In a letter dated October 2, 1903, Mary Grant Cramer, youngest sister of Ulysses S. Grant, wrote the following paragraph about her trip to Grant Cottage at Mt. McGregor. This excerpt was printed in the Report of the Third Reunion of the Grant Family Association, edited by Arthur Hastings Grant, 1904.

“A party of us last Saturday went in carriages up to Mount MacGregor. The day was an ideal one, and we enjoyed the beautiful scenery, tinged with autumnal tints, on the way up the mountain. Entering ‘Grant’s Cottage,’ we saw the furniture as brother left it over eighteen years ago. We opened our lunch boxes on the front veranda, and after partaking of refreshments we went down a winding path to the lookout where the general sat three days before he passed away beyond. From that rocky height he surveyed a magnificent landscape. Four states are visible from there on a clear day. I wondered what thoughts passed through his mind on that occasion. They must have been of a serious nature. His fatal illness and the prayers ascending for him, with the love that went out toward him in his suffering condition, all contributed to produce a serious impression on his mind and heart. The splendor of the far-reaching scene before him must have spoken to my dear brother of its great Creator and the more beautiful scenes beyond. A square block of marble with an inscription on it marks the spot where he rested that day.”
A TRIP TO NEVADA FALL IN YOSEMITE

From *The San Francisco Chronicle*, October 6, 1879, transcribed and edited by Nancy Winkler

"The General was mounted on the best horse in the valley... [He] led the way, enveloped in his linen duster. Mrs. Grant followed as close behind him as his ambitious rate of speed would permit. [They came to a toll booth, being on private property, and took the occasion to rest.] After a short pause the saddles were resumed and climbing recommenced. The grade was steep and difficult. The General was the first in the saddle, and led off as if he were in full retreat from a lost battle. Mrs. Grant rode next, and close behind her a blushing representative of the *New York Times*, [the author of this piece] just let loose in the Yosemite. She began the ascent cheerily, waking the echoes of the hills with such songs of her girlhood as ‘Some Love to Roam’ and ‘My Heart’s in the Highlands,’ the gentlemen behind her furnishing a rich bass to the soprano. The General occasionally turned in his saddle, and addressed those behind him, or roused the reverberations of the opposite side of the deep canyon with an imitation of the rebel yell. Anon he called Mrs. Grant’s attention to Glenn’s little tavern, stuck like a bird’s nest on the edge of Glacier Point, where the party had taken lunch on the previous day. Mrs. Grant was as unaffected in her manner as the young ladies. Instead of ‘My dear General’ and ‘Mr. President,’ it was simply ‘Lys’ whenever she saw fit to address him. A succession of superb views were unfolded as the trail wound higher and higher. Glacier Point raised its impassable wall on the right; at the left yawned gulls of frightful depth, beyond which was another perpendicular wall of rock. The pines in the canyon diminished to dark, straight, green plumes. As the path wound more steeply, Mrs. Grant’s courage changed first to timidity, then to profound alarm. The trail seemed almost perpendicular. The depth at her left was awful. She insisted on dismounting, and was, in the steepest places, thrice lifted from her horse and thrice replaced by the correspondent of the *New York Times*. When she was most alarmed, the General merely turned his horse, and looking around the points of the rock, laughed audibly. Then he accused her of endeavoring to extort a compliment from him by her bravado of half an hour before. It was about noon when the ridge was surmounted and the first sight of the Nevada Fall was gained. It fell down the face of its precipice, 700 feet in height, a mere white ribbon of water...

The General was in good spirits all the way up, thought he said little about the scenery; his conversation consisted chiefly of jests with Mrs. Grant about her riding, and the trouble which she gave her attendant cavalier. At Snow’s [a house along the way] there was an hour or two of rest. Mrs. Snow, who is from Vermont, related her personal history to the travelers and submitted to Mrs. Grant’s inspection her books of ferns, which are extremely elegant. In looking through them Mrs. Grant spoke of other collections of ferns and flowers, which she had made in her tour of the world. The company distributed themselves through the ample rooms while lunch was preparing or gossiped on the front steps. The General, fatigued with his ride, only looked at the falls, the pine forests, and the peaks, near and distant, from a chair on the porch, without troubling himself to seek a better point of view. The lunch was discussed with the appetite of mountaineers. While it was progressing, the simplicity of his surroundings and a remark from Mrs. Grant about the decrease of profanity and the increase of refinement among men, brought to the General’s mind the early days of California, when men talked rough, wore their pantaloons in their boots, and carried about with them an arsenal of bowie-knives and pistols. Money, he said, had little value, and personal labor was overhigh. General Stoneman was then a young lieutenant, and he petitioned to be relieved from duty that he might go to work himself and put his horse in a dray, because was unable to pay his mess bills. Even so late as 1852, Captain Saunders, who had left the place a wilderness a year or two before, on returning and asking a rough-looking man, with a disabled cart, to carry his trunk a short distance to the Tehama House in San Francisco for $1, was told by the man that he would give him $5 to carry it himself. The narration of the General ended and lunch finished, the party took the downward trail together, without visiting Vernal Fall. The General went down at a dangerous rate, emulating General Putnam, and arrived at Bernard’s three-quarters of an hour before the rest. It was nearly sunset when the rank and file of the company straggled into the village, very tired and smothered with dust, as usual. The descent was safely made, though the guides led the horses of one or two of the elder ladies down the entire trail."
In 1899 Leslie’s Official History of the Spanish-American War printed a letter from U.S. Grant to his friend General Badeau giving his view of how he would capture Havana. The letter was written 15 years earlier.

New York City
April 30th, 1878

Dear Badeau,

I beg your pardon for not answering your letter requesting my views about the capabilities of the defenses of the harbor of Havana to resist any navy. I supposed I had answered it, but your last letter reminds me that I have not. On my visit to Havana three years ago I had the opportunity of seeing the forts and armament. Both are formidable, and with additions that could easily be made before any country could attack them, impregnable from direct attack. But I should not regard Havana as a difficult place to capture with a combined army and navy. It would have to be done however by effecting a landing elsewhere and cutting off a communication with army while the navy would perform the same service on the water. The hostility of the native population to the Spanish authority would make this a comparatively easy task for any first-class power, and especially easy for the United States in case of a war with Spain. I have no special news to write to you. Buck and Jesse have returned from abroad all well.

Yours truly,

U.S. Grant
And I think the

imprisoned from their

attacks. But I think not

Regard. Norway is a difficult

place to capture with

combining Army & Navy.

would have to be one

Norway by attacking & freezing

their line and cutting off land

communication with leaving while

the Navy would perform the

same service in the water.

The novelty of the motion presentation to the British

authority would make this a long operation very task

for any first class power, and especially so for

the United States in case of a war with them.

1st. An official meeting to write you that

2nd. Have returned for about 3 weeks.
An excerpt from the 1889 edition of *The History of Ohio* by Henry Howe

During the rebellion and for years after the Grant family lived in Covington opposite Cincinnati, and eventually Jesse Grant, the father, was appointed postmaster of that town. When the star of his son was rising he was a familiar figure on the platform at Union meetings in Cincinnati. I sometimes saw him standing near the *Gazette* building where the people were wont to gather for the latest news from the armies in front in the periods of agonizing suspense.

Father Grant, as they called him, was a large man with high shoulders, about six feet in stature and plainly attired, giving one the idea of being just as he was, a useful, substantial citizen. His complexion was florid, and his eyes were fronted by huge green glasses; his whole appearance was striking. When the Union army was floundering in the mud before Vicksburg and millions were despairing under the long and weary waiting his faith never faltered. “Ulysses,” he said, “will work until he gets a grip, and when he gets a grip he never lets go, and he *will* take Vicksburg.”

One summer afternoon when Grant was President I had the experience of a personal interview with his parents and with each alone. I had published in Cincinnati, my then residence, and in connection with the late E. C. Middleton, a portrait in oil colors of Grant, and crossed the river to Covington to show a copy to them and obtain their testimony as to its accuracy. I first called upon the old gentleman at the post-office. He invited me in behind the letters, and on looking at the portrait was highly pleased, pronouncing it the best he had seen, and was glad to so attest. He was chatty and happy in my presence. Thought sociality was natural to him, I am inclined to think that the reflection that he was the father of General Grant, brought up so forcibly at that moment, was the prime factor to produce and extra benignant mood.

Twenty minutes later I was in the presence of Mrs. Grant. Covington, like most towns in the old slave-holding States, has a slip-shod aspect. The Grants lived on an unattractive, narrow street in a small, plain, two-story brick house close up to the pavement. An old lady answered my ring. It was Mrs. Grant, and I think she was the only person in the house. At the very hour when her son was being inaugurated at Washington, it was said, a neighbor saw her on the rear porch of her residence, with broom in hand, sweeping down the cobwebs.

She was in person and manner the antithesis of her husband; a brunette with small, slender, erect figure, delicately chiseled features, and when young and simply Hannah Simpson must have been very sweet to look upon. Indeed, she was so then to me from
her modest air of refinement and that expression of moral beauty which increased with the years.

In my presence she was the personification of calmness and silence, and put her signature beneath that of her husband without a word. I tried to engage her in conversation to hear more of the tones than simple replies "yes" or "no," and to see some play to her countenance. It was in vain. Believing that life is so short that one should omit no opportunity of trying to give pleasure to another, I said, "I think, madam, I am favored this afternoon. There are multitudes in all parts of our country who would be highly gratified to have an interview with the mother of General Grant."

It was true. I felt it, and it was a pretty thing to say. Not by a word or an expression of countenance did she show that she even heard me. Yet I was glad I said it. A duty had been performed, and it revealed a trait of character.
An incident lately occurred on one of the New York and Jersey City ferry boats which is illustrative of more than one trait in General Grant’s character, and which one of our artists who happened to witness it, has placed on wood and engraved for our readers.

General Grant lately paid a visit to West Point, and being desirous of avoiding that greatest of nuisances to a modest man like himself – the over-civility of the people along his route – traveled incognito; not exactly in disguise, but dressed so differently from his usual habit that he was recognizable to but few. But our artist, Mr. Jewett, had made during the war too many portraits of the General to be deceived by a change in his wearing apparel, and at a glance recognized in the shaded face the features of the “first General of the age.”

While General Grant remained in the cabin of the boat he was approached by one of those disabled veterans who are employed, or who employ themselves, in selling the newspaper known as “The Soldier’s Friend,” a journal, by-the-way, of unusual merit aside from its charitable object, and a copy was laid on his knee. The General, recognizing and admitting the claim of the disabled veteran on his aid and charity, drew from his pocket a $5 greenback and quietly handed it to the much astonished soldier. The latter was in doubt what to do until the General, with a nod, dismissed him. As he turned away, the soldier, observing his friend more closely, recognized his old leader, and would have spoken; but a glance from the General silenced him and he bowed and passed on.

Very few persons on the boat noticed the incident or recognized the General, the incognito was not generally penetrated, and General Grant had the satisfaction of getting through New York without one of those involuntary ovations which the people every where pay him, and which are so very disagreeable to his retiring nature. The modesty of General Grant is as excessive as it is genuine. In his manners, dress, and style of living General Grant displayed during the war more republican simplicity than any other general officer of the army, and maintains the same custom still. In manner he is very unassuming and approachable, and his conversation is noticeable from its unpretending, plain and straightforward style. There is nothing declamatory nor pedantic in his tone or language. His rhetoric is more remarkable for the compact structure than the elegance or finish of his sentences. He talks practically, and writes as he talks; and his language, written and oral, is distinguished by strong common-sense. He dresses in a careless but by no means slovenly manner, and wears no article which attracts attention except the three stars which indicate his rank.
Within a few weeks of General Grant’s death, a person in conversation with General Lee referred to General Grant as a Military Accident, who had no distinguishing merit, but had achieved success through a combination of fortunate circumstances. Lee replied: “Sir, your opinion is a very poor compliment to me. We all thought Richmond protected, as it was, by our splendid fortifications and defended by our army of veterans, could not be taken. Yet Grant turned his face to our capital and never turned it away until we had surrendered. Now, I have carefully searched the military records of both ancient and modern history, and have never found Grant’s superior as a general, I doubt if his superior can be found in all history”.

But, it may be asked, had any man a better opportunity of forming an opinion of Grant’s ability than General William T. Sherman? When General Grant was made Lieutenant-General, General Sherman wrote him as follows: “You are now Washington’s legitimate successor and occupy a position of almost dangerous elevation … I believe you are as unselfish, kind-hearted and honest as a man should be; but the chief characteristic in your nature is the sublime faith in success you have always manifested, which I can liken to nothing else than the faith a Christian has in his Saviour.” Again, Sherman said to the officers of the Army of the Cumberland: “He knows more than all of us put together.”

At a banquet where Sherman and Sheridan were guests, in reply to a question whether or not Grant was a great warrior, Sherman said: “Yes, sir, Sheridan and I think so and we are soldiers.”

Such testimony seems to put to rest all controversy as to General Grant’s position among the great warriors of the world.

LITTLE KNOWN FACTS

Since boyhood, General Grant had an aversion to any kind of profanity, noting that it was a waste of time. No off color stories were allowed to be told in his presence.
GRANT AND THE SANITARY COMMISSIONERS

By 1863 people in America were starting to realize that the blundering, hard drinking soldier known as Ulysses S. Grant was perhaps not the man they had heard rumors about. Mary Livermore was the head of a delegation sent down to see Grant during the Vicksburg campaign. She and the group of devoted ladies accompanying her dreaded the encounter with Grant and were much surprised with the interview they received with the General.

As usual, when in the presence of ladies, Grant was shy, reticent and almost embarrassed. The following quotes from Mary Livermore reveal the welcomed surprised received by the Commission.

“In the first five minutes we learned by some sort of spiritual telegraphy, that reticence, patience, and persistence were the dominant traits of General Grant...He was a quiet, repressed, reluctant, undemonstrative man...We instinctively put ourselves on ‘short rations’ of talk with him”.

“Grant was not a drunkard – that was immediately apparent to us. This conviction gave us such joy that had we been younger we should all, men and women alike, have tossed our hats in the air and hurrahed. As it was, we looked each other in the face and breathed more freely. The clear eye, clean skin, firm flesh, and steady nerves of General Grant gave lie to the universal calumnies then current governing his intemperate habits of those of his staff”. Our eyes had become practiced in reading the diagnosis of drunkenness”. 