

Written December 11, 2021

U.S. GRANT A HERO

Why do Americans honor heroes – Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson, Jackson, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.? They were military heroes, founding fathers, Presidents, popular Americans, emancipators and civil rights leaders. They were leaders, patriots, and men of strong character.

There is a hero who is not celebrated on a national scale each year, except in local areas, his birthplace at Pt. Pleasant, Ohio, his hometown, Georgetown, Ohio, St. Louis, MO, and the Presidential Library at Mississippi State University. Lt. General Ulysses S. Grant and 18th President of the United States is a hero worthy of being celebrated nationally.

Next year 2022 is the 200th anniversary of the birth of Ulysses S. Grant, Lt. General of the Army and 18th President of the United States. Grant is regarded as the general who won the Civil War and preserved the Union. An Army Chief who implemented reconstruction, a President that ensured the civil rights of freed slaves, signed the first civil rights legislation, guaranteed the right to vote of all Americans, including freed slaves with the 15th Amendment, and established international diplomacy. He was the first former President to travel overseas and was welcomed by tremendous admiring crowds throughout the world.

Ulysses Grant's life began on April 27, 1822, in a small one-room house in Point Pleasant, a small river town in southern Clermont County, Ohio, 25 miles east of Cincinnati. His parents were Jesse and Hannah Grant. Jesse had joined a local tannery operation and had married Hannah Simpson the previous year. Jesse had grown up in Pennsylvania and spent his earlier years in the home of George Tod, Ohio Supreme Court

Justice. Jesse came to Clermont County with abolitionist attitudes and expressed his attitudes freely and often.

Hannah Simpson was a farm girl from nearby Bantam, Ohio. She was a devout, quiet, a homemaker and a future influence on her son. In 1823 the family moved to the county seat town of Georgetown, Ohio, just 45 miles east of Cincinnati in neighboring Brown County. There, Grant would live a middle-class life for the next 16 years, longer than he lived anywhere else.

Grant's outstanding military career was a result of his many life experiences growing up in Georgetown—working with horses, hauling people long distances at a young age, farming thereby acquiring common sense, humility, honesty and courage.

He received a typical frontier education, was appointed to West Point, but did not excel as a student. He served with a distinguished effort in the Mexican War.

Notwithstanding his modest background, he found his life's work when the Civil War commenced, and he received command of the 21st Illinois regiment. From that point he was promoted through the United States Army ranks, winning more major battles than any other of Lincoln's generals, commanding great armies, being appointed Lt. General of the U.S. Army and receiving the surrender of General Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia, and eventually all the armies of the confederacy. Perhaps Grant's lack of recognition on the scale of Washington is because he didn't have the aura of Washington or Jackson. He was frumpy, quiet, rarely made speeches, shuffled when he walked and looked like a down-and-out farmer even in military attire. He didn't look like a hero.

So why should we honor Grant in 2022 on his 200th birthday, or on an annual basis? He was a man of courage and honesty, he had leadership skills that enabled him to lead

immense armies, with intuition and develop a successful war strategy. As President he kept the peace and reunited the country, established a sound money policy, ensured the rights of freed slaves and guaranteed their right to vote.

The U.S. Grant Homestead Association of Georgetown, Historic New Richmond, Bethel Historical Society, Clermont Tourism Bureau and the Ohio History Connection have developed a series of events in 2022 that will deal with Grant and civil rights, his personal life, writing his memoirs, the surrender of General Lee, his final resting place, war strategy and the presidency. The first event features Christy Coleman Executive Director of Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation speaking at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati. She will be speaking on the topic, Grant—A Civil Rights President. The event will begin at 7:00pm on February 17, 2022, and tickets are required. For dates and times of all the events, see usgrantboyhood.org, find us on Facebook, or call 877-3728177

Stan Purdy, President US Grant Boyhood Home

112 N. Water Street

Georgetown, OH 45121

937-213-4119