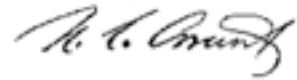


Ulysses S. Grant
18th President




Terms: 1869-1877

Political Party: Republican

First Lady: Julia Dent Grant

Vice President: Schuyler Colfax, Henry Wilson

Highlights from the *Ulysses S. Grant*

<www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/grant/> website include:

- visit Grant's [childhood](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/photo-gallery/grant-shoes/) <www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/photo-gallery/grant-shoes/> in frontier Ohio
- [You're the General](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/grant-general/) <www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/grant-general/>: what would you do at Shiloh?
- meet the [production](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/interview/grant-behind-the-scenes/) <www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/interview/grant-behind-the-scenes/> team and change a sequence from the film
- access an e-book of Grant's [Personal Memoirs](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/grant-memoirs/) <www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/grant-memoirs/>

Overview

Born: April 27, 1822, in Point Pleasant, Ohio... Grant, master military strategist and Union hero of the Civil War, was a terrible businessman and a popular, but somewhat hapless, president. He allowed his advisers and Congress to control many of the events of the day. By his second term, financial improprieties came to light embroiling his administration in scandal, although the president's personal reputation remained untarnished... Died: July 23, 1885.

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The Era

- Henry Morton Stanley finds David Livingstone in Africa searching for the source of the Nile (1871)
- U.S. Congress establishes the first national park in the world at Yellowstone (1872)
- Claude Monet and others organize the first Impressionist Exhibition (1874)
- Sitting Bull and the Sioux repel George Custer and the U.S. Cavalry at [Little Big Horn](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/grant-custer/) (1876)
- Alexander Graham Bell invents the [telephone](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/telephone/), [Thomas Edison](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/edison/index.html) invents the phonograph and J.H. Kellogg introduces "granula" (1876, 1877, 1877)
- [Mark Twain's](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/biography/grant-clemens/) *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* are published (1876, 1877)

"I did not ask for place or position, and was entirely without influence or the acquaintance of persons of influence, but was resolved to perform my part in a struggle threatening the very existence of the nation."

– Ulysses S. Grant, 1873

Domestic Policy

Grant continued national Reconstruction efforts, enforcing laws and propping up Southern state governments with the military when necessary. This period saw the rise of groups like the [Ku Klux Klan](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/grant-ku-klan/), and the nation slowly lost interest in the rights of the former slaves. Grant's administration was characterized by financial scandal. The president had appointed loyal friends to federal jobs, without regard to their experience or competency. His Treasury secretary collected illegal taxes, his secretary of war took kickbacks for patronage jobs, and his vice president defrauded government contracts through a dummy railroad corporation

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called [Crédit Mobilier](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/tcrr-scandal/) <www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/tcrr-scandal/>. The closest Grant came to direct involvement with this corruption was a scheme hatched by New York financiers to artificially inflate the price of gold. When the president realized what they were up to, he ordered the treasury to flood the market with gold to keep prices down, but the crooks had already made their profit.

Foreign Affairs

Like presidents before him, Grant attempted to annex Spanish colonies to the south like Santo Domingo and Cuba, but his efforts were blocked by the Senate. He had more success negotiating reparations from the British for their part in undermining the Union blockade of Confederate ports.

Presidential Politics

The Republican Party found the popular [Civil War](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/lincolns/) hero to be an irresistible candidate in 1868. Corruption and graft had come to light by 1872, however. Although criticized by many leaders of the day, Grant retained his enormous popularity among voters. He was reelected in 1872 and wanted to serve a third term but the Republicans followed the tradition of a two-term limit established by [Thomas Jefferson](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/biography/presidents-jefferson/) <www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/biography/presidents-jefferson/>. Back in private life, after a series of failed businesses, Grant wrote two volumes of [memoirs](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/grant-memoirs/) <www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/grant-memoirs/> to support his family; published not long before his death, they were bestsellers and continue to be regarded as classics.



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