

# Grant Cottage

FRIENDS OF GRANT COTTAGE NEWSLETTER

# CHRONICLES

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## STATE HISTORIC SITE

The Friends of the  
Ulysses S. Grant Cottage

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## PRESIDENTIAL REPORT

2023 has been a very interesting year, as General Grant might have said about 1861. We got off to a rough start due to the loss of the first six weeks of the season because of a major construction project. The good thing is that we now have a \$1.2 million fire suppression system in the Cottage (\$250,000 of which came from one of our generous Members). I sleep better at night knowing that our 140-year-old shrine is safe from flames. The bad thing was that we had our regular expenses, staff payroll and virtually no revenue from Cottage tours until the middle of June. Fortunately, the money our Board of Trustees has put in the bank (and the stock market) over the past several years has helped with this year's deficits.

As we look forward to 2024, note that it's the 150th anniversary of when General Grant visited Saratoga Springs and attended an early form of a baseball game and a Harvard/Yale regatta on Saratoga Lake. We are planning special programming to remember that year and 2024 is also the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the New York State department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Thank you for being a loyal member of Grant Cottage, and please encourage your friends and family to donate to our cause.

*Tim Welch*

*President, Board of Trustees*



## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Grant Cottage welcomes back Steve Porto as Executive Director. During 2023, Steve achieved a myriad of goals that included new signage throughout the region, cultivating community relations, acquiring financial support, and more as Special Projects Manager. Steve will continue supporting Grant Cottage Staff and Board as Executive Director until The Friends start their search for a new Director. "I am happy to be back to serve this important organization and work with its amazing volunteers, staff, and Board of Trustees. Please consider a membership or a donation this year to help keep this historic treasure alive."

*Steve Porto*

*Executive Director*

# Thank you, President Grant!

By Melissa Trombley-Prosch, Friends of Grant Cottage Site Historian



Grant's inauguration - first term

As a Grant historian for several decades, I was aware that **Ulysses S. Grant signed the Yellowstone National Park Protection Act on March 1, 1872** (one of his last acts at the close of his first term as US President). The Act established the concept of a “National Park,” making Yellowstone the first in the world. I had also briefly visited the park with a friend in the early 2000’s. It was not, however, until my camping trip

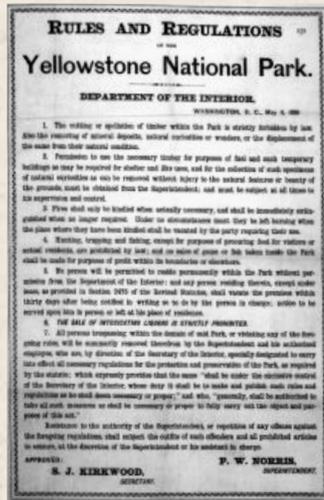
this fall to Yellowstone shared with my daughter, son-in-law and just-turned-three-year-old grandson, that I felt the wonder of the Act’s concept of a “public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.”

We camped in one of the seven campgrounds operated by the National Park Service, and during the week we were there, **we had two visits from bison (called “buccalo” by my grandson) to our campground.** We were able to explore the park’s boundaries (which lie within the States of Wyoming, Montana and Idaho), which are

larger than Rhode Island and Delaware combined and has 466 miles of roads to travel on. Yellowstone sits on an active volcano, and 10,000 **hydrothermal features (named “clouds” by my grandson)**, 500 geysers and 290 **waterfalls.**

Sharing our joy of discovery of the park’s abundant wildlife and amazing scenery were enthusiastic visitors from Alaska to Nova Scotia, California to Florida, states in-between, Europe and Asia.

As our family departed the park, a snowstorm, significant enough to temporarily close the road (our only realistic exit point), was yet another reminder of the magic of the natural world that Yellowstone National Park represents... Thank you, President Grant!



Yellowstone National Park Protection Act



“Buccalo” visiting our campground



View of Lower Falls, Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone



Bison or ‘Buccalo’ according to my grandson



“Clouds”

## FROM THE TREASURER’S DESK

**Financially, 2023 has been a challenging year for the Cottage.** The installation of the much-needed state of the art fire suppression system delayed our opening until Juneteenth, resulting in our losing a whole month of tour revenue. We are grateful for the financial help given to us by the towns of Wilton and Moreau and especially the County of Saratoga, but we still expect to end the year with a deficit.

Sadly, we currently lack any large sponsors and will be launching a fundraising campaign to try to bring in at least \$50,000 in sponsorships in 2024 to keep us solvent and allow us to continue to offer the wonderful history programs and interpretation that we are becoming known for. If you know of any corporate sponsors or other funding sources that support living history, we solicit your help.

*Mike Lesser*

Mike Lesser, Treasurer of the Board

## Bring History to You! with Grant Cottage Outreach Offerings

We are excited to offer engaging outreach presentations, including youth and living history offerings for interested schools and organizations. For more information and to submit your request for Grant to come to you, **please visit [www.grantcottage.org/outreach](http://www.grantcottage.org/outreach).**



## Scout Day

Grant Cottage enjoyed our inaugural Scout Day this year, inviting over 100 Scouts and their families to experience all the site has to offer, including an orienteering course and scavenger hunt, while working towards achieving their merit badges. We had so much fun and are sincerely grateful for all their assistance while completing service projects.



## Fall for All

We had a blast celebrating autumn in upstate New York with our family event Fall for All. Guests enjoyed a site filled with historically significant activities, adventures, and more. Special thanks to all the vendors and volunteers that made it possible.

## Site Project Updates

Razor wire removal and some initial clearing is complete on the new land transferred to the Historic Site last year, and the public enjoyed a sneak preview of the northern overlook. More work is planned for additional uses for the land next season. The Visitor Center roof replacement project will be completed before winter, providing the building with a sturdy and lasting metal roof. An indoor climate improvement project is underway at the Cottage that will provide a better environment for the collections. Survey work on the Eastern Overlook path project is complete, and construction plans will be available soon to determine cost. We are excited to provide a more accessible route to this beautiful view.



## Literary Landmark Book Club

Consider joining other history enthusiasts in reading books on U.S. Grant with weekly online discussion sessions. The Book Club will run from January-April 2024. To find out more information about this enriching opportunity, register for the club, and to purchase books, please visit [www.grantcottage.org/events](http://www.grantcottage.org/events)



## Special Thanks to our Volunteers and Interns

### Special Thanks to our 2023 Interns!

We were thrilled to have the assistance of interns Dana, Abby, and Eric this summer. They helped us give our visitors a great experience while also gaining valuable experience themselves. Thanks to the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the Northeastern Association of the Blind at Albany for making the internships possible.

## Special Thanks to our Volunteers and Staff!



Grant Cottage welcomed a stellar group of new volunteers and staff this season. We sincerely appreciate their efforts, as well as those of our returning volunteers and staff. Are you are interested in becoming a volunteer? Visit [www.grantcottage.org/volunteer](http://www.grantcottage.org/volunteer) to apply today.



The Friends of the  
 Ulysses S. Grant Cottage  
 P.O. Box 2294 / 1000 Mt. McGregor Rd.  
 Wilton, NY 12831  
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State Historic Site



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Thank you for supporting Grant  
 Cottage! This giving season,  
 please consider making a donation  
 to The Friends of the Ulysses S.  
 Grant Cottage to help us continue  
 to offer educational experiences  
 and share Grant's story.

## HELP US KEEP HISTORY ALIVE

**Yes!** I would like to support Grant Cottage with  
 a tax-deductible donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

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Yes, I would like to subscribe to Friends of Grant Cottage e-mail updates.



Colorized image of the Grant Cottage  
 funeral flowers by Park Ranger Nick  
 Sacco at the Ulysses S. Grant National  
 Historic Site in St. Louis, MO.

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**Make your Donation to support Grant Cottage today by mailing the attached form to PO Box 2294, Wilton, NY 12831 or by going to grantcottage.org/take-action**

The Friends of the Ulysses S. Grant Cottage is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that manages the daily operations and programming at Grant Cottage. Generous support from Grant fans like you helps us keep history alive as we tell the story of Ulysses S. Grant's time on Mt. McGregor.