

DISPATCHES FROM GRANT

The Newsletter of the Ulysses S. Grant Association's Ulysses S. Grant
Presidential Library at Mississippi State University • Spring 2015 •
Volume 3, Issue 2

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Members,

It is with pleasure that I send to you our latest Ulysses S. Grant Association newsletter. As always, I am proud of the wonderful job that our editor, Meg Henderson, has done. We want this to be your newsletter, so we look forward to any responses you care to send us. We also want you to feel free to submit articles on our hero, Ulysses S. Grant, for inclusion in future issues.

I hope that you will particularly notice in the newsletter that our Board of Directors is instituting a new membership fee structure. All the details are included within, and I wanted you to be sure to read about these important changes. Our organization is growing and progressing, and this change is an example of the kind of thing we need to do to continue our forward movement.

I hope, too, that you know that we welcome visitors to our facilities and that the future will bring about the completion of a new floor on top of the Mitchell Memorial Library for our use. The 2017 meeting will take place here in our new Presidential Library. We are already beginning to plan for that great celebration. First, however, we are planning for the May 6-8, 2016 annual meeting, at Pamplin Park and Richmond Virginia. We will be sending you information on this Virginia meeting soon.

All the best to everyone from all of us at the Ulysses S. Grant Association's Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library, Mississippi State University.

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Following in Grant's footsteps at 2015 annual meeting in Chattanooga

By Meg Henderson

The Grant Association had a record breaking attendance at its 2015 annual meeting, held this year in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Over 70 members attended the three-day meeting, where they deepened their knowledge of Grant's involvement in the Chattanooga area during the Civil War.

The meeting began Thursday, May 15 with a welcome reception and a special performance by living historian and USGA member Dr. Curt Fields, who gave a hit performance as U.S. Grant. Dinner in downtown Chattanooga followed the reception, and Chattanooga attorney Sam Elliot spoke about Grant from a Confederate perspective.

Saturday began with a tour of Chattanooga Military Park, led by expert National Park Service guide Jim Ogden. Throughout the morning, Ogden took the group to various points on Lookout Mountain and talked about the battle and Grant's military campaign that took place there. He even took the group to the place where Grant was famously photographed on Lookout Mountain.



After lunch, the group returned to the hotel for two panel sessions. Harriet Simon and Marie Kelsey discussed the history of the Grant Association from two different perspectives, and David Nolen and Meg Henderson spoke about the current projects and daily activities at the Grant Library. Dr. Tim Smith, a history professor at the University of Tennessee and a former student of USGA executive director Dr. John Marszalek, presented his evaluation of Grant as a military leader.

Sunday morning, the annual USGA board meeting took place. Afterwards, all members who wished to attend gathered for the annual USGA membership meeting, where Dr. Marszalek summarized the board meeting discussion and then opened the floor to members, giving them an opportunity to ask questions and share ideas. Those present were able to see that it is quite an exciting time for the Grant Association, as it is growing and playing critical roles in upcoming projects, such as the Presidential library expansion, restoration of the Grant Monument in Washington, D.C., and the 2022 bicentennial of Grant's birth. Members who attended the meeting gave helpful feedback, which will help Grant Library staff make decisions in its future operations.

"We sorely missed having our president Frank Williams with us, but his important mediation of the Rhode Island pension system kept him away," said Marszalek.

Next year's USGA meeting will be headquartered in **Richmond, Virginia May 6-8, 2016**. The meeting will feature programs at Pamplin Historical Park, which is located on the site of the Petersburg Campaign. The park features museums, interpretive sites, and antebellum homes. More information about Pamplin Historical Park can be found at <http://www.pamplinpark.org/>. Watch for more information and meeting registration this fall



New membership fee structure

By John F. Marszalek, Executive Director

As those of you who attended the annual USGA meeting in Chattanooga know, during both the Board of Directors meeting and the Membership meeting, we discussed the matter of the USGA fee structure.

We have not had any change in the cost of USGA membership for over ten years. We have also had only one kind of membership --- lifetime membership for a one-time payment of \$200.

The Board of Directors decided that it was time for an evaluation of this past policy. It then directed me, as executive director, to discuss this matter at the Membership meeting.

The following procedure resulted:

A proposal for a new membership fee structure was accepted by the Board; it was sent to the Finance Committee chaired by Vice President Jim Bultema. The Committee unanimously supported the proposal, and the Executive Director sent it, by email, to the entire Board of Directors. This USGA governing body voted overwhelmingly in support of the proposal.

This proposal now the governing regulation of USGA is as follows:

Lifetime USGA membership is \$500.

A new yearly membership is \$100. Anyone who is a yearly member for five straight years automatically will be raised to lifetime membership status.

A new student membership is \$25 per year. Students are defined as elementary to graduate school students.

The new membership structure is hereby promulgated and will go into effect on **September 1, 2015**.

**Grant Library expansion to “break ground”
Summer 2015**

By Meg Henderson

This summer, construction will begin on a 22,000 square foot addition to Mississippi State's Mitchell Memorial Library, which will house the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library. Since the Grant Association moved to Mississippi State University in December 2008, it has expanded its collection of artifacts as well as its services to researchers and the public, and it has quickly outgrown its current space.

A \$7.2 million bond package signed in April 2014 by Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant will fund this expansion. Jackson-based Foil Wyatt Architects and Planners PLLC, the same team that headed the library's major 1995 expansion and renovation project, will oversee the design of the addition, which will be added at the top floor of the university's main library. So, while the library is not literally “breaking ground,” construction is scheduled to begin in August and to be completed in 18 months.

The addition will include exhibit spaces, research areas, processing space, climate-controlled storage, administrative offices and a black-box theater. Visitors to the Grant Library will receive a thorough understanding of Grant “the man” – from childhood through his military career, presidency, and post-presidency, as well as his legacy since

his death in 1885. Although designs for the exhibit spaces are still in the works, the plan is to present Grant's life thematically, rather than chronologically.

“This addition will carry USGA to new heights of historical achievement,” said Executive Director John Marszalek. “MSU President Mark Keenum, USGA President Frank Williams, MSU Libraries Dean Frances Coleman, and the entire USGA staff have worked hard to get this accomplished, and we can hardly wait for the day we move into our new facility.”

Also moving will be the Congressional and Political Research Center that holds collections of prominent public officials, including the late U.S. Sen. John C. Stennis and Congressman G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery--both MSU alumni. The CPRC and Grant Library have been housed together in the Mitchell Memorial Library since the Grant Collection arrived to MSU almost seven years ago and will continue to share the research areas which will be part of the addition.

Dean of MSU Libraries and Grant Association board member Frances Coleman said, “This new addition will enhance opportunities for students, faculty, staff and researchers. The university administration is very supportive of what we're doing in the library.”



Left: Rendering of Grant Presidential Library exhibit gallery; Right: Floorplan of exhibit gallery

Grant Library to host symposium on voting rights

By Meg Henderson

The Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library will be hosting a symposium, “The Fifteenth Amendment: From U.S. Grant to Lyndon B. Johnson’s Voting Rights Act,” September 23-25, 2015 on the Mississippi State University campus. This academic symposium commemorates the 145th anniversary of the Fifteenth Amendment and the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act. It will bring together scholars from across the country to discuss the impact of the Fifteenth Amendment from Reconstruction through the Civil Rights Movement and its significance to American society in the twenty-first century.

Ulysses S. Grant, during whose administration the Amendment became part of the Constitution (1870), called the ratification of this amendment “the most important event that has occurred, since the nation came to life.” Lyndon Johnson said the Voting Rights Act (1965) was “a triumph of freedom as huge as any victory that has ever been won on any battlefield.” How was the nation twice able to add such significant legal protections into American law? Why was it then so difficult to ensure rights that had been apparently guaranteed?

The three-day event is sponsored by the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library; Mississippi State University Libraries; the following departments at MSU: Office of the President, Office of the Provost, Shackouls Honors College, College of Arts and Sciences, African American Studies Program, Political Science Department, Office of Public Affairs, Mississippi State University; Mississippi Department of Archives and History; University Press of Mississippi; National Park Service (Shiloh and Vicksburg National Military Parks); and the Office of the Mayor, Starkville, Mississippi.

Panel sessions will run throughout Thursday and Friday and will be held at the Shackouls Honors

College on the MSU campus. The Wednesday and Friday evening dinners will feature keynote speakers Dr. Doug Egerton of LeMoyne College, who will speak about the early years of Reconstruction and Dr. Michael Fountroy of Howard University, who will discuss the Voting Rights Act and its impact on African American political participation. A featured panel from 10:00 AM to Noon, on Thursday, September 24, will include a discussion on the topic of the symposium among Mississippi Chief Justice William Waller, retired Mississippi Supreme Court Justice Fred Banks, and Rhode Island Chief Justice (ret) Frank J. Williams. The moderator will be former Mississippi Governor William Winter, a member of President Bill Clinton’s Civil Rights Commission.

A full schedule of events and registration are available on the US Grant Presidential Library website: <http://www.usgrantlibrary.org/newsandevents/15thamendment.asp>. All USGA members are encouraged to register and attend.



Image from the Bultema-Williams Collection, Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library

**My Gift to the U.S. Grant Presidential Library
By Ulysses Grant Dietz**

What was I thinking?

My late mother was Julia Grant Dietz, (1916-2014). She was the last great-grandchild of Ulysses and Julia Grant. In the year or so before her death, my mother and I had discussed giving pieces from her cache of U.S. Grant papers to the Presidential Library in its new home at Mississippi State University. She did not get around to it, so I carried out the plan we had discussed in her memory.

My choices from among my mother's papers were based on what I, as a descendant, felt were historically interesting or illustrative of some significant aspect of my ancestors' lives. I was also very much aware of the USGA/USGPL's collecting policy. As the Vice President for Acquisitions of the USGPL, and as a museum curator, being mindful of what my institution really needs and wants is important.

My starting assumption with this gift was that all of the most important historical papers related to General Grant's military career or his presidency were already somewhere public—the USGA papers or in the Library of Congress, or somewhere else. Thus, my goal was to donate things that added some sort of personal or historical color to the vast archive already under the stewardship of the USGA.

Because I have grown increasingly fascinated with how well liked U.S. Grant was in the South, I included a letter from John Minor Botts, sent to the general in late 1865. Botts, a southerner of northern sympathies, was writing a book on his view of the recently ended conflict, and wanted to dedicate it to Grant. His letter, a copy of the dedication, and the general's handwritten comments on that letter, struck me as a wonderful insight into this phenomenon.

Much has been written about Grant the general and Grant the politician, but I've always been interested in my ancestor as a father and a

husband. Each of us descendants bears the stamp of the child from whom we descended, and so Grant's role as father is particularly intriguing.

Thus I latched onto a brief personal note from Ulysses to Julia, dated during that brief period after his election but before he entered the White House. In December, 1868, he wrote from New York while on a quick social trip, reporting to Julia of his various activities—including the wedding of Hamilton Fish's daughter Julia and a dinner at the Union League Club. He ends the letter "Kisses for you and the children Ulys" In some ways, this is the man who matters to me most: the affectionate, loving father and husband. Plus it is a rare example of him signing off with the nickname Julia used for him.

Checks are sort of the standard source of Grant autographs, but two checks from the clutch in my mother's collection jumped out at me, and I thought they needed to be in a public collection.

The first, written when Grant was president, is on a Washington, DC bank, to the great Jewish financier in New York, Joseph Seligman, for \$20,000. I had long thought, without noticing the date, that this was somehow part of paying off his debts after the bankruptcy of Grant and Ward in 1884. But the date makes it entirely a different thing. Grant's salary as president was \$25,000 a year – and here is a check for 4/5 of that sum being sent off to Seligman, whom he befriended through his brother during the War. I suppose this was Grant using the smartest financial mind he knew to invest his money for him—but of course one also can't help but remember the past embarrassment of the infamous General Order 11 of 1863, expelling the Jews from Tennessee, Mississippi and Kentucky.

The other check is the opposite kind, signed not by USG but by Julia. Dated 12/04/02, this is the last check Julia Grant wrote before her death on December 14—prosaically enough, to pay her gas bill. To my surprise, it seems to be in fact the only known check signed by Julia Grant.

Dispatches from Grant • Spring 2015 • Volume 3, Issue 2

Another Julia-related document that I have long treasured, and chose for myself from my mother's papers decades ago, is an autograph letter from President McKinley on February 2, 1901, on Executive Mansion stationary, letting Julia in on the secret that he is going to appoint her son Fred—my great-grandfather—to general. Fred had retired from the army as Colonel at the time of his appointment to the Court of Franz-Josef of Austria in 1889; only coming back into the army in the late 1890s. This promotion to General was a big deal for Fred's career, and the intimate nature of the note from a sitting president always appealed to me.

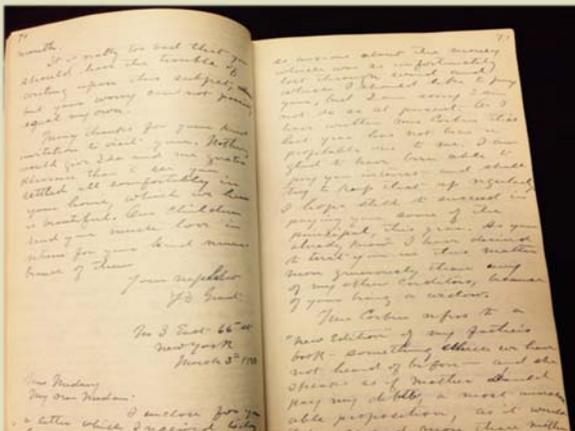
It is also a reminder of Julia's role as a presidential widow in Washington at the end of her life, and the importance of that role in her grandchildren's future. McKinley's Secretary of War was NY lawyer Elihu Root, who would carry on during Teddy Roosevelt's presidency. Fred got his son, my grandfather, a job in the Roosevelt White house, which is where he met Elihu Root's daughter Edith, who would become my grandmother.

Another sort of poignancy comes from William Endicott's letter to Fred of 7/31/85, a week after the general's death on July 23. The letter discusses the disposition of the General's swords. This is particularly significant, in that it points out that the swords already belonged to the Smithsonian Institution, given in Julia's name by William H.

Vanderbilt, who had received them from a humiliated Ulysses as partial repayment for the \$150,000 Vanderbilt provided when the bankruptcy of Grant and Ward struck in 1884. Vanderbilt was a true friend of Grant's and gave the priceless souvenirs away rather than capitalize on them.

This particular letter was tucked inside the final gift to the USGPL: a copy book of letters hand-written by Fred Grant between 1884 and 1889. I had always assumed that this was more about Fred, and thus was an historical curiosity rather than anything of real importance. But I'd never read through all of the 87 pages, and had not realized that many of the letters were fair copies of the general's letters, and indeed are the only known copies of important correspondence relating to the last years of the Grant's life, as well as the years following his death up to the time Fred and his family set out for Austria for his diplomatic career. So what I thought of as a mere curiosity with no value, turned out to be a unique historic document including material never before studied by historians.

The influence of Ulysses and Julia's lives has carried down through the generations, and those of us today hold their legacy. Such documents are, to me, physical links to the past, and reminders that these were not just historical figures, but real people.



Left: Book of Frederick Dent Grant's letters; Right: Check written by Ulysses S. Grant

Board Member Profile: Mike Devine
By Meg Henderson

Dr. Michael J. Devine is a long time member of the Ulysses S. Grant Association. He is now retired from his thirteen-year tenure as director of the Harry S. Truman Library in Independence, Missouri, the culmination of an extensive career in public history and administration which began in 1974 when he became administrator of the Ohio American Revolution Bicentennial Commission. Dr. Devine also served as Director of the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming, Illinois State Historian and director of the Illinois State Historical Society, among other administrative positions. In his retirement, he is working on a number of projects, one of which is chairing the USGA Bicentennial Committee and working with federal legislators and Grant Association members on his committee to plan the commemoration of U.S. Grant's birth in 2022.

When/how did your interest in history first begin? And what directed you to focus on diplomatic history?

I have always been interested in how things got to be the way they are, whether in my family or my town, Joliet, Illinois. When I was a paperboy in grade school, I was fascinated with a column in the local paper: "What happened in Joliet 50 years and 100 years ago today?" I also was fascinated with politics and world affairs from a young age. My mother used to get on my case and tell me to deliver the papers before I read them. In college, I had a wonderful professor at Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa. This was at the time of the Vietnam War, and I became interested in how the war came about and read a lot about European colonialism. Of course, my Peace Corps experience in Korea convinced me that I should study diplomatic history.



Having been the director of the Truman Library for 13 years, what has been the most rewarding part of that job?

The most rewarding part was working with wonderful people on the staff who were dedicated to their jobs, and also volunteers, including some board members of the Truman library institute. I worked with amazing people in the Truman world, including former Truman administration staff members, two of whom are still alive today, his daughter and grandchildren, public officials, scholars, and even international scholars. We hosted Kofi Annan's farewell address, Madeline Albright came for several events, Bill Clinton was here a few times, and we had two meetings with Laura Bush, when we discussed plans for her husband's presidential library in Dallas.

What was the most challenging?

The fact that we were a federal facility and had to abide by federal policies while being a thousand miles from Washington was a challenge. It was hard to get the attention of people from the National Archives in DC who needed to sign off on even minor projects and programs.

For example, when the government shutdown happened a few years ago, we had to do all kinds of things to prepare for layoffs: meeting with union representatives, informing our staff who might be laid off, cancelling tour groups – that was very difficult. Some programs took a long time to get approval. It was much easier to work in Illinois because I was an agency head and working right in Springfield, the capitol.

Do you have any wisdom or advice to pass on to the Grant Presidential Library as we continue to grow and expand?

My advice would be to make big plans. Along with having a great collection there, Grant is rising as a nineteenth century leader, and people are gaining a greater appreciation of him as a president as well as a military leader. And you have a supportive administration.

I'm going to backtrack a little bit – when and how did you become involved in the Grant Association?

I became involved when I became the state historian of Illinois and director of the agency there. I had known John Y. Simon only by scholarly reputation but soon found out that he was a critic of the state historical society. I made a point of meeting with him early on in my tenure to let him know what my plans were and was surprised to find out that he'd been checking me out and had even read my dissertation and decided that it was a pretty good study of diplomacy. I took out a lifetime membership. Then Simon asked me to be on the board and I've been on the board ever since. When I was at the TL it was very hard to attend the meetings because it would always coincide with Truman's birthday and we would have large events and high powered visitors at the library.

I'm sure your experience prepared you well to chair the U.S. Grant Bicentennial Committee. How did you end up in the role of chairman?

Frank Williams asked me to do it in a meeting, so that was part of it – I couldn't say no! But I have experience in doing centennial and bicentennial commemorative activities. In Illinois, we celebrated the centennial of the state historic library. In Maryland, we commemorated the 350th anniversary of the founding of the state in 1984. My first job after getting my doctorate was with the state of Ohio. I was looking for a teaching job, but nothing was coming up. A colleague was on the state American Revolution Bicentennial Commission and asked if I'd be interested in being the director. I never thought I'd pursue an administrative career but had no other option at that point. I enjoyed the creativity the job offered and being able to work with people all over the state, and I was successful in raising money, although funding was much more plentiful in the 1970s than it is today.

Could you tell our members where the committee is with the Bicentennial plans – what has been accomplished so far and what you hope to achieve by 2022?

We've been concentrating on the joint House-Senate resolution designating the USGA as the organization leading official bicentennial activities. I then want to look at ideas. Initial ideas are to work with Grant sites around the country that need some attention – repair and maintenance, for example. I'd also like to look at naming some federal facility – highway, parkway, building, etc. – after Grant. I think that, given his importance, he deserves that. Then there may be some activities we can do – a large celebration on the anniversary of his birth, maybe in New York City at Grant's tomb. Something like that would really draw national attention. I'd like to get together with my committee and share ideas to create a large public awareness about the significance of Grant as a military leader and a successful president who laid some important foundations for where the country should go.

Grant's reputation suffered at the hands of Southern historians who dismissed his military victories as having larger numbers and firepower and attacked his administration, while it was pretty darn good. What really upset Southern politicians was his efforts to protect black citizens and enforce congressionally approved measures for reconstruction. In fact, Harry Truman rated Grant very low, when he rated the presidents. Truman grew up as a Southerner, with slave-owning ancestors, even though Missouri was a borderline state. There was a "hatchet job" done on Grant's reputation for about a century, but if we get the resolution passed, it will put us in a good position to work with other Grant sites and organizations to celebrate the man and re-educate the public about him.

Upcoming Events

June 18, Lincoln, Nebraska: Editors David Nolen and Louis Gallo presenting a panel session at the Association for Documentary Editing, moderated by president Frank Williams

June 27, San Francisco, California: Meg Henderson presenting a poster at the American Library Association annual meeting

July 5, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania: John Marszalek lecturing at the Sacred Trust Talk & Book Signing, Gettysburg National Military Park Museum & Visitor Center

Recent Activity at the Grant Presidential Library

Executive Director John F. Marszalek released the first book in the USGA's *World of Grant* monograph series, which will release a book each year for the next several years. The book is titled *The Best Writings of Ulysses S. Grant* and is an excellent chronological read of the best of Grant's writings published in the 32 volumes of the Grant Papers with biographical context for those selected writings. This fall, *Citizen of a Wider Commonwealth: Ulysses S. Grant's Postpresidential Diplomacy* by Edwina Campbell, a USGA member, will be available.

THANK YOU to our Facebook Fans and to USGA member Curt Fields—the Grant Library hit a social media milestone of 2,000 likes earlier this month. Fields rallied the troops, sending out requests to his friends and groups and asking them to "like" our Facebook page. Ryan Semmes, our archivist and social media coordinator, posted a trivia question to our Facebook friends when we hit the milestone, and the winner received an autographed copy of the latest USGA publication, *The Best Writings of Ulysses S. Grant*.



Jim Ogden leads a tour of Chattanooga Military Park at the USGA annual meeting.

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Interview with the author: G.L. Corum's *Ulysses Underground*

By Meg Henderson

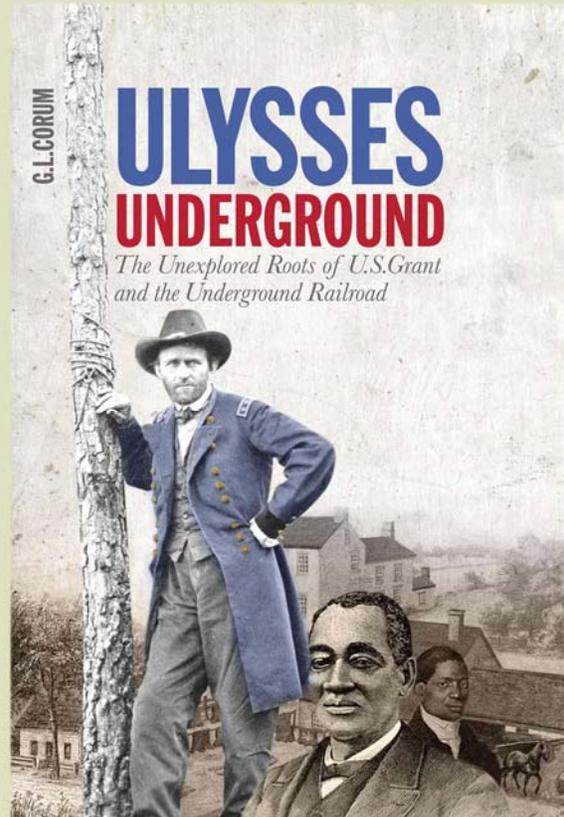
On May 23rd, Grant Association member Lisa Corum (G. L. Corum to her readers) released her latest book *Ulysses Underground: The Unexplored Roots of U. S. Grant and the Underground Railroad*. Corum's book explores the junction where the history of the Underground Railroad meets the history of Ulysses S. Grant. Corum's research led her to discover not only the role the Grant family played in early efforts to bring down slavery but also how early organized antislavery activists played a part in shaping the history of southwestern Ohio, where Corum has lived for the past fourteen years.

Is this a follow-up to your previous book, *Young Ulysses: The Underground Railroad Roots of Hiram Ulysses Grant?*

Originally, I planned to write three little books on Grant; *Young Ulysses* was the first, but early readers suggested structural changes and *Young Ulysses* morphed into a preamble to *Ulysses Underground*. A few early chapters ("Naming the Baby" and "Premeditated Silence") are pretty much the same word for word, but other early chapters have been rearranged, with significant additions. *Young Ulysses* came out in 2012, and I spent the intervening three years researching, writing, and rewriting. The 75 pages expanded into 300.

What sparked your interest in learning about Grant's connection to the Underground Railroad, and how did you arrive at the idea?

In early 2010, Ned Lodwick asked me to speak to the Brown County Historical Society, in the Ohio county where Ulysses grew up. Ned asked me to talk about what I knew – at that point I knew more about Grant's friend Daniel Ammen's family (and their help in printing a watershed tome against slavery). After that I began to research Ulysses in earnest. I knew I had discovered history that



mattered, and I wanted to get it down on paper.

Did your interest in the Underground Railroad lead you to Grant, or did your interest in Grant lead you to the Underground Railroad?

I came to Grant through the back door. I grew up in the north and, as a child, remember learning stirring stories about John Brown, but with Grant, I mainly heard the negative stereotypes. Then seventeen years ago, while reading a biography of Lucretia Mott, I became obsessed with finding out who had the idea or vision that the nation could end slavery, which was ingrained in American society. I began to read widely about the anti-slavery movement, abolitionists, and the Underground Railroad. Lucretia's letters led me to Theodore Weld, and his letters opened a window onto this incredibly committed group working in southwestern Ohio.

After moving to Ohio, I focused on finding the earliest organized antislavery activity, and I called those activists “first generation” or “Ohio’s anti-slavery pioneers”— they arrived before Ohio statehood in 1803. When I first encountered Jesse Grant’s name in conjunction with one early family, I passed it off as insignificant. I’d talked to many school groups, seniors, and library patrons, and people would ask me about the war. I didn’t know much, nor was that my interest. But by the third or fourth time I ran across Grant’s name, I realized I had found the entrance to a tunnel that had to be explored. In 2011, I switched my focus primarily to Ulysses. I thought I’d be able to write a book quickly and finish it well before the 150th anniversary of Appomattox, but I kept finding more. I was constantly surprised at what I uncovered.

No one could believe I was writing about a Civil War figure because I had never had much interest in war. My father was in six invasions on the USS Elmore during WWII; whenever war came up, he would have nightmares, so we avoided that subject altogether. Although I think he felt grateful to serve, he suffered some PTSD—though no one called it that then. I never expected to write a book, much less about a military figure, but I found so much more to Grant’s life than the war; in fact, I found he had a deep yearning for peace. The more I researched Grant, the more I liked him.

When did you begin your research and writing, and which sources or institutions, or people or places, did you find helpful in your research?

After reading *His Promised Land*, I called Betty Campbell in Ripley who was helping restore Parker’s house. I traveled there and met Alison Gibson, the Ripley librarian, who had enormous resources available to help interested researchers. The president of the neighboring Adams County Historical Society, Stephen Kelley, showed me a map which helped me see how the first generation of Underground Railroad pioneers had aligned their homes. Many think there was no deep laid plan

because one historian in the 1960s claimed this, and people took it as fact without further investigation.

Living in southwest Ohio over an extended period of time helped immensely. New pieces would turn up each time I visited a local historical society or library. A woman I had never met, Rheta Campbell, from the Adams County Genealogical Society, rang my doorbell one day and handed me recently donated escape stories that were crucial to understanding the duration of the early organized underground effort. I met Kathy Mast Kane while working in a Presbyterian Historical archive at Montreat in NC. I was a novice, and Kane gave me fabulous assistance. Her husband George, who works for Ohio Historical Society, also supplied a piece I never would have found otherwise. The genealogical chart on the Grant Presidential Library website has helped me many times. When I visited the Grant Presidential Library, Ryan Semmes and Aaron Crawford both read *Young Ulysses* and gave me valuable feedback. There’s no college in my county, so I relished their academic feedback.

Tell me something that our readers might be surprised to learn about Grant’s connection to the Underground Railroad.

Most surprising and confirming was the newspaper article found by Alison Gibson, which mentioned that Peter Grant, Ulysses’ uncle and Jesse’s half-brother, was president of the anti-slavery society in Maysville, Kentucky in 1821. This was after the Missouri Compromise, when nearly everyone who opposed slavery left Kentucky because it became too dangerous to openly oppose it. Yet Peter Grant stayed and took leadership. The second surprise was the Gist Settlement, which has never been widely written about or studied. In 1819, over 300 enslaved persons in Virginia were peacefully emancipated and resettled in Ohio, just a few miles north of Georgetown.

This remarkable triumph for democracy offered hard evidence of an instance of a peaceable end to slavery. Georgetown came into being exactly as the Gist Settlers arrived. Early leaders in Georgetown appear to have helped protect the newly freed citizens. Prejudice existed in Ohio, but there was some protection under the law, and people like the Grant family believed the fundamentals of democracy belonged to all people regardless of color. The Gist Settlers were major players in Underground Railroad escapes as well, although they are seldom recognized for their role.

Besides your recent local release and book signing in Point Pleasant, will there be any more events?

At the moment the book is only for sale locally in sites that helped me research, but in July it will be available online and everywhere books are sold. In mid-July, I will be in Minnesota. More events are in the works, but not all dates are solidified. When exact times and dates are firm they will be on www.ulyssesunderground.com. If any USGA members are interested, I would welcome the chance to speak about this history in their community.

{ HOW CAN I DONATE? }

Donate your books and artifacts. The Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library accepts books on the subjects of U.S. Grant's life and the Grant family, Grant's Presidency, and the Civil War. We also accept artifacts and memorabilia on the subjects of U.S. Grant and family. For inquiries, please email mhenderson@library.msstate.edu or call 662-325-4552.

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Send us your news!

Do you have any news, such as an event, publication, or book review, related to Ulysses S. Grant or the Civil War? If you'd like to share your news in an upcoming issue of the USGA newsletter, please email with a photograph, if available, to mhenderson@library.msstate.edu.

• Updating our Records •

If you have moved or changed your contact information recently, please send us your updated mailing address, phone number, and email. There are also a number of members who have outdated mailing addresses, and we are not able to get in touch with them. If you know anyone listed below, or someone who is a member and is not receiving communications from the Grant Association, please encourage him or her to call Meg Henderson at 662-325-4552 or email mhenderson@library.msstate.edu. Thank you!

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In the Next Issue...

Ulke Family exhibit

U.S. Grant's Washington, DC church

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