

U. S. Grant Camp, No. 68: Grant in St. Louis/Biography



Ulysses S. Grant in St. Louis

After his graduation from West Point in 1843, Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885) was commissioned as a second lieutenant and was assigned to the Fourth Infantry Regiment stationed at Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis, MO. There he met Julia Dent (1826-1902), the sister of a West Point classmate. Grant courted Miss Dent, and they soon became engaged. However, the threat of war with Mexico delayed their wedding. In 1844, the Fourth Infantry left St. Louis for Louisiana and eventually, Texas. Grant was in Texas when the Mexican War began in 1846. After seeing action in the battles at Cerro Gordo and Chapultapec, Grant returned to St. Louis in 1848. On August 22, 1848, Grant married Julia Dent at the White Haven plantation. The White Haven mansion still stands today, and is located on Gravois Rd. near Grant's Farm.



"Hardscrapple"

Grant remained in the army after his marriage because he hesitated to risk the uncertainties of civilian life. After a confrontation with his commanding officer on the issue of excessive drinking, Grant resigned his commission in 1855 and returned to St. Louis. For the next six years, failure. Frederick Dent, Julia's father, gave them a farm with 80 acres of land that was Grant built a cabin there, which he "Hardscrapple". Years later, the its current location at Grant's Farm, the original site. The family lived on 1858. Grant liked farming, but due the land, he did not fare well. To



"White Haven"
St. Louis county, MO
(Photo by Scott Williams)

Grant's life was one of father, gave them a owned by the Dents. named cabin was moved to about one mile from the farm from 1855 to to the poor quality of make ends meet, he



U.S. Grant as President of the United States.
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sometimes peddled firewood on the streets of St. Louis.

In 1859, Grant sold the farm and moved into the city of St. Louis. A relative gave him a job in a real estate office, but Grant was not aggressive in collecting rents. He next obtained, then lost, a job in the U.S. Customs office. During this same period, Grant's brothers opened a leather goods store in Galena, Illinois. In 1860, urged by their father, the brothers offered Grant a \$50 per month job in the store. He accepted, but showed no ability as a store keeper.

Grant was almost 40 years old when the Civil War began. When President Abraham Lincoln called for army volunteers, Grant helped drill a company that was formed in Galena. He then went to Springfield, the Illinois state capital, and worked for the Illinois adjutant general. Grant asked the federal government for a commission as a Colonel, but his request was ignored. After several months, Governor Richard Yates appointed him Colonel of the 21st Illinois Infantry. Grant led these troops on a campaign against Confederate guerrillas in Missouri. Thus, Ulysses S. Grant was headed down a path that would lead him to command of the entire Union Army during the Civil War and eventually, the presidency of the United States.

Credits for this page go to: Don Palmer for text and Scott Williams for graphics.