

Hiram ulysses grant: biography



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Born April 27, 1822 in Point Pleasant, Ohio, Hiram Ulysses Grant, also known as Ulysses S Grant, was the first of six children to Hannah Grant and Jesse Grant. Ulysses was small, sensitive, and quiet. The local schools bored him, and other children mistook his quietness for stupidity, nicknaming him “Useless.” Ulysses also loved horses as a child and was known for taming unruly horses.

His family had little money for college, but the United States Military Academy at West Point offered a deal a free education in return for Army service after graduating. Grant though did not know there was this opportunity so his dad signed him up and he got in. After great deapit he decided to go. He was good at math and drawing, but his prior education was limited, leaving him as a otherwise unexceptional student. His skill with horses, however, were amazing, and he amazed everyone with his riding abilities. Grant seemed sure to win a coveted spot in the Army’s cavalry, its horse-soldier elite, but he was assigned to the infantry after graduating twenty-first out of a class of thirty-nine. In 1804 the Army was very small. Grant was assigned to the Fourth Infantry at the Jefferson Barracks, just south of St. Louis, Missouri. Grant’s West Point roommate, Frederick Dent, had grown up nearby, and Grant often visited the Fredericks home, where the family’s hospitality made him feel comfortable. One day while visiting, Grant met Frederick’s sister, Julia Dent. Julia was charming, smart, and sociable.

They soon fell in love, although Grants service in the Mexican War would delay their union for several years. Grant’s troops moved further south, first to Louisiana and then to Texas to prepare for the conflict with Mexico that

was happening on the Texas Territory. From 1846 to 1848 Grant (who was a lieutenant at the time) fought in the Mexican War and was twice recognized for bravery. Grant was then appointed quartermaster for the Fourth Infantry and was responsible for providing supplies and transportation as his troops moved through the Mexican countryside.

Grant, did not like the ideals of war. He mourned his lost comrades and the waste that war created. When the war was over Grant traveled back to St. Louis to marry Julia. Grant though was unaware that, all three of his Southern attendants, including James Longstreet, would fight against him during the Civil War. The Army then transferred the young lieutenant to Detroit and New York. At the beginning of their marriage Julia was able to travel with Grant but when the Army sent Grant to the Pacific Northwest, first to the Oregon Territory then to California. Grant hated being away from his family. Grant ended up running into some financial problems, he then became depressed. According to some accounts he began to drink to excess. In 1854, Grant resigned suddenly from the Army. And is still not know to this day why he resigned. After leaving the Army, Grant returned to his wife and children in Missouri. Julia's father had given her some land, and Grant tried to farm it, building a log house he built " Hardscrabble." Working hard, Grant found it difficult to make a living.

When extra labor was needed, he hired free blacks. He could have made money from selling the one slave that his father-in-law gave him but instead freed the slave. The painful reality was that Ulysses could not support his family, which eventually grew to four children. He also attempted a half-dozen other lines of work over the next several years. One bleak Christmas,

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he pawned his watch for \$22 to buy presents for his family. By 1860, Grant was forced appeal to his father for help, and he went to work for his younger brother in a leather shop in Galena, Illinois. Soon thereafter, the South seceded from the Union and formed the Confederate States of America. The Civil War had begun, and, suddenly, the North needed experienced Army officers like Grant. The governor of Illinois appointed the former captain to lead a volunteer regiment that no one else had been able to train.

Grant instituted badly needed discipline, focusing on the regiment's main goals and overlooking minor details. He gradually won the men's respect and allegiance and was subsequently appointed to brigadier general. Grant displayed his military prowess early in the conflict. In 1861, he led 3, 000 troops into his first major engagement. The clash at Belmont, Missouri, was a draw, but he showed a rare Union trait at the time—a willingness to fight. More than that in this early period Grant learned something about the enemy, and about himself. “ I never forgot,” he wrote, “ that he had as much reason to fear my forces as I had his. The lesson was valuable.” In February 1862, he captured Fort Henry and Fort Donelson, two critical Confederate fortifications in Tennessee. At Fort Donelson, he accepted the surrender of an entire Confederate force, earning a nickname, “ Unconditional Surrender” Grant. Fort Donelson was the first real Union victory of the