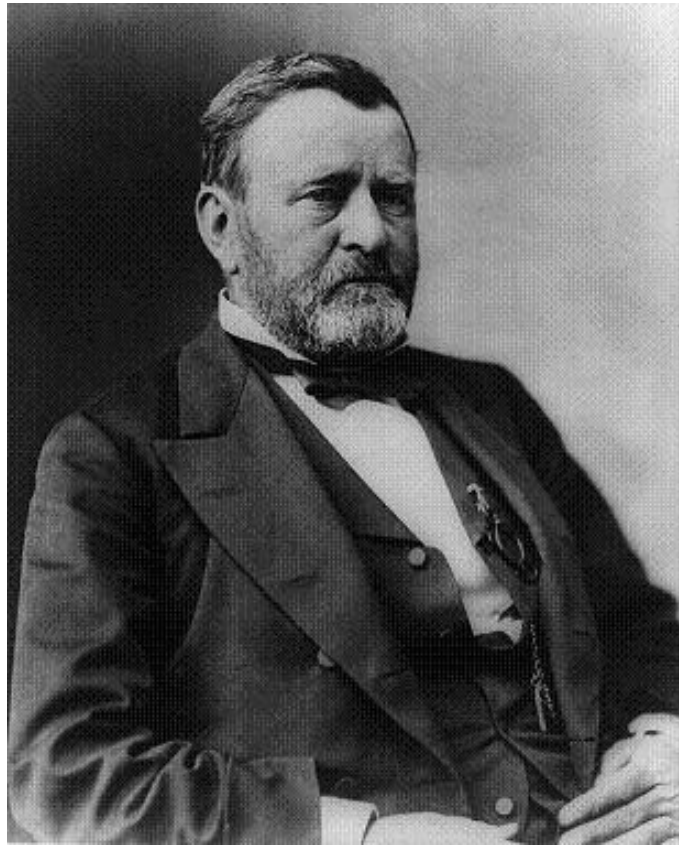


# Ulysses S. Grant

Unconditional  
Eighteenth, 1869-1877



**Nicknames:** "Lyss", "Hug", "Sam", "Uncle Sam", "Unconditional Surrender", "The American Caesar", "Useless Grant"

**Birth:** April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1822, Point Pleasant, Ohio

**Death:** July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1885, Mount McGregor, New York

**Significant Events During Grant's Terms:** Transcontinental Railroad Completed ... Chicago and Peshtigo Fires ... Centennial of the Country ... Custer's Last Stand / Battle of Greasy Grass ... Telephone Invented ... Mark Twain's "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" ... Colorado (#38) becomes a State ... Disputed Hayes/Tilden Presidential Election

**Quotes:** *"A military life had no charms for me, and I had not the faintest idea of staying in the Army even if I should be graduated, which I did not expect."* -- U.S. Grant

*"No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted."* -- U.S. Grant to the Confederate General (a West Point classmate) in command of Fort Donelson

*"I aspire to only one public office. When this war is over I mean to run for Mayor of Galena and if elected I intend to have the sidewalk fixed up between my house and the depot."* -- U.S. Grant

*"Grant has treated me badly; but he was the right man in the right place during the war, and no matter what his faults were or are, the whole world can never write him down."* -- Andrew Johnson

*"I have carefully searched the military records of both ancient and modern history, and have never found Grant's superior as a general."* -- Robert E. Lee

*"The truth is I am more of a farmer than a soldier...I never went into the army without regret and never retired without pleasure."* -- U.S. Grant, 1878

*"He has done more than any other President to degrade the character of Cabinet officers by choosing them on the model of the military staff, because of their pleasant personal relation to him and not because of their national reputation and the public needs."*

-- James Garfield (#20), 1874, speaking of Grant

*"It was my fortune, or misfortune, to be called to the office of Chief Executive without any previous political training...Mistakes have been made, as all can see and I admit, but it seems to me oftener in the selections made of the assistants appointed to aid in carrying out the various duties of administering the Government."* -- U.S. Grant, 1876

**How his term ended:** Grant retired from the presidency after two terms.

**Other Professions:** Farmer, Rancher, Real Estate Salesman, Store Clerk, Soldier, Tanner

**Worst Mistake:** Grant had African-Americans barred from the White House grounds during his time there.

**Saving Graces:** Although quite ill (he was dying of throat cancer), Grant willed himself to finish his autobiography so that his family would be cared for financially by its proceeds. Like many former Presidents, Grant had fallen on hard times after leaving office. Grant's friend Mark Twain brokered a deal between the ex-President and the publishing company whereby Grant received the largest advance ever given an author up to that time.

Grant eliminated the Ku Klux Klan in South Carolina and discouraged it nationally.

As had Lincoln and many others, Grant expressed himself on the unfairness of the war with Mexico (in which he took part as an officer), calling it "one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation." See Grant's quote about this in the James Polk (#11)

chapter for more on his exact feelings.

**Notes:** Born Hiram Ulysses Grant, at West Point military academy he was mistakenly enrolled as Ulysses Simpson Grant (Simpson was actually his mother's maiden name). Grant didn't have the mistake corrected, as he disliked the nickname generated by his given name's acronym ('Hug').

Although he claimed to wonder whether he would even graduate from West Point, Grant did well enough: he graduated ranked 21<sup>st</sup> out of the 39 cadets in his class, and was elected President of the Dialectics (literary) Society.

When Grant and his future wife, Julia Dent, became engaged, neither father approved of the match: Mr. Dent because Grant's prospects, as a career soldier, seemed bleak; abolitionist Jesse Grant because the Dents were slaveholders.

Grant's pre-teen and then teenage son Frederick (born 1850) accompanied Grant during the Civil War.

Grant did not campaign for the presidency and thus made no promises, although his campaign managers took one of his phrases and made a slogan of it ("Let us have peace").

Grant was the first President who, on entering the White House, had not already lost at least one of his parents.

Though apparently not corrupt himself, many of Grant's appointees were, and there were several scandals involving them, such as the Crédit Mobilier Scandal, where a number of Congressmen, including future President Garfield (for a bit of irony, see Garfield's quote above) took advantage of an opportunity to buy railroad stock at a bargain price apparently in return for looking the other way regarding some shady profits being made by the railroad on the government-subsidized transcontinental railroad project.

In one of the scandals that took place during his administration, Grant at first stated that all guilty should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law, but when his personal secretary was implicated, intervened in his behalf.

Grant beat Woodrow Wilson to the punch with the idea of a League of Nations. The former Civil War general expressed the hope that one day "the nations of the earth will agree upon some sort of congress which will take cognizance of international questions of difficulty, and whose decisions will be as binding as the decisions of the Supreme Court are upon us."

Grant finished his life a cocaine addict (the substance was given him as a pain reliever for the throat cancer that ended up killing the chain cigar smoker).

Grant was distantly related to FDR and Grover Cleveland, and also to Judy Garland.