun, and a star from afar leadeth all.” That had been another change the Civil War had imposed on the United States. The bugle notes drifted away. Few things are more moving than “Taps” at a military ceremony. The leading cadet barked out some more orders, and the little band from West Point maneuvered sharply on the pavement to retire the colors. While they marched back, MPs in blue scooped up the fired rifle cartridge cases from the concrete. Chaplain Russel gave the Benediction, and a last few words to urge us to go in peace.

The children regrouped behind their teachers and principals, some to go home, others to bounce into Grant’s Tomb. There they charged the speakers, seeking autographs. Dietz and his cousin, Claire Ruestow Telecki, found themselves in the unusual position of being sought-after celebrities.

The Rangers started the laborious task of folding and stacking the chairs. It gave me a chance to palaver with the powers that were. I told Avery and Stern they’d done a good job with the ceremony. I told the nervous high school kids they’d done a good job with their speeches. I thanked General Abizaid for mentioning the Navy. I talked with Scaturro and the Grant descendants about how the General’s reputation had been maligned over the years, and how it was staging a recovery. We also talked about how Grant’s children and grandchildren had gone into public service themselves, as police commissioners, generals, admirals, and ambassadors. The concept of public service had been well-drilled into Grant’s descendants, and it showed. We talked about presidential descendants. There are no Lincolns, no Buchanans, no Washingtons. The early presidents left few heirs. The Grant children avoided the diseases that wiped out Lincoln’s brood. Plumbing and vaccinations made it possible to live longer, so that Grant’s heirs were many and numerous, scattered from coast to coast. “You all need to get together,” I said to Dietz. “You have to combine all your papers and stories. Even if you just make photocopies and pass them around. You’ve got an immense thing in common—descent from a great American. You should know each other.” Dietz agreed.

Gradually the captains and descendants of kings departed that afternoon, and the schoolchildren followed, some burdened down with souvenirs—Union caps, picture books of life during the Civil War, postcards. The re-enactors packed their bags. They told me that next year Grant’s Tomb plans a massive encampment of Civil War re-enactors for the entire weekend. “We’re going to have a huge celebration here for the new millennium,” the sergeant of the 9th United States Colored Troops told me. “It’ll go on for days.” When not re-enacting, the sergeant was a Park Ranger. I told him (and everyone else I could find) that the NPS had done a terrific job with the ceremony and in restoring the Tomb.

“Thank you,” said the sergeant. “Do you have any ideas on what we could do next time?” I thought for a minute. “Well,” I said, “it is the General’s birthday. I think we could have all sung ‘Happy birthday.’” “I didn’t think of that,” the sergeant said.
Ulysses S. Grant and His Horses After the Civil War

by Marie Kelsey

In later years, during the Civil War, Grant's horses were objects of intense public interest. His oldest son, Frederick Dent Grant, tells of the horses Grant owned during the War.

When the Civil War broke out, my father, General Grant, was appointed colonel of the Twenty-first Illinois Volunteer Infantry and on joining the regiment purchased a horse in Galena, Illinois. This horse, though a strong animal, proved to be unfitted for service and, when my father was taking his regiment from Springfield, Illinois, to Missouri, he encamped on the Illinois River for several days. During the time they were there a farmer brought in a horse called "Jack." This animal was a cream-colored horse, with black eyes, mane and tail of silver white, his hair gradually becoming darker toward his feet. He was a noble animal, high spirited, very intelligent and an excellent horse in every way. He was a stallion and of considerable value. My father used him until after the battle of Chattanooga (November, 1863), as an extra horse and for parades and ceremonial occasions. At the time of the Sanitary Fair in Chicago (1863 or '64), General Grant gave him to the fair, where he was raffled off, bringing $4,000 to the Sanitary Commission.

Soon after my father was made a brigadier-general, (August 8, 1861), he purchased a pony for me and also another horse for field service for himself. At the battle of Belmont (November 7, 1861), his horse was killed under him and he took my pony. The pony was quite small and my father, feeling that the commanding general on the field should have a larger mount, turned the pony over to one of his aides-de-camp (Captain Hillyer) and mounted the captain's horse. The pony was lost in the battle.

The next horse that my father purchased for field service was a roan called "Fox," a very powerful and spirited animal and of great endurance. This horse he rode during the siege and battles around Fort Donelson and also at Shiloh.

At the battle of Shiloh the Confederates left on the field a rawboned horse, very ugly and apparently good for nothing. As a joke, the officer who found this animal on the field, sent it with his compliments, to Colonel Lagow, one of my father's aids-de-camp, who always kept a very excellent mount and was a man of means. The other officers of the staff "jollied" the colonel about this gift. When my father saw him, he told the colonel that the animal was a thoroughbred and a valuable mount and that if he, Lagow, did not wish to keep the horse he would be glad to have him. Because of his appearance he was named "Kangaroo," and after a short period of rest and feeding and care he turned out to be a magnificent animal and was used by my father during the Vicksburg campaign.

In this campaign, General Grant had two other horses, both of them very handsome, one of which he gave away and the other he used until late in the war. During the campaign and siege of Vicksburg, a cavalry raid or scouting party arrived at Joe Davis' plantation (brother of Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy) and there captured a black pony which was brought to the rear of the city and presented to me. The animal was worn out when it reached headquarters but was a very easy riding horse and I used him once or twice. With care he began to pick up and soon carried himself in fine shape.

At that time my father was suffering with a carbuncle and his horse being restless caused him a great deal of pain. It was necessary for General Grant to visit the lines frequently and one day he took this pony for that purpose. The gait of the pony was so delightful that he directed that he be turned over to the quartermaster as a captured horse and a board of officers be convened to appraise the animal. This was done and my father purchased the animal and kept him until he died, which was long after the Civil War. This pony was known as "Jeff Davis."

After the battle of Chattanooga, General Grant went to St. Louis, where I was at the time, critically ill with dysentery contracted during the siege of Vicksburg. During the time of his visit to the city he received a letter from a gentleman who signed his name "S. S. Grant," the initials being the same as those of a brother of my father, who had died in the summer of 1861. S. S. Grant wrote to the effect that he was very desirous of seeing General Grant but that he was ill and confined to his room at the Lindell Hotel and begged him to call, as he had something important to say which my father might be gratified to hear.

The name excited my father's curiosity and he called at the hotel to meet the gentleman who told him that he had, he thought, the finest horse in the world, and knowing General Grant's great liking for horses he had concluded, inasmuch as he would never be able to ride again, that he would like to give his horse to him; that he desired that the horse should have a good home and tender care and that the only condition that he would make in parting with him would be that the person receiving him would see that he was never ill-treated, and should never fall into the hands of a person that would ill-treat him. The promise
was given and General Grant accepted the horse and called him "Cincinnati." This was his battle charger until the end of the war and was kept by him until the horse died at Admiral Ammen's farm in Maryland, in 1878. [Side note on Cincinnati: He was the son of "Lexington," the fastest four-mile thoroughbred in the United States, time 7:19 3/4 minutes. Cincinnati nearly equaled the speed of his half-brother, "Kentucky," and Grant was offered $10,000 in gold or its equivalent for him, but refused. He was seventeen hands high, and in the estimation of Grant was the finest horse that he had ever seen. Grant rarely permitted anyone to mount the horse. Two exceptions were Admiral Daniel Ammen and President Abraham Lincoln. Ammen saved Grant's life from drowning while a schoolboy. Grant said: "Lincoln spent the latter days of his life with me. He came to City Point in the last month of the war and was with me all the time. He was a fine horseman and rode my horse Cincinnati every day."

According to General Horace Porter, Grant rode Cincinnati to the surrender meeting with General Robert E. Lee. About the time of January, 1864, some people in Illinois found a horse in the southern part of that state, which they thought was remarkably beautiful. They purchased him and sent him as a present to my father. This horse was known as "Egypt" as he was raised, or at least came from southern Illinois, a district known in the state as Egypt, as the northern part was known as Canaan.*

General Horace Porter described Grant's technique in mounting Egypt. When the horse was brought up, the General mounted as usual in a manner peculiar to himself. He made no perceptible effort, and used his hands but little to aid him; he put his left foot in the stirrup, grasped the horse's mane near the withers with his left hand, and rose without making a spring by simply straightening the left leg till his body was high enough to enable him to throw the right leg over the saddle. There was no "climbing" up the animal's side, and no jerky movements. The mounting was always done in an instant and with the greatest possible ease.

At Vicksburg, Grant and his horse are described in Hamlin Garland's book as follows: "It was hard for new troops to believe that the low-voiced man in the blouse and straw hat was the one center of all direction and command of this mighty force. His horse, however, was always in full uniform. That was due to the orderly, no doubt."

One horse, however, proved too much for General Grant. In August of 1863, right after the fall of Vicksburg, Grant went to New Orleans to confer with General Banks about movements west of the Mississippi. On September 4th he reviewed General Banks' army at Carrollton and was given a large and somewhat wild and nervous horse to ride for the occasion. An accident occurred which Grant described in his Memoirs. "The horse I rode was vicious and but little used, and on my return to New Orleans ran away and, shying at a locomotive in the street, fell, probably on me. I was rendered insensible, and when I regained consciousness I found myself in a hotel near by with several doctors attending me. My leg was swollen from the knee to the thigh, and the swelling, almost to the point of bursting, extended along the body up to the arm-pit. The pain was almost beyond endurance. I lay at the hotel something over a week without being able to turn myself in bed. I had a steamer stop at the nearest point possible, and was carried to it on a litter. I was then taken to Vicksburg, where I remained unable to move for some time afterwards." Grant was on crutches for two months after this incident.

Cincinnati, Jeff Davis and Egypt all lived to enter the White House stables when Grant became president in 1869. Albert Hawkins was in charge of those stables at this time. He reports that arrangements were made during Grant's second term for an equestrian statue of him mounted on Cincinnati, and that every day for nearly a month the General would have the bridle and saddle put on Cincinnati and ride out to meet the sculptor. Hawkins relates that Jeff Davis was a kicker and he had the habit of biting to such an extent that the stable hands were afraid to go near him. General Grant, however, could handle him as he desired and as soon as he entered the stable Jeff would throw back his ears and move about restlessly until the General came up and patted him.

Jesse Root Grant, Grant's youngest son, describes a ride he took with his father when Grant was president. "Father was driving a fast horse and we were going at a good clip, when a butcher's delivery wagon drew up and passed us. A short distance it stopped to make a delivery. Then again it caught up with us and despite all father's effort, it passed us a second time. By now father had read the owner's name on the wagon and the following day he bought that horse. The animal became a great favorite and father named him "Butcher Boy."

*continued on next page
In later years when General Grant made his celebrated tour around the world, the Sultan of Turkey presented him with two magnificent Arabian stallions. The craze among the general public over those horses led to people coming to the blacksmith shop that shod those horses and asking for the nails, old shoes, and the clippings of the hoofs as relics. The horses were named Leopard and Linden Tree.

Ulysses S. Grant always had plans for the future, most of which did not work out the way he intended. The opening line to the preface of his Memoirs reflects his fatalistic philosophy: "Man proposes, God disposes;" man has very little control over his destiny, he lamented. During the Civil War Grant was dreaming of the day when the war would be over and he would be free to train horses. He extended this daydream to cover his old age as well. "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. I love to train young colts ... When old age comes on, and I get too feeble to move about, I expect to derive my chief pleasure sitting in a big arm-chair in the center of a ring – a sort of training course, holding a colt's leading-line in my hand, and watching him run around the ring."

Sadly, this picture was not to be in Grant's destiny, but he did retain his love of horses until the end of his life. At his apartment in New York City in the spring of 1885, when he was very ill and engaged in writing his memoirs, he reminisced about York, the horse he rode as a cadet at West Point. A former classmate, James Fry, came to visit him and reminded him of the great jump he made on York so many years before. "Yes," Grant whispered, "I remember that very well. York was a wonderful horse. I could feel him gathering under me for the effort as he approached the bar." Horses were, of course, a means of transportation in the 19th century, but to Grant they were much more. He seemed to have a nearly mystical relationship with them: it transcended that which could be objectively explained. Those horses served him well and it has been said that they carried on their backs the destiny of the American nation. Perhaps they knew that, and knew that Hannah Simpson Grant was right when she said "Horses seem to understand Ulysses."


Additional sources for the above article appear on the back cover.
UPCOMING EVENTS

Ulysses S. Grant NHS (White Haven)

September 4, 1999:

“Friends and Neighbors”
A look at local historic homes with links to White Haven.

October 2, 1999:

“Touring Grant’s St. Louis”
A ranger-guided bus tour of Grant sites in the local area.

For reservations or for further information call the visitor center at (314) 842-3298

LITTLE KNOWN FACTS

Grant was tone deaf and could not recognize any of the light airs of the time; military music was especially annoying to him.