

# ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

---

## The Story Behind the Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant

By **Chris Mackowski**, Emerging Civil War

### Resources

**If you can read only one book**

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.
Mackowski, Chris	<i>Grant's Last Battle: The Story Behind the Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant</i> . El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beattie, 2015.

### Books and Articles

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.
Badeau, Adam	"The Last Days of General Grant," in <i>Grant in Peace: From Appomattox to Mt. McGregor, A Personal Memoir</i> . Hartford, CT: S. S. Scranton, 1887.
Flood, Charles Bracelen	<i>Grant's Final Victory: Ulysses S. Grant's Heroic Last Year</i> . Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2011.
Goldhurst, Richard	<i>Many Are the Hearts: The Agony and Triumph of Ulysses S. Grant</i> . New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1975.
Grant, Ulysses S.	<i>Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant</i> . 2 vols. New York: Charles L. Webster, 1885-1886.
Pitkin, Thomas	<i>The Captain Departs: Ulysses S. Grant's Last Campaign</i> . Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973.
Perry, Mark	<i>Grant &amp; Twain: The Story of a Friendship that Changed America</i> . New York: Random House, 2004.

Shrady, George F.	<i>General Grant's Last Days</i> . New York: Privately Published, 1908.
Simon, John Y., ed.	<i>The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant</i> , vol. 31 (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Press, 2009).
Trimm, Steve	<i>Saving Grant Cottage: How a Survivor of Andersonville, A Housewife, a Medical Missionary, An Immigrant from Japan (and Others) Saved a Precious Piece of Our History</i> . This booklet is published by Friends of Grant Cottage and is available for sale there.
Varney, Frank	<i>General Grant and the Rewriting of History: How the Destruction of General William S. Rosecrans Influenced Our Understanding of the Civil War</i> El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beattie, 2013.
Waugh, Joan	<i>U.S. Grant: American Hero, American Myth</i> . Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.
Ward, Geoffrey	<i>A Disposition to be Rich: How a Small-town Pastor's Son Ruined an American President, Brought on a Wall Street Crash, and Made Himself the Best-hated Man in the United States</i> . New York: Random House, 2012.

## Organizations

Organization Name	Description, Contact information including address, email
Friends of Grant Cottage	Grant Cottage State Historic Site is administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation and operated by the Friends of Grant Cottage, a local friends group. The address is 28 Mt. McGregor Rd. Gansevoort NY 12831. The cottage is open Wednesday-Sunday 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. Their website is: <a href="http://www.grantcottage.org/">http://www.grantcottage.org/</a>

The Ulysses S. Grant Association	The mission of the Ulysses S. Grant Association is to conduct research into the life of Ulysses S. Grant and preserve the knowledge of his importance in American history. Their website is: <a href="http://www.usgrantlibrary.org">http://www.usgrantlibrary.org</a>
The General Grant National Memorial	The General Grant National Memorial contains the tomb of Grant and his wife Julia. The Memorial is near the intersection of Riverside Drive and West 122 <sup>nd</sup> Street in New York City. The website is: <a href="http://www.nps.gov/gegr/index.htm">http://www.nps.gov/gegr/index.htm</a>

### Web Resources

URL	Name and description
<a href="http://www.empirenet.com/~ulysses/index.htm">http://www.empirenet.com/~ulysses/index.htm</a>	The Ulysses S. Grant Homepage contains numerous articles about Grant.
<a href="http://www.grantstomb.org/">http://www.grantstomb.org/</a>	The Grant Monument Association is committed to ensuring the establishment of an adequate visitor center and land transfer to the Federal government at Grant's Tomb.
<a href="http://digital.library.msstate.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/USG_volume">http://digital.library.msstate.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/USG_volume</a>	The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant is a digital archive available on-line consisting of 31 volumes of <i>The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant</i> , political cartoons and sheet music from the larger collection at Mississippi State University.

### Other Sources

### Scholars

Name	Email
Chris Mackowski	<a href="mailto:cmackows@sbu.edu">cmackows@sbu.edu</a>
Joan Waugh	<a href="mailto:jwaugh@history.ucla.edu">jwaugh@history.ucla.edu</a>

## Précis

In May 1884 Ulysses S. Grant's life changed dramatically when a Ponzi scheme run by two of his partners in the Wall Street brokerage firm Grant & Ward collapsed harming many investors including the Grant family, which was left destitute. While he had previously demurred when asked by Mark Twain to write his memoirs, needing money, Grant agreed to write four articles about the war for *The Century Magazine*. Enjoying the experience Grant set out to write his memoirs. Although he had been offered a contract by *The Century*, Grant eventually contracted to publish his memoirs with Twain's publishing company, Charles Webster & Co. That summer Grant experienced growing throat discomfort. Seeing his doctor sometime in mid-October, he learned he had throat cancer. He continued to write while his former military secretary Adam Badeau and his son Fred supported him with research, fact checking and editing. Grant suffered bouts of despondency and an almost total collapse of his health in March 1885. While friends and colleagues did what they could to secure his financial position, Adam Badeau attempted to blackmail Grant, trying to obtain more money for his work in exchange for quelling rumors that he, Badeau, was the actual author of Grant's memoirs. Grant fired Badeau. Grant continued to write his memoirs through the spring of 1885. In mid-June doctors relocated Grant from midtown Manhattan to a mountaintop resort north of Albany, the Balmoral Hotel located atop Mount. McGregor hoping that the milder climate would ease his discomfort and prolong his life. Many visitors made the trek up the mountain to pay their last respects to the dying. "I am sure I will never leave Mt. McGregor alive," he confessed to his wife Julia. "I pray God however that [I] may be spared to complete the necessary work upon my book." Finally, on July 20, 1885—after eleven months, two volumes, 1,231 pages, and 291,000 words—Grant finished. "[H]e put aside his pencil and said there was nothing more to do," Mark Twain recounted. On the morning of Thursday, July 23, 1885, doctors told family members to gather around Grant's bedside. He opened his eyes, looked at his family and appeared to fall into a gentle sleep, dying at 8:08 a.m. *The Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant* appeared in two volumes, the first of which came out in December 1885. Grant dedicated his memoirs to "the American soldier and sailor"—both Northern and Southern. "The troops engaged on both sides are yet living," Grant explained to his son Fred, who questioned the dedication. "As it is the dedication is to those we fought against as well as those we fought with. It may serve a purpose in restoring harmony." In its first two years alone, his Memoirs earned \$450,000 in royalties, and since its initial publication, the book has never been out of print.

\*\*\*\*